

Creative City Identity – A Case Study of the Embassy Festival in The Hague



The Embassy Festival in 2022 (source: (Embassy Festival, n.d.))

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Summary

Creative city policies have been utilised in many cities to develop the cultural sector and draw in investment. Festivalisation is a common manifestation of creative city policy. However, such policies can have limitations and intended consequences which are important to understand in the context of the city. The Hague is no exception to creative city policy and presents as a unique case study area due to its significant international population. The annually occurring Embassy Festival is a manifestation of both creative city policy and the international environment, with most embassies in The Netherlands being situated in the city. The research aims to discover how the Embassy Festival contributes to the formation of creative city identity in The Hague, through the qualitative lens of interviews and policy analysis. This research has shown that the goals of the festival are mainly sociocultural, aiming to disregard political tensions to unite cultures through education and experience. Secondly, the festival prioritises inclusivity, especially financial inclusivity, however heavy reliance on subsidies, coupled with inflation, poses a challenge. Thirdly, the festival contributes to The Hague's creative city identity indirectly, mostly through opportunities for performers and the inclusion of various demographic groups. Further research should be done into the views of visitors to gain a greater depth of understanding of the motivations for attending the festival. Additional further research may involve applying the same framework to a case study of a different festival in The Hague, such as De Betovering (a creative children's festival) and seeing festivalisation affects the creative city identity.

Introduction

Richard Florida's 'creative class' concept has been a basis for the creative city discourse in cultural geography. According to Florida (2003), it is in these creative centres that convergence of economic activity occurs and thrives, and the creative city concept was developed. This, unlike previous rational planning, embraces self-organising, unpredictable, and "pleasantly" chaotic cities (De Lange, 2019). The creative city concept has been incorporated into policy by policy-makers focused on both place-making and the competitiveness of a place (Rofe and Woosnam, 2015).

Much like many cities, the Hague has adopted a form of creative city policy, Cultuurvisie Den Haag 2033 ('Culture Vision The Hague 2033'). The policy outlines the current situation and

plans for The Hague's cultural sector, which ranges from "museums, companies and festivals with (inter)national fame to small-scale initiatives, young makers and great amateur artists" (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). According to the document, residents can face barriers in taking part in events offered. This has led to cultural education and accessibility for contact with art and culture becoming core pillars of the policy (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). This document was chosen for analysis as it is the core overarching cultural policy of a highly diverse and international city.

Festivals are considered cultural activities and are important agents of urban change (Smith et al., 2022). They can create both intended and unintended outcomes, occupy urban spaces and be vessels of sociopolitical change. They are also linked to time, creating a dimension of spatial-temporal analysis, meaning that their goals and features are best understood whilst considering the spatial-temporal context of the event (Smith et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding these aspects of a festival are crucial for planners and policymakers. According to Smith et al., (2022), festivals can be exclusive, providing financial and physical barriers that prevent certain groups from taking part. These barriers, and how they change urban space, are yet to be fully understood. There is a clear lack of research on inclusion and exclusion stemming from cultural festivals and creative city policy.

With the Hague and festivals in mind, a cultural festival named the Embassy Festival presents as the perfect case study. It is an annually occurring festival since 2013, that "highlights the cultural richness of the participants and inspires visitors to meet and experience each other's cultures" (Embassy Festival, n.d.). It includes markets and decorated stands which sell jewelry, clothes, traditional food and drink, as well as multiple stages featuring music and dance group representing their home country. Additionally, the festival is organised in cooperation with Gemeente Den Haag (Municipality of The Hague), as well as many embassies located in The Hague.

The aim of the research is to discover the how the Embassy Festival links to and affects the creative city identify of The Hague. This is especially relevant as culture is a focus of many city policies, and yet there is more division and polarisation than ever. Therefore, the proposed research question is 'How does the Embassy Festival contribute to the formation of a creative city identity in The Hague?'. From this, the following subquestions arise:

- What are the current creative city policies of The Hague?
- What are the key goals and features of the Embassy Festival?
- How do the key goals and features of the Embassy Festival relate to the creative city?
- What role does inclusion and exclusion play in the Embassy Festival?

The structure of the paper will consist of a theoretical framework, followed by the methodology and results, ending with a discussion and conclusion. The appendix contains relevant information and documents, such as interview guides and coding schemes.

Theoretical framework

The underpinning of the creative city discourse is the creative class concept. It involves professionals such as scientists, engineers, actors, architects, artists, and more, whose work produces new forms or designs that are transferable (products, theorems, strategies, etc.) (Florida, 2003). Creative professionals attract others, investments, and new businesses, forming creative centres which are an economic asset allowing creativity to thrive (Florida, 2003). More relevant to the research is the creative city. Comunian (2011) highlights differences in definition, such as a place where creative industries are concentrated, as opposed to repositioning and regenerating existing cultural industries.

Policymakers aiming to promote a location such as a city often embed policy in the creative city ethos, where creativity and the creative class take a new role, as opposed to traditional economic rationalism (Rofe and Woosnam, 2015). However, the increase in creativity as a focus of policy raises the criticism that it centres around a particular socioeconomic group - the creative class - and therefore lacks inclusivity (Ibid., 346). Regarding creative city policies, Comunian (2011) argues several limitations. Firstly, the use of policy for urban regeneration on the local versus global scale. They claim that creative city policies may promote a globalised culture that homogenizes cities across the globe. Therefore, urban regeneration should not focus so much on the creative class, but rather on reclaiming history, sense of place and belonging (Comunian, 2011). Secondly, the issue of short-term attraction versus long-term retention. Creative city policy aims to attract foreign talent rather than strengthen local skills, which may ultimately backfire as the local workforce is neglected.

Central to the research are cultural festivals. “Festivalisation” processes, the increase in festivals and events, are prevalent in Western European cities and are part of the agenda of neoliberal, entrepreneurial cities (Smith et al., 2022). Festivals and events can shape the character of urban public spaces. In addition, they can provide host cities with performances and excitement that can be tailor-made for branding the urban area. Giorgi et al (2011) speak about festivals and the cultural public sphere, stating that festivals can be seen as a space and time separate from dimensions of daily life. Similarly, Finkel and Platt (2020) express that festivals exist within spatial and temporal boundaries, understood through their context, meaning that their significance is shaped by the specific conditions they occur in. Therefore, a holistic understanding of social, economic, political and cultural conditions is needed to fully understand a festival. They can also serve as sites that allow the diffusion of cultural ideas and goods and can become spaces for learning and exchange of ideas. The festival process – planning, anticipating, partaking – generates “collective excitement” in the community (Giorgi et al., 2011).

Cultural festivals can serve different purposes. Firstly, they can be used as political devices (Giorgi et al., 2011). This happens in a number of ways. On the one hand, they can be a way to positively change the image of a city/country. This is through spreading the word of the city, attracting tourists, and improving infrastructure. On the other hand, it can be a way of making people aware of political issues. As Giorgi et al., (2011) argue as an example, festivals can make young people aware of eco-political issues. To achieve this, the organizer of the festivals needs to form strategic alliances to shift the attitudes of stakeholders and society. In addition, festivals need to be profitable so that their goals can be realized. Another interesting idea put forward is that theatre in particular is a public service – it is state-guaranteed – which also adds to its use as a political device. Lastly, they mention that even though on the surface, festivals are about entertainment, they also provide opportunities to reflect and promote crucial social, economic, and political issues.

According to Smith et al., (2022), creative city policies are often driven by economic agendas. Most research around festivals and festivalisation focus on assessing economic impact (Small et al., 2005). Finkel and Platt (2020) state that cultural festivals are often a means of marketing, tourism and other socio-economic benefits - they share a commercialised relationship

with the city. Aside from political and economic motivations, a key reason for festivalisation is sociocultural benefits. According to Popescu and Corboş (2012), they are organised as a response to the specific needs of a community and offer a feeling of belonging as well as providing entertainment. Specially community-based festivals are becoming more popular, due to a desire in the community to celebrate their identity (Small et al., 2005).

Alongside the numerous positive impacts, festivalisation can produce unintended negative impacts. The success of a festival is dependent on participant opinion. Each participant has different expectations, which means that all aspects need to be taken into account when planning a festival (Popescu and Corboş, 2012). This includes organization, public/tourist balance, and participant needs. The residents are a group that may be significantly impacted by festivals. It is important for the local community, as well as the continuation of a festival for there to be balance between the needs of visitors, the local community, and the place, which can include the active participation of locals and making festival spaces inclusive and accessible (Finkel and Platt, 2020). The topic of inclusion and exclusion is also mentioned by Smith et al., (2022), claiming that festivals can be exclusive through financial and physical barriers that limit certain groups from taking part. On the planning and policy side, festivals are becoming homogenised due to saturation, which has increased competition for scarce resources, such as subsidies (Finkel and Platt, 2020). Festivals must be unique to draw attention and visitors, and to remain sustainable.

The main concepts that will be used in the research are the creative city, creative city policies, festivalisation, and cultural festivals. The research hopes to address a gap in literature by bringing attention to inclusion and exclusion within cultural festivities.

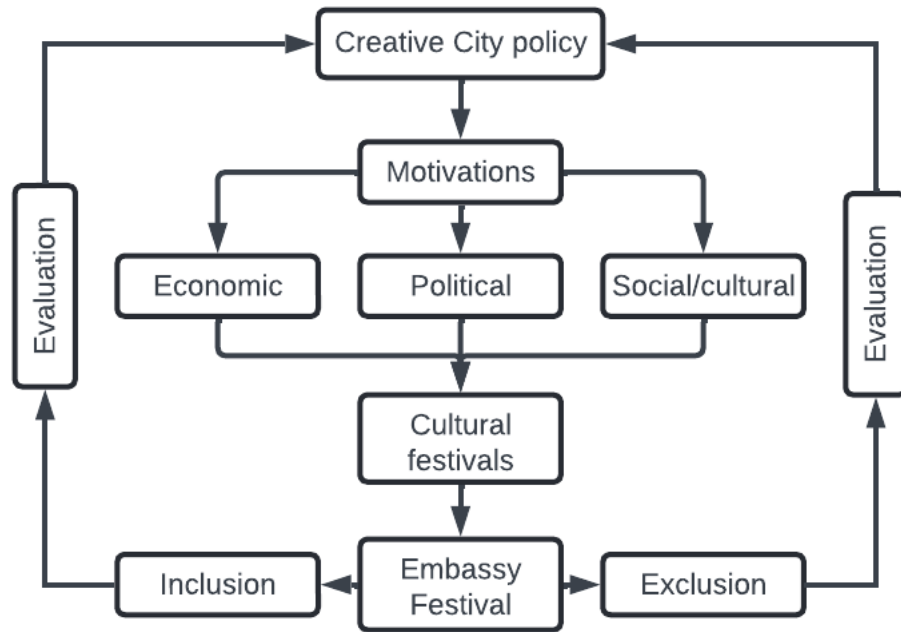


Figure 1: Conceptual Model (Source: author)

Figure 1 shows a conceptual model based on the theoretical framework. This will be used to guide the research. It begins with creative city policies as the basis of the research, following Florida's (2003) creative class. Creative city policies are motivated by economic motivations, described by Smith et al., (2022) and Finkel and Platt (2020). Political motivations are also mentioned by Giorgi et al., (2011). Sociocultural motivations are also present in festivalisation, following Giorgi et al., (2011) and Finkel and Platt (2020). A materialisation of creative city policies are cultural festivals, which may be used to achieve those goals. From cultural festivals, the Embassy Festival presents as the case study. This then leads into the mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion, described by Smith et al., (2022), circling back to creative city policies through evaluation, which is mentioned by both Popescu and Corboş (2012) and Comunian (2011).

Expectations

Due to the qualitative nature of the research, expectations are more suitable to use than hypotheses. The main expectation is that since the Embassy Festival is a cultural festival attracting a diverse crowd, it will align with creative city policies in The Hague. It is also expected that trying to create inclusive festival spaces comes with many challenges, largely economic.

Methodology

The research method will be qualitative. This is because to answer the research question, a depth of understanding is needed that cannot be reached with quantitative research. This methodology section will discuss primary and secondary data strategies, after which it will touch upon participant recruitment, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

Primary data

According to Punch (2014), interviews are the most prominent way to access people's perceptions, meanings, and understandings of reality. Interviews will be unstructured to a large extent to allow for open-ended, in-depth answers (Punch, 2014). The unstructured method will allow for the exploration of interpretations and meanings of the event (Ibid.).

Table 1: Interviewee List (Source: author)

Pseudonym	Occupation	Reason
David, Marcell and Caleb	Performers/stand owners	To understand the entertainment side of the festival, and gain insight into the goals and features.
Alex	Embassy Festival organiser	To gain insight into the goals and features of the festival, and the inner workings.

Martin	Municipality	To gain insight into the policy aspect of the research, and how creative city policy in The Hague functions.
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Secondary data

To supplement the interviews, policy analysis will be used. Policy analysis as a method was chosen because the research centers around a specific policy. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis has many advantages, including efficiency, lack of obtrusiveness, and availability. The policy in question, Cultuurvisie Den Haag 2033, is publicly available online.

Participant recruitment

Interviews will be conducted with planners and performers related to the Embassy Festival. Performers can be found on the official website and contacted through their given email addresses, or social media when no email is listed. The municipality and Embassy Festival were likewise contacted through official means of contact, in this case through email. Contacting these entities through official forms of contact ensures the likelihood of receiving a response.

Data collection and analysis

The interviews will be semi-structured, following Punch (2014), to keep the interview relevant to the aim of the research but allow for flexibility and depth of responses. To answer the research question and subquestions, interview questions will be grouped into the following themes.

1. The festival itself – goals, features, actors
2. Impacts of the festival
3. Inclusion/exclusion

The interviews will be transcribed and coded using Atlas.ti, and thematic analysis will be conducted. To supplement this, secondary policy analysis will be conducted. The Cultuurvisie Den Haag 2033 policy document will be analysed, to see where this event fits into the policy. Analysis will be done by firstly skimming, then reading and interpreting the document (Bowen, 2009).

Thematic analysis will also be conducted for the policy to identify recurrent themes and patterns. The findings of both analyses will be compared and combined, and together will be applied to answer the research question as well as the subquestions. Interview guides, the consent form, transcripts, the policy analysis codebook and the coding scheme can be found in the appendix.

Research ethics and data management

Due to the qualitative nature of the research, there are a number of ethical considerations. The event is organised in cooperation with large organisations such as the municipality. This creates an automatic power imbalance between these large organisations compared to individual performers. It is important to consider this throughout the research.

The positionality of the researcher will also be considered. The interviewees will likely not be native English native speakers, being interviewed in English by a foreign researcher. There might be a language barrier which decreases the ability of the interviewees to express themselves. In addition, policy documents are in Dutch. The researcher is able to read this but is not fluent, meaning some context may become lost in translation, so it is important to supplement this with analysis from other scholars. In addition, throughout the research, the researcher should examine their biases and preconceptions, as well as expectations of the outcome.

Concerning data collection, it must be made certain that the research does not harm any group involved. To do this, there must be informed consent on behalf of the interviewees. Information about the research aim, data collection and storage will be given in advance, as well as the option to withdraw at any point. Consent will be given verbally in the case of online interviews or written in the case of in-person interviews. Contact details of the researcher will also be given. Personal data will not be collected where possible, and interviewees will be made anonymous – pseudonyms will be used. Data will be stored during the data collection period on a personal device; however, this will be removed as soon the data collection has ended.

Results

The Hague and the Embassy Festival

The Hague, although not the capital of The Netherlands, is a significant city in national and global terms. It is situated in the west of the country, termed the “City of Peace and Justice”, home to notable international institutions such as the International Court of Justice, Europol, and the Permanent Court of Arbitration, among others (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017). The Hague has around 450 international organisations, providing approximately 40,000 occupations to just under 600,000 residents (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). The city is incredibly diverse with the population comprising of 180 different nationalities - 56% of residents in 2022 had a migrant background (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). Aside from cultural diversity, there is significant diversity in other demographic measures. The Hague has a growing (international) student and young professional population, due to the presence of universities. Diversity in ages means that there need to be cultural activities and events to satisfy all age groups and interests, however, this also has the potential to lead to conflict. There are also income differences in The Hague, which are higher than in any other Dutch city (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). These demographic differences may lead to inequality and tension in the community.

Being such a culturally diverse city, and the presence of many embassies, The Hague presents as the perfect location for the Embassy Festival. The festival has run each year starting in 2013, on the Lange Voorhout - a central, tree-lined avenue in the city centre (Embassy Festival, n.d.). The festival is a one-day event, consisting of several stages exhibiting cultural dances and music, the International Market with decorated stands selling food, drinks, and other items, and the Kids Compound (a daycare area). The festival “showcases that culture connects people and embodies togetherness and amazement”, and is clearly successful in the fact since thousands visit each year (Embassy Festival, n.d.). The unique circumstances of the festival being in the City of Peace and Justice and surrounded by embassies gives it an edge that prevents homogenisation with other festivals, which is vital to its sustainability, as described by Finkel and Platt (2020).

The festival is organized in partnership with the Gemeente Den Haag (The Hague Municipality), and many of the embassies located in the city (Embassy Festival, n.d.). Subsidies come from several sources, most importantly from the municipality and a company named Proost,

who are responsible for the creation of the Embassy Festival. Interestingly, the festival is not subsidized by the Cultural Department of the municipality who deal with most urban festivals, but by the International Department. Aside from these actors, a number of freelancers work on the festival each year, looking at different aspects such as legalities, regulation, sustainability and safety.

Features and goals

The features and goals of the festival are important in the context of this research, because they allow for an understanding of what the festival stands for, how it aims to achieve this, and evaluating the end product. The goals of the festival are clear. As described by Alex, a key member of the Embassy Festival's organisation,

“The goals of the festival are to bring together the international community that is in The Hague, both expats, but also the diplomatic scene that's here in The Hague. (...) there's a lot that happens on a political front and we want to push all of that aside and really let culture shine. So that's our main objective with the Embassy Festival, to really create space for all the cultures to be together and really put any political differences aside.” - Alex

According to performers interviewed, the general perceptions of the festival are very positive and achieve the goal of showcasing different cultures and creating an environment in which cultural education and appreciation can take place, following the ideas put forward by Finkel and Platt (2020), that cultural festivals can serve as sites of the diffusion of cultural ideas and goods.

Ideas about what features of the festival work best are shared amongst organizers and performers. The general opinion seems to be that the sociocultural features work best - the accessibility and inclusivity of seeing such varieties of cultures in one place. On a more technical level, this involves each country having a designated stand that they are able to decorate as they wish, and that there are multiple stages which allow for diverse performances. Allowing creative freedom with the stand creates a sense of uniqueness, which according to Finkel and Platt (2020), is key to the sustainability of a festival. A recent feature that was mentioned by the organizer is

the 'activity passport', a fake passport visitors can use to 'visit' countries, complete with activities and questions and space for a stamp. Alex mentioned that this was very popular and will be reintroduced next year, with additional countries wanting to take part.

There are differences between what participants, performers and the city can gain from such a festival. As Caleb, a performer of music, put it,

it's a great way to meet other performers and to see what their experiences are and for people interested in that music you can actually pitch yourself with a lot of people that maybe are interested in Yugoslav music in general of the region but don't know about me or don't know about a different artist." - Caleb

For performers, the festival is a chance to create connections and expand their artistic network, in both commercial and cultural terms, functioning as a springboard for performers and their careers. In addition, as two performers mentioned, it allows them the opportunity to represent and showcase their culture.

When asked what participants may gain, both performers and the Embassy Festival organiser suggested that participants are able to experience other cultures through food, drink, music and more, in a localised way that would otherwise not be possible without travel.

"You can experience a half of the world in one afternoon" – Alex

This also links to Giorgi et al. (2011) in that the festival can be seen as a space and time different from the dimensions of ordinary, daily life.

The Embassy Festival's impact on the image of The Hague may be viewed as both a feature and goal of the festival and city. The festival can serve as a marketing point of the city. As described by Alex,

"To have this happen in the heart of The Hague every single year, it's just like having this extra badge of "look we really care, we really represent, and the expats that come here to feel very welcome"". – Alex

Finkel and Platt's (2020) perspective of cultural festivals as a means of marketing and tourism and sharing a commercialized relationship with the city can be applied here to the impact of the Embassy Festival on The Hague. By showcasing the city as multicultural, the festival contributes to branding the city to both residents and potential visitors/economic migrants. However, the lack of data on the festival's profitability makes it difficult to assess the direct economic impact. Additionally, although the festival makes The Hague seem like an attractive place for expats, it is mostly only visited by those already living in the area and therefore has minimal power to attract new workers.

Social benefits to the city through the Embassy Festival are also present. A significant goal of the festival is to draw together diverse cultures to celebrate differences and educate participants. The idea that cultural events can foster tolerance is also mentioned by Martin,

"I feel the diversity of The Hague makes it one way very polarized, segregated, city but also it can provide solutions for the world's problems, in the way that we have all those people here with all their backgrounds, all their knowledge, all their cultures, they can live together because we do. So, I'm very hopeful that by just being confronted with other cultures every day that people will have more empathy and be better humans." – Martin

The Hague has one of the largest diversities in nationality, age and income in The Netherlands, and this has the potential for segregation and polarisation (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). The festival may therefore serve to mitigate these possible tensions.

As explored in the theoretical framework, festivalisation occurs with economic, sociocultural and political motivations. The goals of the festival, as described by the Embassy Festival organiser interviewed, are sociocultural. As Alex states, political aspects are deliberately disregarded for this purpose.

"And there's a lot that happens on a political front and we want to push all of that aside and really let culture shine. So that's our main objective with the Embassy Festival, to really create space for all the cultures to be together and really put any political differences aside." - Alex

However, because of the nature of the festival, being subsidised by the municipality and embassies, there are clear political linkages present. Like Giorgi et al. (2011) state, cultural festivals have the ability to be used as political devices. In the case of the Embassy Festival, this aspect is present in a positive sense, aimed to unite cultures.

Direct economic motivations for organising the festival do not seem to be present, considering that it is a free event. However, it is possible that there are indirect motivations on the part of the municipality, in that more people may visit The Hague and make use of services and amenities. Performers and stall owners have the opportunity to generate some income, however these come with a set of challenges, analysed in the following section.

Inclusion, exclusion, and the future of the festival

Urban festivals have the ability to create both inclusion and exclusion, directly and indirectly. Smith et al. (2022) state that economic barriers are one of the most significant processes by which exclusion in festivals can occur. Entrance to the Embassy Festival is free, as are the performances. Food, drinks, merchandise, and some activities need to be paid for. This encourages inclusivity as it allows participants to tailor their experience to their personal budget.

“Those are things that they'll remember and they'll think “I had such a good time and I didn't have to pay a penny if I didn't want to and I had such an international experience that I should be doing this every year”.” - Alex

This sentiment is shared by performers of the festival too. Multiple performers agree that the festival being free is a key feature promoting inclusivity. However, there are some political nuances involved. One performer stated that their Embassy could not provide any funding, meaning that funds must be raised by the performance group itself and sponsors - this meant the performer could not perform on the main stage and was not compensated.

“In practice it means that we had to raise funds from our group participating with our own money and asking sponsors in the Bosnian community to fund stuff. It also meant for me that also because that wasn't part of the main stage that I couldn't or did not receive any compensation.” - Caleb

This highlights the interplay between economics and politics of inclusion. The festival being free lowers barriers to participation, however, this does not guarantee sufficient compensation for performers. Embassies with higher funds and higher migrant populations to raise these funds may not face the same issues, and this may create unequal opportunities for those participating.

Keeping the festival free comes with additional challenges. The festival relies heavily on subsidies, however, with inflation and increasing prices, subsidy money does not go as far as it once did.

“The fact that it's free is a big thing because with everything getting more and more expensive there could be a moment when we're not able to do it for free anymore.” - Alex

This means that they may need to rethink budgets, sacrifice profit and see whether or not keeping free entrance is feasible. These financial constraints are not limited to the Embassy Festival. The municipality member explained that the Cultural Department is limited to giving €75 million in subsidies each year and is a significant obstacle seeing as it does not adjust for inflation over time. As a result of this, free festivals struggle to provide free admission while facing the rising costs for festival expenses. They risk losing a large participant base if they decide to start charging entrance fees to cover these losses. According to Martin,

“What we do see lately is free festivals are struggling, it's very hard to maintain a free festival and in a way you can only be diverse and inclusive if you're free (...) that's only possible with subsidies and our subsidies remain more or less the same and the inflation rises, so it's hard for those free festivals.” - Martin

As mentioned by Martin, a way in which the municipality has attempted to tackle economic barriers on the resident level is through the Ooievaarspas. This is a free pass for residents of the greater area of The Hague with low income (up to 150% of the social assistance standard in The Hague) (Ooievaarspas, 2023). It enables low-income residents to partake in cultural activities for a discounted or free price, aiming to remove economic barriers. However, the municipality has found there to be limitations. Firstly, the social stigma of using the pass deters some residents for using it. Secondly, some providers of activities do not provide discounts as they do not find it to

be financially feasible (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). Despite being a positive move towards ensuring inclusion, other factors, such as addressing social perceptions also need to be tackled.

Removing economic barriers is not the only method by which the Embassy Festival increases inclusion. Being accessible for less-abled people is a goal of the festival and is achieved through providing seats and wheelchair accessible paths. Inclusion of different age groups is also aimed for by advertising on different platforms and providing activities of interest for all ages. Despite the festival being attended by many migrant/expat groups, the festival aims to broaden its participant background by promoting to the local community, targeting people “that love culture”, according to Alex.

One of the only drawbacks of the Embassy Festival described by performers is the temporary disruption it may cause to the local residents. This disruption involves noise pollution, litter, and difficulty accessing the Lange Voorhout (the street on which the festival takes place). Following Popescu and Corboş (2012), the resident-tourist balance is a key factor in the organisation of festival, because locals are a significantly impacted group. The active participation of locals and creating inclusive and accessible spaces is important to minimise this (Finkel and Platt, 2020). By marketing towards the local community, the Embassy Festival creates an opportunity for this inclusion. Conversely, the municipality encourages a different approach. As Martin mentioned,

“Every country has a person in The Hague, and the organizations need to be aware of that context and make sure to be attractive to more than just ethnically Dutch people. But they don't have to be there for the entire city - we want as a city, that the entire cultural field is there for everyone...” - Martin

Seemingly, it is important to the municipality to create cultural spaces that are catered to the full diversity of nationalities in The Hague, rather than simply Dutch locals. This is an important finding when considering the diversity related polarisation that is present in The Hague, and what the different organisations see as being a solution to this issue. Looking at the broader scale, the cultural sector should aim to ensure cultural representation for all residents, regardless of nationality. By doing so, inclusion can be reached, and the potential segregation that may occur in The Hague due to its multinational population may be prevented or minimised.

The Embassy Festival and the creative city

The overarching creative city policy of The Hague is Cultuurvisie 2030. This document outlines the current situation, constraints, and goals of the cultural sector. Policy is a significant stressor of the Embassy Festival. As emphasised by the organiser interviewed,

“The city's policy plays a role in everything that happens in the city whether it's accessibility or events or just changing curbstones. (...) And if there's a new parliament and a new people in charge and the policy changes, (...) They might not give us our subsidies or they might not give us our permission to set the festival ground there.” - Alex

Through policy analysis, several interesting findings emerged. The policy puts forward that the city benefits from a strong cultural sector, making “a contribution that should not be underestimated to the identity, image and social and economic appeal of our city.” (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). This is in line with Smith et al., (2022) and Giorgi et al., (2011) in that creative city policy motivations can be economic, political, and sociocultural. The policy separates its goals into four “ambitions”; education and development, attraction, diversity and inclusion, and innovation and creativity (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). Diversity and inclusion, and innovation and creativity are especially relevant to the research.

An interesting point brought up by the policy is that inclusion is not a “trend-sensitive” subject or a goal in itself.” and is positioned as what should be an intrinsic aspect of cultural policy. This differs from the way culture is positioned in the Embassy Festival where the entire concept of the festival revolves around being inclusive (mostly to cultures, but also ages, income groups, and accessibility levels). Methods to reach the goal of inclusivity in the cultural sector of The Hague involve removing all barriers to participation (including the Ooievaarspas), reduce the clustering of cultural institutions in the city centre and increase representation (Gemeente Den Haag, 2023). The policy presents the current situation, where creative and cultural institutions are mainly located in the city centre, as a negative point because it causes social and financial barriers for residents. According to Florida (2003), creative professionals cluster in creative centres, and this is what drives economic growth. However, what remains clear, and is also brought up by Comunian (2011), is that there are differences in definition. Depending on the definition of a

creative centre, either the greater The Hague area can be considered as a creative city, or only the city centre as that is where most creative activity is located.

Comunian (2011) argues that creative city policies aim to attract foreign talent rather than strengthen local skills. Though the policy document mentions the highly international demographic in The Hague, it does not explicitly cater toward either Dutch or internationals. The Embassy Festival also welcomes both, however, the nature of the festival means that a significant portion of participants are international. Rofe and Woosnam (2015) mention that an increase in creativity as a focus on policy promotes exclusivity because it focuses on the creative class. However, this is not seen in either The Hague's policy, or the Embassy Festival, as both make inclusivity (especially on different socioeconomic groups) a priority.

The festival contributes to the creative city identity of The Hague in an indirect way. Looking at the economic motivations for the creative city put forward by Florida (2003), the Embassy Festival has minimal impact on attracting new professionals and businesses to the city. However, it does significantly benefit the existing community by creating a space in which all cultures are welcome and able to showcase themselves, through art, music, dance, and food. Comunian (2011) argues that attracting foreign talent, rather than strengthening local skills through creative city policy may backfire. However, in this case, foreign talent is already present, and the festival can be considered as a show of local value.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Embassy Festival contributes to a creative city identity in The Hague in an indirect way. It allows for the generation of excitement in the community and increases tolerance through learning and experiencing different cultures. It also serves as a springboard for performers, who fall under the creative class, to expand their networks. An important point is the inclusivity of the festival. The current inclusivity promoted by the festival may help in tackling the polarisation occurring due to the demographically diverse population of the city. There is a chance that in the future the festival will no longer be free to enter, which would cause a shift in participant demographic. This may have an impact on the creative city identity of The Hague, as it may limit access for the diverse participant base it now boasts and reduce the festival's role in promoting cultural inclusivity in the city.

A limitation of the study is that no visitors of the festival were interviewed, which means an important stakeholder point of view is missing, especially as Popescu and Corboş (2012) state that each participant has different expectations. However, in order to be able to achieve valid results, a large number of visitors must be interviewed as their experiences may vary greatly. Therefore, further qualitative research should be conducted to further substantiate the conclusions. Policy analysis was important in answering the research question, as creative city identity is intrinsically tied to creative city policies and their goals. However, the interviews were a vital part of understanding the actual context and inner workings of the festival. For further research, it would be beneficial to include visitor interviews to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the festival's impact on The Hague's creative city identity. Additionally, this identity could be further explored through another creative city festival, such as The Betovering, a children's arts festival, to gain a more complete understanding of how festivalisation processes affect The Hague.

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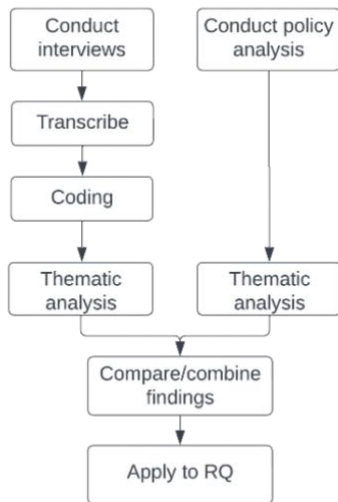
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Appendix

A. Data analysis scheme



B. Coding tree

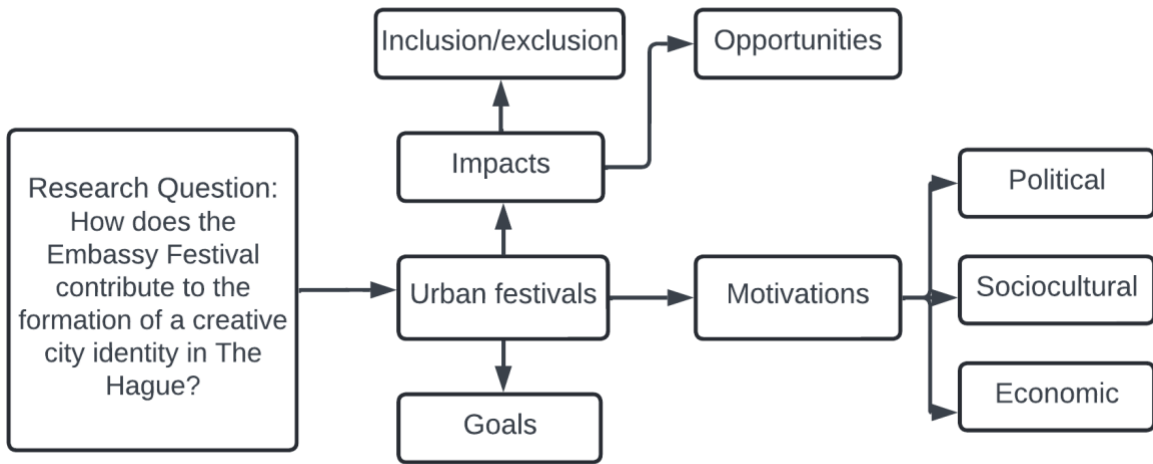


Figure 2 - Coding tree (Source: Author)

C. Policy analysis table

Table 2: Topics for Policy Analysis (Source: author)

Topic	Reasoning
Goals of the policy	Aid in answering subquestion related to creative city policy.
What has been achieved?	Understand the history of the policy.
How this has been achieved?	Understand how to policy functions (e.g. actors) and what activities are undertaken for this functioning.
Motivations	Understand the economic, political and sociocultural motivations for the policy.
Impacts	Answer subquestion.
Urban festivals/events	To see whether the creative city policy includes festival. Concepts from literature: festivilisation, reasons for festivilisation, urban play
Inclusion and exclusion	Answer subquestion.

D. Codebook of policy analysis

ATLAS.ti Report
 THESIS DOCS
 Codes grouped by Documents
 Report created by Boroka Szekely on 6 Jun 2024

 5 Cultuurvisie translated

Created: 07/05/2024 by Boroka Szekely, **Modified:** 07/05/2024 by Boroka Szekely

Quotations:

- 🗨️ 5:1 p 3, The Hague has a high-quality and versatile cultural offer. Quality and diversity that we are proud o... in Cultuurvisie translated
- 🗨️ 5:2 p 3, we still see barriers for many residents to participate in cultural activities and make use of the a... in Cultuurvisie translated
- 🗨️ 5:3 p 4, The Hague is a significant art and cultural city. A city that has an

extensive and extremely diverse... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:4 p 4, Art and culture make a contribution that should not be underestimated to the identity, image and soc... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:5 p 4, The cultural sector has faced major challenges in recent years and has proven to be particularly res... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:6 p 4, That is why, together with the cultural sector, we are committed to a versatile and high-quality cul... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:7 p 4, Art and culture are of great importance to the city. That meaning starts with their intrinsic value,... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:8 pp 4 – 5, Nevertheless, we are developing our vision on cultural policy in 2033 first and foremost based on wh... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:9 p 5, We involved two external organizations in the development of this Cultural Vision: cultural consulta... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:10 p 7, The Hague has been an important European center, where politicians, diplomats, legal scholars, scien... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:11 p 7, On this rich breeding ground, the cultural sector continued to develop and new institutions emerged... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:12 p 7, young visual artists, musicians, theater makers and other artists and performers create idiosyncrati... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:13 p 8, et, despite the often high level of art and culture on offer, there is also room for - and need for... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:14 p 8, With the new Amare, which opened in 2021, The Hague has a sustainably built cultural center that is... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:15 p 9, We provide the necessary support in this regard with the municipal Pop Notes (2007 and 2017). in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:16 p 10, A broad spectrum of institutions and festivals are also active in The Hague in the field of classica... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:17 p 10, With the availability of good and affordable work space and the incubator policy, the city contribut... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:18 p 10, With the Filmhuis, The Hague has a much-praised and strong organization, with a wide reach and a lea... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:19 p 11, When it comes to language, 'conversation and debate' - especially in the city of Dutch democracy - s... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:20 p 11, The Cultural Anchors are an indispensable part of the infrastructure of The Hague's art and culture... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:21 p 11, As a so-called 'system institution' (see 1.3), CultuurSchakel connects supply and demand: it brings... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:22 p 12, In addition, The Hague has a lively amateur arts field. About forty percent of the residents of The... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:23 p 12, The Hague has three 'system institutions': CultuurSchakel, Stroom Den Haag and Popradar. These insti... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:24 p 13, In The Hague, the connection between different organizations from small, medium to large institution... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:25 p 13, The Hague benefits from a pluriform and diverse cultural sector in which every cultural organization... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:26 p 13, If gaps arise in the supply, the municipality has a facilitating and supporting role in collaboratio... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:27 p 13, It is therefore extra important that the city's cultural policy provides space for innovation, for m... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:28 p 14, Because art expresses who we - with all our differences - are, groups of people can better understand... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:29 p 15, We have consciously included in this circle those meanings of art and culture that can be important... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:30 378.062 × 290.849, 378.062 × 290.849 in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤

5:31 p 16, We have made a distinction between quality criteria and reach criteria, and the degree of influence... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:32 p 16, We define quality in essence as 'what a relevant group of experts experiences as quality'. To assist u... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:33 p 18, In close consultation with residents, organizations and companies, the municipality is working hard... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:34 424.094 × 387.802, 424.094 × 387.802 in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:35 p 19, - Education and Development - Diversity and Inclusion - Innovation and Creativity - Attraction in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:36 p 20, Diversity and Inclusion Innovation and Creativity One of the city's biggest challenges is reducing s... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:37 541.627 × 221.813, 541.627 × 221.813 in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:38 p 22, Where possible, we will make the necessary investments in many cases, but always based on a broad as... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:39 p 23, With regard to the urban task of 'Education and Development', we see a major role for cultural educa... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:40 p 23, By cultural participation we mean actively participating in art and culture in your free time. By th... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:41 pp 24 – 25, At the same time, we also see some challenges. For cultural education and cultural education • Insuf... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:42 pp 25 – 26, By 2033, the infrastructure for cultural education and cultural participation will have been substan... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:43 p 26, In this way we build a solid foundation, lowering physical, financial, cultural and social barriers.... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:44 p 26, All young people and adults in The Hague should have the opportunity to visit cultural activities or... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:45 p 28, In 2033, we will implement an active policy to bring all children and young people in The Hague into... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:46 p 30, The diversity of The Hague's population is great. The most striking thing is of course the diversity... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:47 p 30, In terms of income level, the differences in no other Dutch city are as great as in The Hague¹³. The... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:48 p 30, We strongly advocate a diverse and inclusive cultural sector. But the question is of course: why do... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:49 p 31, A diverse and inclusive sector is therefore not a 'trend-sensitive' subject or a goal in itself. It... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:50 p 31, When we look at diversity and inclusion within the cultural sector, we look at: • Representation: to... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:51 p 32, In recent years, various cultural institutions in The Hague, subsidized by the municipality, have do... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:52 p 33, But we're not there yet: • In the center of the city there is a clustering of functions that are use... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:53 p 33, In 2033, diversity and inclusion will no longer be a separate theme for all (subsidized) institution... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:54 p 34, 5.4.1 Accessibility By 2033, all subsidized cultural institutions will be physically and socially ac... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:55 p 35, 5.4.2 Proximity to art and culture In 2033, the cultural infrastructure, especially in the neighborh... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:56 p 35, 5.4.3 Diversity & Inclusion Code In 2033, the workforce of the cultural sector and that of the munic... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:57 p 37, 6.2 Where do we want to be in 2033? In 2033 there will be space, attention and support for makers wi... in Cultuurvisie translated ⑤ 5:58 p 39, In 2033, the Makers Scheme was further developed and is still

an accessible interdisciplinary scheme... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:59 p 40, The core idea of this Cultural Vision is that The Hague is attractive to everyone. For residents and... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:60 p 40, In addition to our ambition to be an attractive city for all residents and visitors, we aim to attra... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:61 pp 40 – 41, The Hague is the international city of the Netherlands par excellence. The city now has approximatel... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:62 p 41, Suitable offers have also been developed or made more visible for population groups that do not yet... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:63 p 44, To achieve all this, the internal coordination between Culture, Economy, City Branding, Events (offi... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:64 p 44, By paying more attention to the characteristic, idiosyncratic side of the cultural sector - with its... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:65 p 46, If we want the cultural sector to have optimal significance for the city, we must work together with... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:66 p 46, But an equally important condition is that we are optimally able to realize our ambitions. This also... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:67 p 47, Particularly in times of budgetary tightness and sharp cost increases, it is important that awarded... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:68 p 48, In addition, when assessing multi-year subsidy applications and performance data, the (qualitative)... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:69 p 51, This happens once every four years when establishing a new Arts Plan in Cultuurvisie translated 5:70 p 53, The ambitions for 2033 have been stated as specifically as possible, the road to achieving them runs... in Cultuurvisie translated 5:71 p 58, What do residents think in 2023? The cultural offer in The Hague may be rich, with a number of top i... in Cultuurvisie translated

11 Codes:

- Challenges
- Economic
- Goals
- How has this been achieved (policy)
- Impacts
- Inclusion/exclusion
- Opportunities
- Political
- Sociocultural
- Urban events/festivals
- What has been achieved (policy)
- Urban events/festivals

E. Consent form sample

Dear ...

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research.

I am a student at the RUG, in the course Human Geography and Planning, writing my bachelor thesis. The aim of the research is to gain insight into The Hague's cultural policy, specifically looking at the Embassy Festival.

The interview will take a maximum of a half an hour. Participating is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time, without reason and without any repercussions. Your name will not be present in the research, and we will remove any personal data unless absolutely vital and with your consent.

If you consent, the interview will be recorded and transcribed, using software that safeguards your privacy. Your information will be deleted at the end of the research, in July.

If you consent to the above, please sign here:

Signature:

Date:

Contact:

Boróka Székely
 b.székely.1@student.rug.nl

F. Interview guides

Performers

1. The Embassy Festival	Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was your role in the festival? - What were your motivations for participating in the festival? - How does participant recruiting work? <p>What features of the festival work the best (in your opinion)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the future of the festival?
2. Impacts	Questions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can performers gain from the festival? - What can viewers/people attending the festival gain? - What are the positive impacts of the festival? - Are there any negative impacts of the festival?
--	--

3. Inclusion/exclusion	Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What groups are included in the festival? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Why are these groups included? o What do these groups contribute? - Why might diversity of cultures the focus of the festival? - What can a city gain from hosting a festival such as this?

Municipality

1. Cultural policies	Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your role in Gemeente Den Haag? - What is the general purpose of cultural policies? - How are cultural policies implemented in The Hague? - What can you tell me about the ‘Culturele broedplaatsen 2021-2024’ policy?

2. Festivals	Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do/can urban festivals fall under cultural policy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How? - How can urban festivals contribute to The Hague? - Are you familiar with the Embassy Festival? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What are the positive impacts of the festival? o What are the negative impacts of the festival? - Does cultural policy play a role in the realisation of this festival?

3. Inclusion/exclusion	Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can cultural policy ensure the inclusion of groups? - What can The Hague gain from hosting a cultural festival? - What can The Hague gain from hosting a festival free to the public?

Embassy Festival

1. The Embassy Festival	Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your role in the festival? - What are the goals of the Embassy Festival? - How does its organisation work? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Who is involved? - How are the stalls and performances chosen? What features of the festival work the best (in your opinion)? - What is the future of the festival?

2. Impacts	Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the positive impacts of the festival? - What are the negative impacts of the festival? - Does city policy play a role in the realisation of the festival?

3. Inclusion/exclusion	Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are any groups included in the festival? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Why are these groups included? o What do these groups contribute? - Why is diversity of cultures the focus of the festival? - What can a city gain from hosting a festival such as this?

G. Transcripts

Performer 1: David

I: Hello, this is Boroka.

R: Yes Boroka, Eddie, yeah.

I: Thank you for being willing to talk to me...

R: Yeah sure, no problem.

I: So, before we start, is it OK if I record the phone call.

R: Oh yeah sure, one moment, I think I will go to the quiet place.

[shuffling around]

I: So, I will record the interview and I'm going to keep the recording until July and then I will delete it.

R: OK sure OK great.

I: Yes, so my first question is you performed in the embassy festival, right?

R: Yes, that's right.

I: What was your performance?

R: You mean the style?

I: Yes.

R: We performance from Indonesian style, Indonesia dancer.

I: OK, and did you only perform one time or for many years?

R: Oh, I'm with the dance group, I'm doing already three times.

I: OK, and why did you want to perform at the embassy festival?

R: I like it, or I'm interested in that performance because they're so nice with the other cultures and with so many lands or many countries, so we can also introduce each other about the dance of the country, or where are you from. That is very nice to meet each other with other people.

I: And do you have to apply to perform or do they choose you? Or how does that work out?

R: The Indonesian embassy, my country here in Holland, they choose me for performance.

I: And did you enjoy it? Is it a good experience?

R: Yeah, sure. I'm with my dance group and we enjoyed that.

I: And do you think that the festival is a good idea?

R: Yeah sure, this is good idea. Also, we are introducing our culture of Indonesia to make that performance, so everybody looks at many country, many other countries watching.

I: Yes, that's really nice, because I'm from Hungary and Hungary never performs in the embassy festival. We only have the food stands so it's always nice. And what do you think is the future for the festival, do you see it going for a long time?

R: Yeah, I hope the embassy festival is going for the long time and then doing every year, I hope so. This will be nice, and it's good for the public. I think so many publics are interested about the embassy because they're waiting every year for this festival in Den Haag.

I: I have some more questions about the impact. What can performers like you gain from participating in the festival?

R: I'm doing performance for dance, so the participation for dance. And then we introduced about our dance from Indonesia [lists dance names] or something like that.

I: SO, you as a performer are gaining this, but are the people watching gaining something different?

R: You mean the style?

I: Just what is the benefit of like watching these different dances?

R: The public you mean? They are very interested, and they like it, and then they love to see all the styles of all the countries and land where they are from. They are very interested. All the different dance they see, they are very enjoyable to working with them. Also, the festival embassy festival is not only for dance, also like people singing or music something like that, but also different countries.

I: I've been to the embassy festival, and I really liked it, which also that's why I'm writing about it.

R: Yes, and many different food. I love to, I like it try to another food.

I: So, we've talked about the good things, but is there anything negative about the festival?

R: No, the people the public is very positive about that. I see on Facebook and Instagram and the website. People are very positive about the Embassy Festival. Every year I'm looking, what they are writing something for every year. It is very positive.

I: OK. Part, of my research is also about inclusion. What groups are included in the festival?

R: What group do you mean?

I: I mean, for example there is obviously the different cultural groups, but also in the public. I mean is it for children, or adults?

R: Yes, also different of children adult and people want it to be mixed together. Many children like it.

I: It's also free which is amazing.

R: Yeah, also free so all always there is always a lot of people - very full.

I: What do you think is the benefit of having such a diverse group of people in one place?

R: You mean the people...

I: The different ages of the people watching.

R: Yeah, the different ages.

I: And why do you think so many different cultures together are the focus of the festival?

R: I think because in Holland there are so many different cultures, different countries that live here. So I think the public also love to see a different, I mean a lot to see the other culture. For watching the cultures and dance, and music, and language and the food.

I: I think maybe it also increases the tolerance for each other.

R: Yes, here is so tolerant. We are excepting eachother here.

I: Exactly. So my last question is, what do you think a city can gain from hosting a festival like this one?

R: Which city?

I: In this case The Hague, but in my research, I'm also looking if this type of festival can be done in other cities also. So, I want to know the impacts for the city.

R: I think Utrecht is also a very nice city, I think there's many students from other countries, and many people are also living there.

I: And what could Utrecht gain from this? What would be the benefit from Utrecht.

R: Yes, maybe a benefit for Utrecht is that, not an Embassy festival but International Culture. What do you think, maybe like that?

I: I think it's great.

R: Because in The Hague it's the embassy festival, maybe in Utrecht the international festival would be good.

I: Yeah, it would be great. OK well super, that was the end of my questions.

R: Yes, thank you.

I: Yes, thank you so much.

[goodbyes]

Performer 2: Marcell

[issues with hearing/connecting]

I: So hi, I'm Boroka. Thank you so much for responding to my message. This will be quite short, but can I have your consent to record it the phone call.

R: Yeah, no problem at all.

I: OK great I will delete it after the research is over. So, my first question is that I saw online that you have participated in the embassy festival. What was your role?

R: I was a musician, so I was invited by the embassy to perform the Slovenian folk music.

I: By the Slovenian embassy, I assume.

R: By the Slovenian embassy yes.

I: What were your motivations for taking part?

R: Wow. I try to give a short answer.

I: It could be as long as you want.

R: We're really fond of Slovenia. I'm since I was a child I'm fond of the music from Slovenia from a specific musician over there, and my wife arranged that could meet him there, and since then we go to Slovenia once, twice, sometimes even three times a year, and we got to get in contact with some people from the embassy, and every time when something's up and they need Slovenian music in Holland they call us and well we are happy to do that because we love to meet Slovenian people here in Holland.

I: But you're originally from where?

R: Me myself? I am completely Dutch.

I: Ah, okay, interesting.

R: Born and raised.

I: So, you said the embassy recruited you - how does that work? Do you have to make an application, or they just contact you and ask you?

R: So, a long time ago- looking at my wife – [who is also on the phone] I think the first time was through our website that we had at the time for our music group and at the start it was a little bit, well, of course formal, but very quickly it became clear that well they're also just people who try to organize something

and they really are enthusiastic about Dutch people making their music, so, right from the start there was a click and yeah, they know our number so if they have something they call us.

I: Yes, that's really nice. And what features of the festival do you think work the best?

R: Well we've been there two times, last year should have been the third time but I was ill unfortunately, so I hope we get a raincheck next year, but it's, well, you can imagine how many different cultures on a very small place together. So, you just have to walk 100 yards and you have seen, let's say, 20 different cultures from all over the world - from Asia, from Africa, from Europe, and well it's really nice that it's so easy to access. Everybody's very accessible, friendly, it's a really good way of getting to know different cultures.

I: I agree, I've actually been to the festival last year and I really liked it, I think it's such a great idea.

R: It's a combination of food, art, information.

I: And what do you think is the future of the festival? Do you think it will carry on for a long time?

R: Oh, that's hard to say and to be honest I have no idea who is driving this. I'm not sure who takes the initiative every year to organise this, but I think it's a very good thing to prolong but I don't have a glass bowl.

I: No, of course not. Next, what can you as a performer or an entertainer gain from being in this festival?

R: Besides that it's just a pleasure? Contacts - so getting to know other people and we're not commercial so are not looking for performances every day or every week, but still you get to know people and some contacts come from and that's nice. The main thing for me is that we really love Slovenia, and we'd like to help promote Slovenia so that's pretty lovely if we can contribute to that then that's good.

I: Just out of curiosity, how often do you perform?

R: Nowadays very little, I think twice, three times a year but that's because we just moved house and spend a lot of time in rebuilding our house, but it is our hobby, it's not our job.

I: I think that's for most of the performers actually that take part in the festival.

R: I think so too, yes.

I: Do you think there are any negative impacts from the festival?

R: Well, then I really have to look for them and that's a little bit looking for the bad things, but I can imagine that people in the neighborhood say, "hey our street is blocked again" something like that but in general no I see no negative.

I: I will say actually, your name will not be in the research, so don't worry about that.

R: No, no I understand but that's not a reason for being careful because no doubt there will be, for example, police around, but I never saw something that's disturbing. It's all very friendly and nice and so I can't imagine there's anything wrong with it.

I: When I went it was such a nice atmosphere.

R: Yes, really. My wife is sitting beside me, and she is nodding very heavily.

R (wife): People are happy, and they are very nice, and they want to talk with you, and everyone is excited, also about the environment and the performances, and what they see, and well, very positive.

I: Okay, I have a few more questions. What kind of groups are included in the festival, and why are these groups included? I mean obviously there's the different cultures but is there any type of group, like maybe children or adults or any anything like that?

R: Demographic, you mean?

I: Also, yes.

R: I can't say. I think there's a good combination of everything. I think there are three main points I think, and that's food - there are a lot of stands that promote themselves around something to eat or drink, and I said art but mainly it's music and dance. That's I got from it, but not specific on the demographic, no, there are a lot of differences of all kinds of ages and genders walking around.

I: I mean maybe that's a benefit actually, that it's so mixed.

R: Yes, I think that's one of the good things of it, shows that it's really low profile and really to access.

I: I think the entrance is free, right, so that's also very accessible.

R: Yes, and you don't have to stay there a whole day as a visitor, you can walk for 10 minutes or a few hours it doesn't matter, just like you want.

I: Yes. And why do you think that the diversity of cultures is the focus of the festival?

R: Wow, I didn't really think about it. But, The Hague being the embassy city of the Netherlands here with most embassies, I think it's very it's a logical place to start with because you have all the people from the different countries together being able to mobilize some people to promote their country. So, I think it's very convenient, and I think those are big words but nowadays it's exceedingly important that we see other cultures and not see them as far from my home and not on my interest. I think that's a really powerful thing of it, that's sort of something is far from your bed, and people are starving in Africa, "well yeah, ok it's bad, but I have a good meal and a good bed so yeah I don't feel it" but when you really meet

people and they are real people, that's a no brainer, it's not the television, it's real people, and that makes the difference .

I: No, I agree. My final question is what do you think a city can gain from such a festival? I don't know of any other cities that have anything similar only The Hague, so what can The Hague really gain from this?

R: I think it's a really positive - I'm looking for the right word here - advertisement is not the right word, but it's a positive broadcast. Let's say like this: I think the embassies are strongly related, at least in my mind, to bureaucracy, and they are about giving passports and visas and all kinds of that boring stuff. But in this way, they really give a positive contribution and show the positive side of the countries and I think that attracts people. If I see how many people come there, that's not only the Hague coming there. So I think also from a tourism perspective, it may not be much seeing that they also have Madurodam and it's only a few days a year. I think you can never have enough positive publicity.

I: True, I mean I'm really interested in seeing if such a festival can be implemented somewhere else because obviously the embassies are in The Hague, but some kind of International Festival. I think it really boosts the city.

R: Yes, I believe that. As soon as you organize something that draws attention of people, people come and then you have some kind of connection.

I: Exactly. OK, well, those were my questions.

R: Oh, that wasn't so hard.

I: Thank you so much.

[goodbyes]

Performer 3: Caleb

[issues with connection]

I: So, I'm Boroka.

R: Yes, nice to meet you.

I: Nice to meet you too. I'm a student at Groningen. I'm studying Human Geography and Planning. And for my bachelor thesis, I'm writing about the Embassy Festival. So, when I looked on the website, I saw that you took part. So, part of my thesis is interviewing some of the performers, just to get kind of an idea of what the overall idea is of the festival, basically. So, yeah, participating is obviously voluntary. You can withdraw at any point. Your name will not be present in the research. And if possible, if I have your consent, I will record the interview, but I will delete it in July when the research is over.

R: Yeah, no problem. So, record freely, no problem. I'll try to answer as much as I can. So, at least to the best of my knowledge.

I: Thank you so much. So, first of all, what exactly was your role in the festival?

R: My role was a double-sided. So, I was a couple of months ago in the what do you call it, an abort for the platform for citizens from Bosnia in the Netherlands. And I was a performer. So, that meant that I was also in the group that organized the Bosnian participation in the festival.

I: Okay, I see. And what were your motivations for doing so?

R: Well, mostly because there's a lot of normally political talk about region, and especially Bosnia. So, we wanted to put Bosnia in a better daylight and show our cultural heritage and the good points of the country.

I: Okay, and why the Embassy Festival to do this? Or actually, is there anything like any other events or things like this?

R: Well, we do organize events ourselves. We do have the Embassy staff visits on the Festival, and we think it's a good opportunity and the Embassy of Bosnia to go in itself as well to have intercultural interaction, especially in the AIC, which is normally viewed as the intercultural like how do you call it, intercultural or metropolitan these events.

I: Okay, and what kind of performance did you do?

R: I did a performance of traditional Bosnian songs on instrumentals and just a collection of the most traditional folk songs that have been sang there for 250 years.

I: Okay, nice. And so, from as a performer, how did the recruiting work of you?

R: Yeah, how it normally works is for the Festival, the Embassy approaches interested parties because as I mentioned, that board that I was in and that organization has contact with almost every organization known in the Netherlands related to Bosnia. So, they first offered up to them in terms of performance we viewed as members of the board and any project group, they look at what is available here in the country. So, I'm born and raised here for instance and I've been performing for 10 years. So, that's how they try to find it because as you mentioned, everything is voluntarily to participate. So, it's best to look what we have here in the Netherlands.

I: And of the Festival, which features work the best, do you think?

R: Well, I think a great focus and a great staple point for the Festival is the stands that they have. So, each country, depending on what type of how do I say, type of stand or type of place that they purchase, they have a certain amount of space to present their country. So, we had a standard stand like that then we

could build around it. But you also have like huge, more open like almost like circumstance areas. And you have for people that have enough participants in budget, they can actually showcase art as well or do a workshop. So, you can paint it here and fill it out yourself as you would like. And I think that's a really strong point. And the other strong point is that you have approximately three or four areas, I believe, in which people perform and that's really nice. So, you can view folk or dances then you view my singing of traditional songs that you have been performing and you have like this main stage event. So, even though it has a clear objective, it knows it's a festival. So, that also attracts that combined a lot of people in The Hague as well.

I: Okay, I'm from Hungary and we always have one of the smallest stands. So, I've been to the Embassy Festival and my favorite part was always watching the performances.

R: Yeah, we heard that a lot too and of course, for me as a singer and as a musician, that's what attracted me most of course.

I: Yeah, makes sense. What do you see the future of the festival being? Actually, first of all, how many years did you participate?

R: I participated myself for one year and for two years in total, I was part of the project group.

I: Okay, so then you have some experience, so yeah, what do you see the future of the festival being?

R: I think it's a bright future. I think they keep getting momentum and a lot of people that normally, even though necessarily know about the festival, actually stop by or see some of the stands from one of the corners and walk through it. So, if they keep organizing it at the same place, I think it will just get better and better and who knows maybe more room will be needed.

I: Yeah, yeah. One of the critiques that I've heard of the festival is that it creates a lot of disruption in the area, especially for the people that are living close by. Do you think this is like, it can something be done against this or is this just kind of like a, something that must happen, like for the greater good if you see what I mean.

R: So, if I heard correctly, one of the complaints is that it's too loud or too...

I: Yeah, just too disruptive for I mean, it's only a few days, but...

R: Yeah. No, I understand where it's coming from, but I think it can't be avoided. Not the complaints itself, but also the festival happening because there are a lot of different festivals and manifestations. As you know, we have one just a couple of days ago, on the King's Day. They're also in the same type of trends. And as you mentioned yourself, it's announced way ahead. It's known, it's allocated space, law enforcement is informed, so everything and that's also due to the organization itself goes in the best ways possible.

I: Yeah, I agree. Do you think that there are any other negative impacts?

R: Hmm... Negative impacts from festivals?

I: Yeah.

R: No, I think it's proven in practice as well that there's no like chance for should I say, like for any anonymities or any arguments or anything. I think it brings people just together and yeah.

I: Okay, so then what are the positive impacts apart from bringing people together? What are the positive impacts in your view?

R: I think a lot of people have a lot of access to information online nowadays, but actually speaking and having experiences from the people themselves is a whole different thing. So that's one aspect of it. Did you actually get to speak to a Hungarian, Bosnian, etc? The other thing is, I think it's like you have almost like a mini vacation for half a day because you get to try out the Hungarian traditions you get to see and listen t, Bosnian traditions, you get to experience some great Croatian wine, etc. So there's a lot of things that normally would go on holiday for so I think yeah, but that's also a great aspect of it.

I: Yeah, I've actually never thought about it that way, it's true. So, as a performer, what can you gain from participating?

R: Well, it's a way to broaden your network. I mean, if you take time, which I unfortunately didn't have because of organizing it, but it's a great way to meet other performers and to see what their experiences are and for people interested in that music you can actually pitch yourself with a lot of people that maybe are interested in Yugoslav music in general of the region but don't know about me or don't know about a different artist.

I: Okay, and what about the people that are attending or viewing the performances? What do they gain?

R: Well, I think they broaden their spectrum a bit and they get to experience some other tastes in music. And it's also perhaps good to know I believe a lot of people have for instance, what I sometimes heard as feedback neighbors that know that their neighbors are Bosnian or Hungarian but they never actually heard anything or had any interest in following it up. And by chance they're there and they're like, okay, so this is what that's about or I listened to that, I know a bit more so I think anyone has in their neighborhood somebody that they know of a certain descent that is also represented at that festival.

I: And so apart from cultural groups which are obviously the focus of the festival, are there any other demographic or societal groups that are specifically included?

R: Included or intruded, you mean?

I: Included, included.

R: Yeah, I don't know, I think if the main focus is on the diverse groups and cultures that do live here because of the international nature of the Hague and the Netherlands by itself other than that I would say perhaps the focus is also on the future generation. There's a lot of focus and still a lot of political term always. And then there's the globalization of the world. Yeah, and that hooks in with what I just said earlier as well with your direct neighbor who could be Hungarian or possible.

I: That's kind of a reoccurring trend that I'm hearing is that it helps to increase this tolerance for each other.

R: Yeah, I guess so. I mean, it won't work wonders or miracles, but by any chance if it even gets one person to think a bit differently or think before they speak then that's great.

I: Yeah, I completely agree. Looking at inclusion I know that the festival is free. What do you think are the benefits and the drawbacks of this?

R: Well, the benefit is that the entrance speak for certain but I think that the festival has been around long enough for them to actually start charging something. Then again, then increases cost for them too because it's a secluded space but it's an open area in principle so it becomes more complicated to uphold that. I do think that is necessary in the future because one of the drawbacks is, for instance, maybe you're familiar too with it but in terms of funding the embassy could not provide any funding. They would gladly do so compared to that in mind but they weren't able to pass it and to lend some of their budget. That's difficult for some embassies to have complicated political systems. In practice it means that we had to raise funds from our group participating with our own money and asking sponsors in the Bosnian community to fund stuff. It also meant for me that also because that wasn't part of the main stage that I couldn't or did not receive any compensation.

I: But is this specifically for Bosnian embassy or for most of them?

R: It depends. I'm not sure. I can't speak for others but I believe that others do have either their own funding because for instance a Turkish organization there has a lot of funds more funds because there's more of a how do you call it demographic here from which they can draw. But in our instance the Bosnian embassy couldn't fund anything. So that becomes complicated. Nonetheless though I have to add a lot of people can still sell the food and use that as additional funds. So I think it's easier if you want more cultures also more diversity represented to have an entrance fee at the lowest point for more participation from other groups and wider programs and in any case you try to cover it by the sale of baklava and boreks and all kinds of stuff.

R: So I guess from that we can in a way assume that the motivations for the festival are not as much economic as as they are let's say cultural or social or maybe even political.

I: No, I believe it has to be interesting culturally that you want to represent your country for something like that at least at the stage that the embassy festivals are at right now.

R: Yeah, okay. We're already at the end. What do you think a city such as the Hague can gain from hosting a festival like this? I mean we've talked about the personal reasons and also the societal reasons but on a city scale what are the benefits?

I: Well I think the first benefit is already for people there are a lot of international students in the Hague so just to be able to see a glimpse of your country there and actually perhaps connect to meet people that you haven't yet that's a chance too. It's great. So that's one of the advantages other than that I think it's very easy for them also to have organized this and gain those permissions because The Hague is in between. So to have something that fits completely with their flyers and their slogans, slogans, that's great.

I: Yeah I mean I think it's such a great idea for a festival. I think it's very inclusive as well. I think it's great.

R: Yeah, I totally agree.

I: Okay well those were all my questions so thank you so much for being willing to answer them. Do you have anything else to add?

R: No I just wish you luck with the transcripts and if you're perhaps confused with them you can just leave them in the transcript where you have any questions.

I: Thank you so much

[final goodbyes]

Member of Cultural Department of Gemeente Den Haag: Martin

I: So, what I'm trying to research is the embassy festival in The Hague, but the background of that is the cultural policies, I would really like to know more about cultural policies and particularly for they, and this festival are benefiting the city of the Hague. So, to start, what is your role here in the Gemeente, what do you do on a day-today?

R: My role now is team coordinator of the cultural policy team, and before I was a policy advisor.

I: And what kind of activities do you do here?

R: Well, it's very varied, most of the time I'm busy with talking to cultural institutions and helping them out if they have a question, or obviously we give out a lot of subsidies, we develop new cultural locations. One of them is Amare, you're looking at it now, it's a very large cultural building but also very small locations and we do a lot of projects, subsidies festivals. But the funny thing is we don't give any subsidy to the Embassy Festival from our department it's really the Cultural Department. I think the Embassy Festival is subsidized from the International Department. But of course, I can tell you something about our cultural policies and the how the Embassy Festival relates and why we don't subsidize it from the

cultural side of things. Our cultural policy is very... the main focus is artistic output, so every four years we have this big competition from all the cultural organizations in the city, and they have to basically battle for the little subsidy there is. We give away like over €75 million per year, but if you look at the demand from all the organizations it's like way higher, like €130 million. So, every four years we decide what we give subsidies, and we don't.

I: And, by artistic output, what do you mean?

R: So, well, not the output per se, but the artistic value of the output. Well, basically there are 4 criteria that they're scored on, by an independent Advisory Commission, and artistic value is one of them. The diversity and inclusion is one of them, the way they run their business, like entrepreneurship is one of the criteria, and the last one is how important they are for the city.

I: OK, yes. So, the purpose of the cultural policies is this?

R: Yes, to engage your entire city that there is something for everyone, and we want all the organizations to be aware that the city they work and operate in is very diverse. The Hague actually more diverse than Amsterdam. There's like 188 nationalities here. I didn't even know there were so many countries. Every country has a person in The Hague, and the organizations need to be aware of that context and make sure to be attractive to more than just ethnically Dutch people. But they don't have to be there for the entire city - we want as a city, that the entire cultural field is there for everyone, and you can be niche, that's fine, but we want to make sure that everybody feels included.

I: OK, and how are these policies implemented here?

R: Well, basically, the most is through the subsidy policy, because that's the point when you can really... it's hard to translate everything because we made the policies in Dutch so...

I: You can say it in Dutch, no problem.

R: Yes, every four years we decide on the criteria that organizations have to make their applications for and that's the point where you can make the decision on what emphasis you put on things. We have the document called Cultuurvisie and the Beleidskader, those documents have all the criteria in them if you want to look.

I: OK, and the specific policy I was looking at the Culturele Broedplaatsen. You can you tell me a bit about that?

R: Yes, so 'broedplaatsen' translates to incubator, I guess, and that's a policy that there are like 40 or 50 of those places in town and they were like collectives of artists and makers and it's their experimentation space, they can do whatever they want there in the cultural sense.

I: Ah, OK, interesting. So, my next question is, do urban festivals, so for example Embassy Festival, but also any other festival, fall under cultural policies?

R: A lot of festivals do but the Embassy Festival is one of the few that doesn't and I think that is because it's, well, it literally is an Embassy festival right, so it was subsidized through our International Department that has the relationships with all the embassies and consulates. But a lot of festivals are subsidized in The Hague from cultural policy.

I: OK, so, speaking about festivals in general, not specifically the Embassy Festival, how do they contribute to The Hague, or the atmosphere, or economically, or anything?

R: Yes, for instance last week we had the Rewire Festival. It's not an outdoor festival but it's a festival that takes place all around the city at different venues and it's very good for the economy. All hotels are fully booked, and you see a lively atmosphere in the city. This is a very hipster festival so you recognize the audience very well, with the green hair and stuff like that, it's very good for the economy but it's also very good for the cultural scene, because only in The Hague is a festival like Rewire possible because if you see how experimental and avant-garde it is, and it's sold out and really busy then it makes me really proud that such a niche festival just happens to be here and works.

I: What kind of festival is it actually?

R: It's what they call adventurous music. It's everything that's not mainstream so you can in one hall, you can see like a very literary rapper and then the next scene is very dark techno.

I: Ah, yes, I can imagine it. So, these are the positive impacts of these types of festivals - are there any negative impacts that come from these festivals?

R: Yes, well, not from Rewire because it's all indoors, but you see all the outdoor festivals there's always the discussion of how people in the environment experience it. For instance, there's every year in June, there's The Crave festival which is a techno festival inside the park. It's like really loud beats and every year there are people that complain about the noise and it's always...you need to make a decision as a city, you can't not have events, you have to have festivals and events in the city of 500,000 people.

I: It's also a very small city, so wherever you put the festival, I think someone will be...

R: Exactly, well it's dense...

I: Exactly.

R: In area it's not that big.

I: So, how exactly do cultural policies help in the realization of festivals like this?

R: Well, first of all we subsidize the infrastructure, so the venues the events take place in, and then of course some events we also subsidize the events themselves. For the Embassy Festival I think it's different because it's outside and it's not subsidized through the cultural policy, but I think the main thing

is we facilitate the places for where festivals can take place, and then every year we also give out projects subsidies to certain festivals. T

I: These can be big festivals but also very small?

R: Yes, very small.

I: Can you give an example of a small one?

R: They all start small and then grow big. But yes, for instance, Sniester festival is a very small festival taking place in Grote Markt and in Paard, it's in that side of the city over there, it's growing every year and getting bigger, but it started out very small and I think the main reason why Embassy Festival by the way is not sponsored by our department is that it's the same every year. It didn't evolve in a certain way, and we always emphasize that if we subsidize it one year then we want to see development next year.

I: I see what you mean, so a growth or...

R: A growth or an artistic development like you start with small artists and you get a bigger artist for instance.

I: I see. And how can cultural policies ensure that all groups are included? I know for example the Embassy Festival is free and it's also for all age groups, but not all festivals are like that, so how can cultural policy kind of help this inclusion.

R: It's very hard because we can only not give subsidy when it's not good, so whenever we give out subsidies, we always take this into consideration, like "How is the entire city included? How diverse is the audience? How different is the organization themselves, are they like a traditional white organization trying to reach out to other groups or are they actually from the communities themselves?" We literally score them with points. So, that's one way we can ensure that, but in the end, it always depends on the quality of the applications, so we can't really force them too, we can only say afterwards if its good or not good.

I: About the application, you don't reach out, but they reach out to you?

R: Exactly, we say what we think is important and then they can decide if they want to apply for a subsidy with us.

I: And specifically, about cultural festivals, so the Embassy Festival is very international, what can The Hague as a city gain from the diversity of cultures.

R: Yes, it's a very good question, I think that in this very polarized world, where The Hague is the city of peace and justice, and all world conflicts are in some way connected to our city like for the international Court of Justice. There was this case from South Africa against Israel for instance because of their actions in Gaza and then their actual case takes place in The Hague and there are protesters in The Hague, and I

feel the diversity of The Hague makes it one way very polarized, segregated, city but also it can provide solution for the world's problems, in the way that we have all those people here with all their backgrounds, all their knowledge, all their cultures, they can live together because we do. So I'm very hopeful that by just being confronted with other cultures every day that people will have more empathy and be better humans.

I: Actually, I was interviewing some people from the Embassy Festival, the performers, there was a Dutch couple and they fell in love with Slovenian music and now they perform Slovenian in music, but they are fully Dutch, they have no connection to Slovenia. I thought it was so interesting.

R: Exactly, you can have just all those weird connections between cultures like an African person can meet like Slovenian person and then make something together.

I: Also, I think when we see these different cultures on TV you feel so far removed but when you actually see someone, for example at the Embassy Festival dressed in the clothes and showing you their food and their dances and it kind of becomes real, if you know what I mean. It's not so far from you. I also know that the festival was free, what are the benefits of hosting a festival that is free? I mean for the people obvious but for the city?

R: Well what we do see lately is it free festivals are struggling, it's very hard to maintain a free festival and in a way you can only be diverse and inclusive if you're free you. As soon as you charge for a ticket then you lose a lot of people. So, in that way it's very good it's if a festival is free but we also have to be realistic and see that security, the artist themselves they charge a lot. You have to clean up afterwards, right, so, that's only possible with subsidies and our subsidies remain more or less the same and the inflation rises, so it's hard for those free festivals.

I: I read online that there's a pass low-income families can get exactly, do you know what it's called?

R: it's the Ooievaarspas, if you are low income family, you can apply for that card and then you get a lot of discounts on everything. For instance, this Rewire festivals usually is like €50 or something, but if you have this card, you can get it for €10.

I: Wow, OK, so big discounts, that's really great.

R: Yes, and also a lot of museums are free and you can go like once a year free to the theater or something.

I: What do you think is the future of cultural festivals here in The Hague?

R: I'm a bit pessimistic because I see a lot of free festivals not working out for instance Parkpop was the biggest festival free festival in Europe I guess, in the Zuiderpark as well and then at some point it just couldn't do it anymore for free, and now they decided not to do it at all and now different people are trying to do it again but then charge like 5 or €10. I see a lot of pressure, so all the free festivals are under the pressure of price inflation and there's not a lot of new things coming up and the things that are, are

quickly becoming very commercial for instance the Crave, I think the ticket is like €70 or 60. So, yes, I think the golden age of free festivals is over and I don't know what the future will bring because also the city is very dense but it's also growing still so they expect another 100,000 people to go live in The Hague in the next 10 years or something. So there's another 100,000 people that have to live somewhere and be amongst those people are obviously also people that want quiet and peace and they don't want festivals in their backyard, so it will take a lot to for us as a city to make sure that everyone feels at home, as the people that want festivals, and the people that want peace and quiet, we have to find middle ground in that, and that's very difficult.

I: I can imagine. Apart from charging entrance to a festival, is there any other way to, I guess, generate, or keep the festival afloat?

R: I think the main thing is government subsidies are the only way, other than charging €5 for a beer or something. Because it's weird to have a free festival but the beers are €5. I think if you really want to have an inclusive festival landscape you need to have some government subsidies but then the budgets are very tight.

I: So the government subsidies work by, there's a certain amount of money and it goes to each division, I guess, or...

R: Within the municipality, you mean?

I: Yes.

R: For instance, culture has a budget of €70 million, but then the Economy Department also gives out subsidies to other events, and they have another couple of million, I'm not sure exactly. And also, the International Department, everybody does something, but I might get you in touch with the actual people who do the subsidies, I don't know who those people are but I know the department so I can check it out.

I: That would be great, thank you. That was it really, it was very helpful so thank you so much. Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

R: What is actually the main question of your research.

I: It needs a little tweaking still but I'm looking at how urban artists and planner, including the municipality, view The Embassy Festival as giving to the city.

R: And you do this in collaboration with the Embassy Festival?

I: Yes, I'm in contact with them. And I am also contacting the performers, but because the background is cultural policies, I needed a good foundation, which today I got.

[final goodbyes]

Embassy Festival Organiser: Alex

I: Hi, how are you?

R: I'm good. Thank you. How are you?

I: Very well.

R: You're working hard or enjoying the sunshine?

I: Working hard right now, but hopefully I'll be out in the sun soon.

R: Good, good, good.

I: Yeah. So I'm Boroka. I sent you the consent form. So if you have any questions about that, I mean, do you have any questions about that?

R: No, no, I'm sorry. I was in the middle of the festival, the Kings Day Festival. So I just read it, everything's okay. And happy to do the interview with you. But yeah, no questions. I'm keen to hear what you would like to know.

I: Okay, so I'm researching the Embassy Festival. I'm looking at inclusion and exclusion, particularly. And like the general context is the creative city concept. I don't know if you've heard about that.

R: No.

I: It's was this concept put forward by Richard Florida, and he basically said that there's this thing called the 'creative class'. And the creative class is people like artists, performers, intellectuals, and they basically converge in a point in a city and that grows the city economically.

R: Okay.

I: It has a lot of critiques, but that's the overarching concept that I'm using for my research. So to start, what's your role in the Embassy Festival?

R: I am the head of marketing and head of growth. So my focus is to make sure that people know about it, that they come to the festival. But also that we grow our reach, we grow our exposure, and we grow the amount of participants we have every year.

I: Okay. And is that a year long thing or just a few months out of the year?

R: No, so I am a freelancer, so I only work there for a few months per year. Currently, the Embassy Festival is all about just one day basically that the festival happens. Last couple of years, we also had the Embassy Tour, which was the day before the festival. So we typically work about four months-ish from

the moment that I get pulled in to the moment the festival happens and we finish everything off, that's roughly four months. But that might change in the coming years. We are looking to make some moves and to make some changes. So it might change.

I: Okay. And how long have you been doing that?

R: 2021, so three years.

I: So right after or right at the start of COVID then?

R: Yeah. So the first edition I did was the edition where we were allowed to do the Embassy Festival, but it had to be closed off. And we had to have lots of seats apart from each other. It was a much smaller event than usual. But that was the first one I had to do.

I: Okay. And what are the goals of the festival?

R: The goals of the festival are to bring together the international community that is in the Hague, both expats, but also the diplomatic scene that's here in The Hague. It's just huge, not just the Hague, the Netherlands. And there's a lot that happens on a political front and we want to push all of that aside and really let culture shine. So that's our main objective with the Embassy Festival, to really create space for all the cultures to be together and really put any political differences aside. A place where people can come and almost like travel the whole world in one day and taste different cultures and meet different people and interact. And that's the main objective of the festival for sure.

R: I've been to it a few times and I loved it. It was great.

I: Nice. It's my favorite project that I work on as well. It brings me a lot of joy for sure.

R: And how does its organization work? So apart from you, who else works on it and how does it kind of get put together?

I: We are partially subsidized by the municipality. So we get some financial support from them. And also the company that has created this is called Proost. Proost is also the company that does the King's Day Festival. So yeah, it's the same company. And they came up with this concept I think about 12 years ago. And it just grew and grew and grew. And we're quite a small team. There's only like four of us in the office. And then we have a lot of freelancers that we work with and a lot of people that help set up the festival on the day itself. But yeah, typically, you know, there's people like me that make sure that people come and that participants sign up. There's people that deal with the production to make sure that everything gets built and set up on time. There's people that deal with the legality of things, the rules and regulations of how to build a festival and safety measures and insurances and things like that. We are after all responsible for all these people that come there. And yeah, I mean, there's how much detail do you want?

R: As much as you are willing to give!

I: Yeah, there's a lot of fine details that play a big role in this, you know, the fact that we work directly with all the different organizations that represent these different cultures, you know, whether it's embassies or missions or different different cultural entities. It also means that you deal with a lot of diverse cultures and a lot of different ways of communicating and a lot of expectations. And so we have people that deal with that as well. It's yeah, there's a lot that happens.

R: I thought initially when I first started researching it that it was connected to the Cultural Department of the municipality. But then I actually found out it's the International Department.

I: What did you find out about that?

R: Basically, I had an interview with someone from the Cultural Department because I wanted to know about the cultural policies of the Hague. And he said that they subsidize a lot of festivals, but the Embassy Festival is actually subsidized by the International Department, not the Cultural.

I: Yeah, so that whole subsidy side of things is not not what I know too much about. That's actually the boss of the this company is the one that deals with all of that. And the subsidies thing is it's very complicated because there's a lot of subsidy money. So it might be that a little bit comes from here and a little bit comes from there and another tiny bit comes from the other thing. But we we generally generate our income from the participating cultures.

R: Yeah, okay. I mean, it's also not my main focus. So that's okay.

I: But where are you from, by the way?

R: I'm from Hungary. But I grew up in The Hague though. And now I'm studying in Groningen.

I: Nice. And you grew up in The Hague. So your parents were diplomats or something?

R: Yeah, they're expats.

I: Okay. Nice.

R: Did they work for NGO here in The Hague or something?

I: My dad, he worked for a company that hires a lot of expats. So I went to an international school and all my friends were.

R: Nice. Where did you go? ISH?

I: No, I went to the BSN.

R: You went BSN?

I: Yeah.

R: I went to ISH.

I: Oh, really?

R: Yeah.

I: You also grew up in The Hague then?

R: Yeah, yeah. Born and raised here. Been here most of my life and then I went to university in the UK. And yeah, I've been back for 12 years now. The Hague's a great place to live.

I: How come you came back?

R: I came back because I started a company here. I started a business. And that's another story from the other time. But I started a business and then COVID basically killed the business.

I: Oh, that's a shame.

R: But now I have a lot less stress, which is quite nice.

I: Yeah.

R: But sorry, go on. Your next question.

I: Okay. So how are the performances chosen? Are they chosen by you or the embassies or how does that work?

R: We have a couple of different ways. We have a programmer who programs the entertainment at the festival basically. And we have them in two categories. So there's the professional bands and performances. And then we have what we call the cultural, the Creative Arena and the cultural space. And these are spots that we open up to any sort of cultures that want to represent what they do. And this could be, you know, an Indian drumming club or it could be Palestinian dabke group in The Hague or it could be Indonesian theater that like tours in Amsterdam or something like that. It could be anything that's a lot more related to culture. So on one side, it's like it's like bands with music and instruments. And on the other side, it's really focused on culture. And basically, we we're always open to collaborating with an embassy or a mission or a council or any of those if they want to submit one of their performances to us. It was basically always at our discretion. It needs to be good. And sometimes it's fun, but it's not good enough. And I mean, you've been to the festival. It's an overflow of colors and entertainment and sounds. And that's really important for us that we curate that in a way that is of a really good quality. That's important.

I: Okay, so you want to make sure that there's a mix of performances, food, art.

R: Yeah, yeah, we really try to find a bit of a balance in it. In recent years, we've gone a bit of a critique that we've become too much of a food festival, which I understand because there is a lot of food. But at the same time, I mean, were you there last year? Did you come to the embassy last year? Did you see the cultural parade with the flags?

I: I don't know, I don't think so. I was only there for a very short amount of time.

R: Okay, yeah, then you probably missed it. But what we did is we had all the participating countries walk around the ground in their cultural outfit with the flag and the board. Yeah, so things like that, you know, we try to we really try to bring things like that where we where we create more opportunities for cultures to be present and be more at the forefront of this festival. It's really about people just interacting with cultures and heritages and traditions that they normally don't know about. And for that reason, it's very important for us to try to find a balance. And that it's not just everyone, you know, grilling food and selling their local version of a hot dog.

I: You know, I mean, to be honest, though, last year the line for the Hungarian food stand was very long. I was so proud of that. I was like, yeah.

R: Yeah, it's good. And that's quite funny because despite people saying it's too much of a food festival, it's still too busy at the food places. So it's like there's always more space for food. But we need to keep that balance in it, right? Like if some countries show up and they just want to sell food, that's not good enough because your culture is not just your food. So we really push to have a bit of a balance in that.

I: And the location of the festival, I mean, it's at least what I went, it was quite full. So would you ever consider expanding to a different location?

R: Yeah, we've had these conversations. There's always moments when it gets very busy. And there are opportunities to go to other spots, but it does take away from the the experience of it being in like a narrow promenade with loads of trees that protect you from the heat a little bit, that create a bit of an atmosphere. There's something to it when it's like that, because if we were to move to a big open field, it's just going to be it takes the soul out of it really. And this is nice because it really forces people to be a little closer to each other and to see so much within such a small space. So moving to another location doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to be better. And we've weighed that decision for many years now, and we're sticking to this location so far.

I: Okay. And what other features do you think work the best of the festival? Features in terms of, could be anything.

R: So well, last year we launched last year, we launched what we called the activity passport. I don't know if you saw that, but we made I don't know if I have one here actually. Yeah, I do. Last year we made this thing. It's called an activity passport, and it's designed like it's a plain passport basically. And what it is is like it's got like a page, you're filling your name and your and then we did basically we asked

people to visit all the countries and collect all the stamps. So all the countries brought their stamp and every country that participated had a page in the passport. So this one's Guatemala and it says like it's got a question says how many how many volcanoes does Guatemala have? And it's got like Guatemala on the map and a space to get your stamp. And then over here a little bit of information about the country. And at the bottom it's got like an activity. So it encouraged people to visit the countries that participated in this and it was eight countries last year. 12345678. Yeah, eight countries last year. And it's yeah, it's it was just a lot of fun because people had more of a more of a mission at the festival as opposed to just walking around and whatever it was like oh cool let's go to this now let's go to that now. And this was really really popular last year. And this year we've already got so many more countries that want to participate so there's going to be more of this getting made. Yeah, and then the other thing that we did was we tried to include a little bit more of you know things that might be interesting for expats in The Hague or whether it's businesses that want to promote themselves a little bit. We want to add a little bit of that but the focus still needs to be culture. And we might partner up with some with some other like expat organizations or things like that. The idea is really that culture spreads and that people that are here as expats also feel very welcoming at home and get to meet people here. Places like Amsterdam it's a great city to be as an expat because you can settle in very quickly. But it's also a place where you could feel very isolated as an expat where it's it's it's always easy to make new friends and meet people and that's that's one of the things that we really try to push for as well that comes in a place to connect.

I: So who would you say the festival is targeted to mostly would it be expats?

R: No, it's just people that love culture. Yeah people that love culture that's because we don't exclude the local Dutch people you know we promote to them just as much as we do to the expat community. People that love culture, people that love to travel, people that are adventurous and want to try different things, you know. Like if you go to an Asian stand you could try something that you probably won't be able to get at at a restaurant, you know. There's not very many African restaurants and when you come to the Embassy Festival not only can you go try African food that you can't buy in a restaurant but you could probably get like a jar of whatever sauce they've got. Or you could probably buy some really cool like art pieces for your house, you know, so we really try to promote it to the people that just love culture.

I: Where do you see the festival heading in the future?

R: I'd love it if we did multiple days in the year so that we had maybe like a winter edition, that would be a lot of fun. I would love it if we had some sort of community that came together outside of the the normal Embassy Festival days, like I think things like a like a language club would be really nice, you know, something that we could put together where it's like, I don't know, anyone who's Spanish that wants to learn improve their English and anyone who's English that wants to improve their Spanish. Doing a get-together and meet people, something like that I think could be nice. There are ways where we can promote culture beyond that one day at the festival and you know, in the current landscape with all the drama that's going on in the world, with all the wars, I would love it if we could play a bigger role in that, where countries could really just put aside their differences and that we can bring people together and just unite and just really celebrate humanity and celebrate the tapestry of our world. It's so broad and it's so diverse and it's often a few idiots in the leadership of countries that are creating a lot of problems

when really people just want to be together and have a good time so I would really like it if we could create some sort of thing out of that where we can bring people together.

I: I'd say The Hague is the perfect place for that being the city of peace and everything.

R: In theory that's good but I mean if you look at the the Israeli embassy right now like it's completely blocked off, and theres security everywhere, and there's every few days there's demonstrations happening, and a lot of police. Nothing serious has happened but there's still violence and and it's a shame, yeah it's a shame, and it's sad to see so it would be great if we could play some sort of role in that and just to bring people together.

I: Okay, so my next set of questions is about the impacts, more specifically. So you already told me quite a few positive impacts, but are there any other positive impacts you'd like to mention?

R: I love the impact that the festival has on children because, like, my little niece comes to this festival every year since she was born and she sees things that she'll never see unless she travels abroad. You and I probably know as international school kids how amazing it is when you've got such a diverse group of friends around you, so I really love that about the Embassy festival, that kids really... like you see them walking around and their eyes are just like open, you know. All the cultures, when you see someone like a Japanese samurai walking next to like a Zulu warrior at the festival ,and it's so cool so I really love that impact. I love how all the international representatives come together here and they're not here with a diplomatic agenda, they're not here with trying to like solve some problem, or get a deal, they're here to like really promote their culture and that's so amazing to see. Last year Cameroon had a new ambassador and she was just over the moon, she wanted to do everything ,and she wanted to be everywhere She was talking to people and she was completely in her element so I think that's a really nice impact. I love how the mayor of The Hague shows up every year because this is like this one opportunity for him to like shake hands with all these diplomats who are otherwise really really busy. And yeah, it's just the crowd that comes to this is such a nice audience, there's such lovely people, and they're so supportive and they're so kind and like we don't really have problems at the festival which is really nice. And I think for The Hague this is a really good product to have in their brand, you know that we bring these people together, and that these cultures could be at war but they're still at the same festival ground. I think that's a really really nice impact as well because something like this doesn't happen in Amsterdam, it doesn't happen in Rotterdam either, you know, so it's really nice that this goes down really well over here.

I: Yeah I mean you've kind of already answered but are there any negative impacts at all?

R: Very little, I mean you know our negative impact was sustainability for us last year but this year we were forced to, sorry, 2022-2023 we had to work with the recycled materials and statiegeld on bottles and things like that. It's a complicated issue but it's good for the environment so that's something that we're happy about. And I think you know, the world is getting more and more expensive, so everything gets more expensive, which is a shame but that's just something we have to roll with. The festival is free, the entrance is free, so I mean that makes it very inclusive, I would say to the public.

I: Are there any other ways that the festival strives to make it inclusive?

R: We try to make sure that there's accessibility for less-able people, so we want to make sure that if you're coming by wheelchair or if you're on crutches or if you're old, right, like if you still want to come to this, we want to make sure that people can get access, can get help, can find a seat. I think that's really important. The fact that it's free is a big thing because with everything getting more and more expensive there could be a moment when we're not able to do it for free anymore. So that's something that we really push for that it stays free. We try to make sure that all the information is available to everyone so that's not just exclusive to people that are on Instagram or whatever, but that whether you're 60 years old or whether you're 10 years old and you want to come to the festival that you can find the information. We try to make sure that everyone just feels welcome, for sure.

I: Okay, so the demographic is all ages, all genders, all cultures?

R: Yeah, for sure yeah.

I: And what's the benefit of having such a diverse demographic attending the festival?

R: I mean diversity is what makes us strong, you know. It's what makes this festival so beautiful right. If all of the European cultures were the same, and all the African ones were the same, and all the Asian ones were the same, we wouldn't have much to look at you know, so I think this diversity is a really exciting experience and you see it, like, people come to the festival dressed in their traditional outfits, even though they're not part of the festival, they're like proudly wear and show their colors and that's the beauty of this diversity for sure. That's the strength of this festival.

I: And what can people who attend benefit from attending?

R: You become richer in experience, you become richer in understanding, and in tolerance for each other. And you know how they say travelling expands the mind, this is like travelling and you don't need to go very far around. You can experience a half of the world in one afternoon and like I said that could be done through food and drinks but it could also be done through, you know, Ukraine had like a straw keychain folding activity. Like it's so small but it's still an experience for something that you did and you're being told the story behind it. Tunisia had an Arabic calligraphy writer so you'd go to the stand and you tell him your name and he'd write your name in calligraphy in Arabic. You don't get that at any other festival. That's the real beauty of it.

I: My favorite one especially when I was younger, it was getting the henna, the henna done.

R: Oh yeah the henna is very popular. Yeah the henna is very very popular. But also I mean the changes that we've made to the performances - we've removed the stage because we realized that people want to get close to the performance. So we've just created space in the festival ground, where on the ground that becomes the stage so we just ask people to move out the way. And then like a dance group from Uzbekistan or wherever they come in and they just blow people away. Or the dance crew from Zimbabwe comes in and they ask all the people to get involved and dance. Like those are things that people will

leave and tell their friends. Those are things that they'll remember and they'll think "I had such a good time and I didn't have to pay a penny if I didn't want to and I had such an international experience that I should be doing this every year". And I think for you as well it's probably become a bit of a tradition to come to this, for me even before I worked at this festival I used to come to this festival and now for my little niece and my other friends who have children, it's just a great day out.

I: it's really interesting to hear actually because when you go to the festival it's so cohesive so you wouldn't think that there's so many little things that go into it for example removing the stage. That's really interesting.

R: You would be blown away if you knew all the little details that we pay attention to and all the things that we remember from last year that were like "okay we've got to improve on, that this wasn't safe, that seemed crowded over here, that we needed more bin bags on that side, okay that side of the curb is risky, so we've got to move everything". Just the details that go into it it's pretty crazy.

I: It pays off.

R: It pays off for sure.

I: So apart from, so we talked about the people, but what can a city gain from such a festival?

R: I mean for a city that is known as the international city of peace and justice, as one of the capitals for diplomacy, as one of the most important cities in the history of diplomacy. To have this happen in the heart of The Hague every single year, it's just like having this extra badge of like "look we really care, we really represent, and the expats that come here to feel very welcome". Do you know that the hotel on Langevoorschouw?

I: Yeah, I do.

R: Yeah, that hotel used to belong to some rich man, a very long time ago, and this rich man used to have loads of famous people come over. And before it became a really big hotel it was just a place for the elite to stay right, so if you ever go into that hotel they have a huge frame hung up in one of the hallways and it's got thank you notes from all these incredible people from back in the day like the Tsar of Russia, Winston Churchill, like all these incredible incredible people from history have stayed in this building. And the very first conversation that happened to decide to set up the United Nations happened in that building. And the fact that we celebrate all of our cultures outside of that building on that ground it's just - I mean how much of a cool story do you need? The city of The Hague should be proud of this.

I: Okay, so we're at the end, but my last question is does city policy play a role in the festival?

R: Yeah massively. The city's policy plays a role in everything that happens in the city whether it's accessibility or events or just changing curbstones. I mean The Hague is constantly under construction. They're always making changes. And if there's a new parliament and a new people in charge and the policy changes, it means that somebody might come in and go "you know what I don't think this is that

important". They might not give us our subsidies or they might not give us our permissions to set the festival ground there. Right like anything can happen. It's a really really big player in everything that happens and it's important to keep them as our friends and it's important that they remain proud of what we do.

I: Yeah, okay, great. Well that was everything I wanted to ask so thank you so much.

R: What are you studying?

I: I'm studying Human Geography and Planning.

R: Human Geography and Planning. Yeah, okay, and what kind of what direction does that take you in?

I: Well funnily enough I'm doing my thesis about this, so this is more on the cultural side but for my masters I'm going into like the computer side of geography so like mapping and GPS and all that stuff.

R: Okay, cool.

I: But yeah you can go a lot of different ways with it, a lot of my friends are going into urban planning.

R: Okay, yeah, exciting. Can I have a read of your...when it's all done

I: Absolutely.

R: Nice, what is your deadline.

I: It's in June.

R: Okay, nice, good luck.

I: Thank you so much.

R: Feel free to reach out if you have any other questions.

I: Okay thank you, have a nice day, take care, bye-bye.