

## CHAPTER 6

# How Music Festival Organisers in Rotterdam Deal with Diversity

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### Introduction

Festival spaces are often seen as arenas where diverse groups of people come together in celebration. They can be defined as regularly occurring, social occasions where ‘all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a worldview’ meet (Cudny 2016, 16). Festivals are spaces of social bridging (inclusion) as well as bonding (exclusion) (Mair and Duffy 2017). On the one hand, music festivals have the potential to connect people and foster tolerance. Previous research, for example, shows ‘acts of heightened sociability and communication’ across social boundaries at music festivals (Chalcraft, Delanty and Sassatelli 2014, 120). Following Durkheim’s notion of collective consciousness, festivals create a sense of community and belonging because of their rhythm and rituals (Mair and Duffy 2017). In the case of music festivals, this refers to the affective, emotional and bodily responses individuals have while listening and dancing to music. However, festivals might not quite be able to create ‘real cohesion’ (Crespi-Valbona and Richards 2007), due to the size of the group gathering and their ephemeral nature. As such, they may be characterised as ‘sites of

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conviviality' at best (Fincher and Iveson 2008). On the other hand, previous research has shown that festival sites can be exclusionary spaces, where social inequalities are aggravated (Misener 2013). For example, quite often festival audiences have a contentious relationship with the local population (Laing and Mair 2015), gender hierarchies might be reinforced (Pielichaty 2015) or ethnically diverse populations may be excluded (Van den Berg 2012). Music, and music festival consumption, is a form of distinction, an indicator of one's social position (Bourdieu 1984). This means that music can act to exclude as well as include people who have a similar cultural taste, influencing one's feeling of belonging (or not) to a festival space.

Either way, festival spaces do not come into existence naturally. They are created, often with a particular vision in mind. As Mair and Duffy (2017) argued, for positive encounters to occur at festivals, they must be planned and managed to allow festival attendees to share the atmosphere of the festival (Arcodia and Whitford 2006). Festival organisers have the power to engage in inclusionary or exclusionary practices in event planning (Walters, Stadler and Jepson 2021). However, the efforts of organisers have been heavily understudied. For example, in their systematic literature review, Wilson, Arshed, Shaw and Pret (2017) found only two articles exploring the role of the festival founder. One exception is a study of festival organisers' perspectives on inclusion by Laing and Mair (2015). While it focuses on the organisers' intentions rather than on how they think about diversity, it does highlight several ways through which organisers felt they could produce inclusive events. These include: using local suppliers, authorities and volunteers; partnering with community-based organisations; offering internships and volunteer programmes; devising marketing strategies to reach marginalised groups; providing free or discounted tickets; and showcasing local talent and live broadcasts (Laing and Mair 2015). Diverse programming might also play a role in creating inclusive events (Harvie 2003). This chapter therefore aims to describe how music festival organisers in Rotterdam define, and deal with diversity in making their festival. In doing so, we consider many different possible categories of differentiation, for example, gender, sexuality, age, life course, class, religion, ethnicity, migrant trajectories, nationality and ability (Hoekstra and Pinkster 2019). Taking an inductive approach, we are interested in finding out how these categories are employed, by whom and in which contexts. The chapter investigates: 1) discussing diversity: what meanings do festival organisers attach to the concept of diversity, 2) organizing diversity: how they deal with diversity throughout the festival organisation process, and 3) implementing diversity: the difficulties and tensions perceived in making diverse festivals.

## Data and Methods

Our study focuses on music festivals within Rotterdam for three reasons. First, the city of Rotterdam sees itself as a very diverse city, meaning that we

**Table 6.1:** Selection of music festivals.

	Pricing	Genres	Scale	Diversity goals	Maturity (n editions)	Number of interviewees
Blijdorp Festival [BF]	Paid	multiple	medium	no	7	5
Magia Festival [MAG]	paid / free	focused	small	no	3	3
Metropolis Festival [MET]	Free	multiple	medium	no	31	5
Rotterdam Unlimited [RU]	Free	multiple	large	yes	6	3
Confetti Fest [CON]	Paid	focused	small	yes	2	1
Expedition [EXP]	Paid	focused	medium	no	4	1*
Eendracht Festival [EEN]	free	multiple	medium	no	10	1
Modular [MOD]	paid	focused	medium	no	3	1
Vrije Volk [VRIJ]	paid	multiple	medium	yes	6	1*
Kralingse Bos Festival [KRA]	paid	multiple	large	no	5	1*

\* One interviewee working for three festivals.

can no longer talk about distinct majorities and minorities within an urban area (Scholten, Crul and van de Laar 2019). Second, diversity and inclusion have become a policy spearhead for the Rotterdam Arts Council. Its policy programme has included research, symposia, heated debates in the (local) media, and generally more attention to the topic of inclusion in the arts and culture sector (Berkers et al. 2018). Third, Rotterdam often profiles itself as a festival city (Van der Hoeven 2016). Drawing on a dataset including all music festivals that took place in the Netherlands between 2008 and 2018, we used four criteria to select relevant music festivals in Rotterdam (see Cudny 2016, Paleo and Wijnberg 2006): pricing (paid or free entry), genres (multiple or focused), scale (large, medium or small audiences) and maturity (number of editions). Based on our interviews, we also distinguished between festivals with and without explicit diversity goals. Table 6.1 shows the selection of festivals.

Our selection of music festivals includes paid electronic music festivals, such as Blijdorp, Expedition and Modular, but also more broadly oriented free music festivals, including Eendracht and Metropolis. In addition, we have festivals clearly focusing on diversity, such as the paid electronic music festival Confetti Fest (with the slogan: ‘We don’t blend, we mix’) and the large-scale, free festival Rotterdam Unlimited which focuses on the celebration of cultural diversity as

well as Vrije Volk Festival, specifically oriented to the LGBTQI+ community. Moreover, the selection includes a smaller, free music festival focusing on non-Western music with *Magia Festival*, and *Kralingse Bos Festival*, which is paid and includes many music genres. This way, we gained a diverse selection of music festivals within Rotterdam.

In total, 20 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with music festival organisers. The number of interviewees per festival depended on the structure of the festival (division of labour) and availability of the organisers. We spoke to six festival directors, two artistic directors, three programmers, two marketeers, four producers, one artist handler, one collaborations liaison and one sustainability expert. However, roles often overlap, and these roles do not necessarily mean the same for each festival. The study sample gave us a first indication of the gendered, classed and racialised nature of the festival organisation profession. Despite the broad variety of music festivals, including music genres, included in the study, it seems that being a festival organiser mostly means being white, young and/or male, although there were some exceptions. The interviews were set up in such a way that we did not ask organisers about diversity until the very end, unless they brought it up themselves earlier in the interview. Rather, the interviews focused on the characteristics of the festival, work processes before, during and after the festival took place, and considerations regarding programming, production and marketing. This enabled the researchers to see whether diversity is part of festival organisers' rationale when developing their sites. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and afterwards coded, during which saturation was reached, in Atlas-ti in two rounds, including 1) open coding and 2) organising themes. The results will be discussed in three sections: 1) discussing, 2) organising and 3) implementing diversity.

## Discussing Diversity

### *Different Meanings of Diversity*

Our interviewees are highly aware of diversity issues within the music festival sector, often in connection with Rotterdam as a diverse city. Festival organisers are 'trying to be a festival for everyone in the city' [programmer, KRA] wanting to embrace the contemporary city which 'is formed by a wide variety of cultures and from that a new metropolitan culture emerges, a new urban culture' [festival director, RU]. Within this context, organisers are working with five types of diversity: 1) age-generation, 2) race-ethnicity, 3) gender-sexuality, 4) disability and 5) social class.

Two diversities are discussed most by organisers: age-generation and race-ethnicity. The first type is either being talked about in terms of the importance of having a young team or including young talent, as is the case with *Blijdorp Festival*, *Eendracht Festival* and *Rotterdam Unlimited*, but mostly it is

about the composition of audiences. The artistic director of Blijdorp Festival, for example, states: ‘people from 18 to 65 and that’s something you see in ticket sales, the biggest part is of course the average age is 28, but really everyone comes.’ The festival director of Magia also considers his audience to be diverse in terms of age, as do all organisers from Metropolis festival: ‘you have the old people who have been coming to the festival for 20 years ... you have a lot of families, because well we are a pretty kid friendly festival’ [producer, MET]. Other festival organisers mention age/generation diversity among their audiences too, albeit less strongly.

Second, cultural diversity, or race-ethnicity, is widely discussed by festival organisers, particularly by representatives of Rotterdam Unlimited and Confetti Fest which have a specific focus on cultural diversity. As the festival director of Confetti Fest argues: ‘Basically, you can see Confetti Fest as some kind of “umbrella festival”, where we want to characterise ourselves as the most colourful festival of the city, in programme as well as in audiences, at least that is what we strive for.’ Rotterdam Unlimited takes this several steps further and strives for diversity in terms of audiences, programming, partners and their team. Rotterdam Unlimited is one of the few festivals in our sample consciously engaging with diversity within their organising team: ‘the cultural framework from not only Rotterdam, but all big cities and all cities in the Netherlands, is fairly white so we’re consciously choosing a culturally mixed framework. [...] We become an open door, overcoming a threshold for those new makers, and those new, new currents and also new cultures, to give them a spot in the framework of the cultural sector which is fairly white’ [festival director, RU]. He continues to talk about all the workers from varying backgrounds they work with: from an Antillean producer, to a half-Antillean/half-Surinamese social media expert, makers with a Moroccan background and entrepreneurs with a Turkish background. Magia festival mainly focuses on ethnic diversity in terms of the artists programmed, and Eendracht festival tries to be representative of all music scenes present in the city. Some other organisers are attracting a mostly white audience and are not sure if and how to change.

Third, gender-sexuality is mentioned fairly often by festival organisers, mostly in terms of their programming. For instance, the festival director of Magia states: ‘the first edition I only had men on the stage. And then I thought hmmm is that necessary? [...] So then I started looking a bit differently, and more, more noticing what is happening at the female side of the industry. [...] There are a lot of women in that terrain as well, so you have to search a bit better, but that, that’s what I did ...’ The organiser from Confetti Fest, consciously looks for female DJs to programme at his festival ‘because there are fewer options to pick from.’ One organiser from Blijdorp festival also talks about wanting to create a gay-queer-community stage at their festival in coming years.

Lastly, festival organisers discuss social class and disability the least. Metropolis emphasises social class in terms of their location in a working-class

neighbourhood: 'Well let me put it like this, those are the people who are a bit behind compared to the rest of Rotterdam socio-economically. I'm not sure if I'm saying this very harsh now but they are not to be found at other festivals or cultural occasions. And with us they do, so we have a whole group of Feyenoord hooligans. They come to have a look. Yeah, you don't find them uhh. And we know them, the police know them. And they come in with families. And yeah, then they're not the Feyenoord hooligan for a moment but just Dad with his family' [festival director, MET]. Disability is only mentioned by four organisers, two from Blijdorp festival and two from Metropolis festival, focusing mostly on (physical) disability and spatial arrangements that have been, or could be, made for audiences with disabilities.

### *Reasons to Engage with Diversity*

As shown above, organisers are aware of different types of diversity. But why do they engage with diversity? Firstly, addressing diversity has become a necessity within the (Rotterdam) cultural sector over past years as it increasingly became a sectoral norm. Cultural workers often describe how they have to address how they will engage with diversity in their projects, for example, when applying for funding. Even festival organisers who do not have diversity as a spearhead in their festival concept consider its importance: 'For me, it has never really been a goal, no. And at the same time I would conclude for myself that I would be doing something wrong if it wasn't the case' [festival director, EEN]. Some organisers also see themselves, or festivals in general, as front-runners in terms of diversity. For example, the festival director of Confetti Fest states: 'people are looking at festivals and organisers on things-uhh such as inclusivity and diversity and it becomes ... more of a thing'. Another organiser adds: 'it is very important for visitors to come into contact with that [diversity]. [...] I think it can be an eye-opener for many people to be confronted with new ways of thinking and new ways of listening' [collaborations liaison, MET]. Emphasising the role of festivals within society, this organiser is convinced of the value of festival spaces as learning spaces with regards to diversity.

Secondly, festival organisers are concerned with attracting more audience groups for festival growth: 'for us it is important of course for the future that every year you attract young, new visitors, to make sure that you keep those visitors later' [festival director, MET]. Here diversity is also a business decision within the commercial festival sector. As one of the organisers argues: 'it is very good that they [diverse audience groups] are there because yeah, very crudely said, you need them to grow ...' [safety producer, BF].

Third, organisers engage with diversity as it impacts the enjoyment of their audiences. For some organisers, diversity is an integral part of that story, for others it is not. For example, when the festival director of Rotterdam Unlimited talks about his festival, he says: 'they [the audiences] have fun, they mix'. By

talking about this in this order, he shows how he perceives the convergence of both things: enjoyment of the festival is equal to mixing. For those who organise festivals without concrete diversity goals, it might not be inherently about diversity; yet, having fun at a festival is equated with discovering and seeing new things. As an organiser from Blijdorp describes: ‘especially with a bigger festival your supply has to be more diverse, otherwise people won’t think it’s worth their money, and people like to be challenged and to be excited, people want to be surprised. And that’s something you’re only doing when you programme more broadly and you try to attract a broader audience’ [Safety Production, BF]. In a way, festival organisers use diversity as a tool to create an enjoyable festival space.

### Organizing Diversity

Organisers consider four different factors when trying to produce a diverse festival space.

#### *Programming and Audiences*

Programming is key to producing a diverse festival. As aptly put by the festival director of *Magia*: if you want any kind of diversity at your festival ‘you have to change your programme accordingly’. There are multiple festival organisers who take the diversity of their line-up into consideration, mainly the backgrounds of artists in terms of race-ethnicity, gender and age. The organiser from *Confetti Fest*, for example, connects the diversity of artists with audience diversity: ‘I think it would be nice if open-minded people were coming to our festival. People who appreciate the profile of these kind of things and one of the things that fits into that is a better balance between male and female artists and the same goes for the background of DJs’. Other organisers also see the connection between different audience groups and their musical taste. For example, as the festival director of *Eendracht Festival* described: ‘You’re gathering all these scenes, and those scenes are a mirror of the city, so then it is pretty logical that you’re not just attracting white, highly educated men, you know. [...] It would be that at the moment that I saw we’re only attracting white people, then it would be a sign for me of how can that be, you know, how can I have a representative scene representation and only attract one group? That would not be a reason for me to think well let’s advertise on *FunX*, but that just, that would mean that that should be a sign that something in my framework doesn’t fit’. This organiser equates different music scenes with particular audiences. Thus, the audiences should match the programme they are doing and if he does not get a diverse audience, then there must be something wrong with his programme since it is supposed to reflect a city and its diverse scenes and audiences.

### *Partners*

Collaborations, for example, with media or programme partners, are mainly based on required expertise. Even though they are not the most important diversifying strategy, some organisers see collaboration with partners as an important way to foster diversity. One festival director commented: ‘We notice that through the partners we work with we attract a totally different group of people on the stages we have. [...] So we make them and they host them’ [festival director, BF]. This means that by working together with a partner that has an audience you want to have at your festival, you hope to create diversity at your festival. A similar strategy is used by Confetti Fest: ‘I think that’s the number one way for festivals. You’re buying it in. In the same way that Blijdorp Festival has a yardbird stage, they just bought in a bit of black music and that sound and in that way they’re hoping to buy in that audience’. Thus, programming partners are considered to be important for producing diversity. Another example is Metropolis which collaborates with art schools in Rotterdam for poster designs, to give young talent the opportunity to work and learn at their festival.

Festival organisers talk about the media partners they work with in targeting their audiences, or how they develop their social media strategy, but this is not necessarily talked about in terms of diversity. For some, however, this is a thing they do more consciously. The festival director of Magia, for example, considers a media partner he would not work with: ‘I’m not looking for collaborations with FunX for example. No. FunX, FunX, for them it is not interesting, and their audience is not interesting for me. And we both know that’. As a radio station that is mainly focusing on urban music, the director of Magia festival which focuses mainly on ‘forgotten’ non-Western music, is not interested in working with FunX. Rotterdam Unlimited, on the other hand, would see FunX as an interesting media partner for particular programme parts: ‘Of course collaborations are an important tool in that. [...] You understand that for an act such as Erdogan I would put that somewhere else marketing-wise than a Noche de Las Chicas, because Noche de Las Chicas I put on FunX immediately and they partner up with Open. For Aktas Erdogan I would do it through website, I’d do it through ethnomedia’. Here, we can also see that the way organisers partner up with certain media partners derives from the music that is programmed, and this is considered the most important diversifying strategy.

### *Format*

Several organisers organise music festivals that are (partially) for free. For some of them, this is related directly to their accessibility and audience diversity. The programmer of Metropolis, for example, states: ‘Yeah I would say, poor, rich, but for us that’s not the case because we’re free for everyone so poor and rich are welcome’. One of Metropolis’ organisers compares it to another paid festival she works for and argues: ‘it really is a very different type of people

coming there. That's often white people with money' [collaborations liaison, MET]. Organisers from Rotterdam Unlimited also consider their audiences when thinking about their festival format: 'Well actually you could say people with a migration-background, as first, but as a sub-target-group people from underprivileged neighbourhoods. And that is why we, indeed why it is a free event' [artistic director, RU]. Considering their audiences and the festival character they would like to create, they stipulate the importance of a free festival format.

Ticket prices also play a role in paid festivals. Even though one organiser of Blijdorp Festival argues that for their festival 'everyone has a nice income and that is, that is something you can see, otherwise of course it's more difficult to pay for a festival day. Because, let's just be honest, I mean fifty euros for eleven hours' [marketeer, BF]. On the other hand, the artistic director of the same festival argues that they purposefully keep their ticket prices lower: 'If you're a bit cheaper you're attracting a younger audience and uhh ... you're making a different impression on people you know, you want, that fits with the brand Blijdorp too that open-minded and free and, you know down-to-earth and then you don't want-uhh ... to have too expensive tickets because that doesn't fit the brand'. Here, he also directly links ticket prices to festival accessibility.

### *Location Within the City*

For most festivals, location does not seem to be a conscious decision, but it is restricted by the municipality. Some organisers think that location matters for diversity. Metropolis has a particularly important connection to their location, as it has taken place within the same park in the South of Rotterdam for over 30 years: 'There is a strong value to Metropolis because it is Op Zuid. And that we just have a very diverse audience composition' [marketeer, MET]. The festival director adds: 'the fun thing about us is that just because we are Op Zuid and because we are free, that we serve a whole different audience. Our audience composition is way different than a festival in Kralingse Bos or ... Roel Langerakpark. So yeah, that uh, and well that's also cool that you really, look people that love music will come anyway, but next to that you have a very different audience, say the families and the people from Zuid who also join our festival. And who embrace it as being their festival'. A few organisers from other festivals also see the connection between location and attendees, such as the programmer of Expedition: 'But also from the neighbourhood, so if it is in Vroezenpark, then you see that a lot of people from Blijdorp and Noord join'. Moreover, people who regularly visit the place where your festival is held, might accidentally attend, especially when the festival is freely accessible: 'A mix of the usual Witte de With visitor walking around and gives it a casual look, but also the visitors from the locations themselves where we are at. So just the regulars of Witte de With and TENT who saw it on the calendar and think oh that looks fun let's explore it a little bit' [artist handler, MAG]. In this way,

location might not always be a choice that organisers get to make themselves, but it does seem to affect audience diversity.

### **Implementing Diversity: Ideals, Tools, Risks**

Festival organisers run into three main tensions when trying to implement diversity goals, even when they are not explicitly formulated as such.

#### *Diversity as an Ideal*

Organisers tend to target a specific type of diversity with their festivals. Even the festivals with diversity goals do not provide some perfect, utopian situation where everything and anything is diverse. By focusing on one type of diversity, a particular group or community (Daspher and Finkel 2020), organisers try to create a singular identity or concept that fits their festival. As one organiser puts it: ‘you can want to be for everything and everyone all the time, but that’s just not always feasible and some [groups of] people don’t want that [to join a festival] either’ [collaborations liaison, MET]. For instance, some festivals, such as *Magia*, are set up because they want to celebrate a particular lifestyle or music genre. Changing the content or programme of the festival to become more diverse, is not something the organisers of *Magia* want to do, because that would change the identity and concept of their entire festival. This also means that there is no ‘perfectly’ diverse festival. As the safety producer of *Blijdorp* says, for example, ‘In the ideal world you would want to organise a festival where literally everyone can come together. And that an EO youth day [a music event for Christian youth] and a *Blijdorp* festival wouldn’t have to take place separately, but that they can happen on one terrain. And that’s I think, that’s sort of the ultimate form of diversity in my eyes that you, that you can combine that within one party. If that’s ever going to happen, I think chances are small. We don’t live in a utopia but that’s a sort of the ideal world how I see diversity that you just, that you just, get to bring everyone in a space literally and figuratively’. Comparing an electronic music festival such as *Blijdorp* to a big music event for Christian youth, this organiser shows an awareness of the different types of audiences that these festivals attract and the fundamental differences between them that according to him could only be overcome in a utopian version of the world. In other words: festivals tend to focus on a specific type of diversity, serving a specific audience, often for commercial reasons as we will show below.

#### *Diversity as a Commercial Tool*

Organisers of festivals with explicit diversity goals argue that it is rather challenging to market their festival in comparison to festivals organised around a

singular identity. ‘Well, the wide reach of the event Rotterdam Unlimited of course makes it more complex marketing-wise. Because it has so many areas’ [artistic director, RU]. Still, doing diversity is often criticised as being a good marketing trick or ‘easy marketing’ as ‘it also sells very well at the moment’ [festival director, CON]. This is partially about doing diversity for the wrong (read: commercial) reasons: ‘I think that the value is about that you keep moving as a festival and go along with the current affairs of certain things and that, also understanding the urgency. So not only going along with it because it is a trend in the cultural sector or because subsidies want that from you and because you wrote a plan so now you have to do it. But just, feeling that it must. Feeling. [...] So that it is not a gimmick or a hype or trending but just really, get the urgency of it’ [collaborations liaison, MET]. This organiser, and some others, share their frustration with the trendiness that surrounds the topic of diversity. From their point of view, festivals should not engage with the topic because they have to, but because they want to.

Additionally, doing diversity is also criticised by festival organisers when it is done in the wrong way. For instance, when talking about gender and sexual orientation, the festival director of *Magia* shares his annoyance: ‘In the festival I’m doing, it’s [diversity] not playing a role in my take on it. [It is] not that I’m working with that in my communication, it is not that I’m thinking about that in my programme that I purposefully book a transgender artist because I’m, no ... I think it’s a bit cheap, because a lot of festivals know that it’s trendy and they use that’. Other organisers also criticise the ‘quota-politics’ they say some cultural organisations tend to wield: ‘Cultural organisations have to be diverse. So everyone threw themselves at the token black person. I’m saying that kind of disrespectfully but, it seems like it really works that way. Like oh god we need one, could you, you have that black guy couldn’t we just? That’s the way it works most of the time’ [artistic director, RU].

### *Diversity as a Risk*

A few festival organisers note that bringing together diverse audience groups also creates safety risks. According to the festival director of Rotterdam Unlimited ‘a culturally diverse event like this, is also a risk event. Of course, diverse cultural groups have a high risk. And they are all walking there at the same time. So, if it is about the sensitivity of public order, then we’re more sensitive than *De Havendagan* or *De Marathon*. We have to invest a lot in safety. And there are a lot of demands put on us in terms of safety and that influences your budget’. The artistic director of the same festival also considers the prejudices she sometimes comes across in the organisation of their festival: ‘We notice that a lot of people don’t know or are pre-programmed with prejudice to the group we work with. And if you, for example, want to work with a certain theatre and they say, yeah but do you know how expensive our furniture is? As if my

audience would ruin furniture any more than a Western audience would.' One other organiser argues: 'there are certain groups we do not want at our festival. [...] Those are groups that hang outside of my house, for example, guys that don't have anything to do in their lives. Certain people between 12 and 27, who do petty crime, who come to our event with another reason than we want them to come. [...] But in that we're not diverse, no, that's something we're very strict on, we keep an eye on that. [...] But that is a certain type of people and that is very annoying because that does not mean that other people would not do that, that's an important thing, and that's why in my eyes it is not discrimination. But it is unfortunately a stigma that is based on a certain type of person, and that's not what someone looks like, but that's about behaviour right, how does someone move around an event? Yeah, and that is a certain group of guys' [festival director, BF]. It seems that, even though organisers themselves might not always feel this way or conceptualise it differently, diversity is equated to conflict and danger and safety measures are therefore perceived as a necessity.

## Conclusion and Discussion

In this chapter, we examined how music festival organisers in Rotterdam discuss, organise and implement diversity in the making of their festivals. First, our respondents primarily discuss diversity in terms of age-generation and race-ethnicity, mostly in relation to their audiences. One could say these are dominant diversities in the Rotterdam festival context. On the one hand, this makes sense in a young and diverse city like Rotterdam, where the arts council has pushed arts organisations to diversify. Indeed, festival organisers recognise diversity as a sectoral norm as well as crucial to staying commercially relevant, in a rather competitive festival world. On the other hand, Rotterdam still has a reputation as an, albeit transforming, working-class city (Van den Berg 2012), making the absence of diversity in terms of social class somewhat surprising (cf. Bourdieu, 1984).

Second, festival organisers discuss four diversity strategies: 1) programming and audiences, 2) partners, 3) format and 4) location within the city. The link that can be made to cultural sociology is significant in the organisation of diversity through programming and audiences. Generally speaking, there are music genres that can be distinguished along racial, classed and gendered lines (Schaap and Berkers 2019; Vandenberg, Berghman and van Eijck 2020), which is a rationale that organisers use or think of in creating diversity at festivals. Bourdieu refers to this overlap as homology. And, as Laing and Mair (2015) noted before, partnerships are considered of importance in diversifying festivals too. Here we can also see the organisers' concern with creating accessible spaces (Zhang and He 2019), which is often defined as a political and ideological decision. As we have seen, organisers argue that the format of their

festival and the location within the city affects the accessibility of the festival to certain groups of people.

However, even if organisers have found diversity strategies, they also indicated difficulties in implementing diversity. Several organisers struggle with the inability to achieve 'perfect' diversity as music taste inherently discriminates, i.e. one cannot programme a music festival that caters for all tastes. Moreover, as diversity has become a buzzword, some organisers see it as a marketing trick. Finally, bringing people together also creates a risk in terms of public order. Indeed, diversity can foster creativity but also result in conflict (Government Equalities Office 2013).

Future research might consider how effective such diversity strategies are in making an inclusive festival community. Do particular strategies 'merely' foster conviviality, while others lead to a collective conscience? Interviews with some festival organisers indicated a concern with the diverse range of festivals in the sector resulting from the Corona crisis. The survival of many festivals is an issue, possibly reducing overall diversity within the festival sector in the coming years. Future research should consider how the crisis may possibly affect organisers' diversity strategies.

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