'Beyond bonding & bridging, linking communities and safeguarding equal treatment in a super diverse city'
Study design

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D2.2 EN
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Gemeente Rotterdam   Antidiscriminatiebureau RADAR   Kenniscentrum Art.1

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1. **Problem statement**

Rotterdam is a hyper diverse city in which living together of different ethnicities is challenged by experiences of harassment and discrimination. Racism and discrimination are persistent problems within the city, that frequently resist policy interventions. If effectively combated in one place, they tend to reappear elsewhere and in a different form. The municipality of Rotterdam with RADAR, the local antidiscrimination organization, have committed themselves to invest in an approach that provides for a structural dialogue with the communities affected by racism and discrimination, to realize a more effective and alert approach to the issue and greater equality in the urban environment. To counter these experiences in a way more relevant for the communities involved, the initiators developed an approach providing in capacity building, more specifically social capital building, with these communities. The project develops a combined intervention strategy to improve the social capital of the local Muslim, Jewish and Black communities (Arneil, 2006; Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2007; Wong, 2007). In this approach a structural dialogue is established within the community ("bonding") and between communities ("bridging") to find common ground in defining and prioritizing critical issues and problems related to discrimination and hate crime. This to enable the communities to set a shared agenda for change and establish a continuous dialogue with the municipality and with key players in institutional life (private and public) in the city ("linking"), to realize a safe, respectful and relaxed mutuality and social life in the city of Rotterdam.

According to the Dutch Penal Code (Article 90 quater), discrimination occurs when someone is denied equal treatment on the basis of a prejudice. Experiences of discrimination are defined as personal experiences of violence, direct and indirect (micro aggression and racial slights), and institutional discrimination. In racial discrimination, this is unequal treatment based on "race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin". The term 'race' refers to assumed biological differences between people, while ethnicity refers to the belief that one has a shared lineage, history, or cultural heritage and religion, generally linked to a specific time or place. Racism refers to discrimination based on an explicit underlying ideology of superiority and dominance over "the other" because of racial characteristics. Discrimination based on ethnicity is more likely to be preoccupied with the incompatibility of cultures and the consequent 'necessity' of exclusion (Beijers, 2020).

The project 'Beyond bonding & bridging, Linking communities and safeguarding equal treatment in a super diverse city' (BBB) serves as an example how to make the city a place in which the interest of harboring the full diversity of the inhabitants, is promoted and protected. Research of the project is aimed at (1) identifying the experiences of discrimination, exclusion, hate crime and hate speech and understanding their impact on individuals and separate communities; and (2) to evaluate each project phase with the participants (effects and satisfaction); (3) to provide an exemplary methodology applicable across cities in Europe.

2. **Research questions**
Based on this statement of the problem for the bonding phase the following research questions are formulated:
1. What is the impact of discriminatory acts and hate crimes (emic perspective) on the participants form the three communities involved?
   a. Which experiences of discrimination and violence are reported at the community level
   - Which language and words do participants use to express themselves and what aspects do they feel are most important?
   - How do participants respond to the information they receive and what experiences do they share and where do they differ?
   - Which priorities do they set in the experiences and to what extent does this differ from the data from research and the priorities in policy?

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    b. Is there a gap between the perception and impact of discrimination at the community level and actual individual reports of discrimination.

    c. What are the underlying causes of discriminatory experiences according to them

    d. Which coping strategies (resilience and change capacity) are in place?

2. How many unique participants from the communities and from governmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the meetings (bonding, bridging and linking; dissemination efforts), which learning effect did they report in terms of attitudes (competences, knowledge, willingness) and readiness, and what is their satisfaction with the meetings (per meeting, per step in the process (bonding, bridging, linking, dissemination), per party and overall). Did this match the criteria of the project?

3. Did the process of bonding, bridging and linking meetings result in

    a. a shared anti-discrimination agenda. If so how did this evolve and what is the result?

    b. an increase in confidence (responsiveness, competence, trustworthiness) in the local authorities (e.g. administration, institutions) and

    c. the development of more involvement and influence of the communities in effective anti-discrimination policies:

        ▪ A strong network of key persons from the communities concerned and from local government bodies and other institutions

        ▪ i.c. key persons from the communities becoming more empowered to participate in decision-making processes, in lasting information positions.

4. What transferable methodology can be derived from the process and the use of the conceptual framework of 'social capital', which is applicable in other cities in Europe with similar problems?

The study design is described and reported conforming the consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ) (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007).

3. **Initiating organizations, research team and reflexivity**

The project is initiated as a cooperative endeavor of RADAR, (antidiscrimination monitoring agency, Rotterdam) Art.1 (Center for expertise on discrimination, Netherlands) and the municipality of Rotterdam and is funded by these organizations and the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program of the European Union (grant agreement 963797) .

The project team has chosen a limited number of participating communities: the Muslim community, the Jewish community and the Black community, acknowledging in advance that these categories are not mutually exclusive. These communities, proposed by the EU, experience an above average level of hate crime and differ in a number of relevant characteristics of experiences (history of migration, political attention/urgency, access to the community, supposed intercommunal benefit and level of intersectionality).

Researcher is a psychologist / medical anthropologist, born and raised in The Netherlands (age 67, white, male). He is employed at Art.1, not involved in developing and executing the project and employed only for the duration of the research. He was part of the project team, consisting of one project leader, and three 'community-specialists'. All the project team members are specialists in training in the field of racism, antisemitism, hate crime and islamophobia and have an explicit

connection with the community of interest, based on shared roots, belief system or expertise. Three staff-members from the 'social development'-department of the Rotterdam municipality were involved in the project. Their responsibility was preparing the linking phase of the project and recruiting participating institutions for that phase. One of them functioned as a liaison-officer for the EU.

The researcher was present during the meetings, but not involved in a moderating or planning role. When painful experiences concerning white people were shared in the meetings, the researchers' presence could possibly block a free expression of experiences and feelings. Being in a privileged social position could bias a full understanding experiences of discrimination of any kind. To reflect on these possible confounding factors in the research and to reduce their effect, the researcher called for special reflexive meetings with the community specialists to stand still at a possible bias in participating, observing and interpreting of data.

Results of each meeting were discussed with consortium partners, related to the Jewish, Muslim and Black communities participating in the research, representatives from the municipality, the local police department and the 'city marshal racism and discrimination'.

4. **Study design**

4.1 Theoretical framework

Because of the developmental character of the process of building social capital across communities (bonding, bridging, linking), in the project is chosen for a dialogical and participatory research design. Representatives of the communities come together in focus groups which are seen as 'communities of practice' in which knowledge is invested and intermediate results from the research during the process are reinvested. In focus group discussions the researcher and the facilitators share
(1) information about discrimination with participants, such as numbers, news articles and scientific research. (2) participants are encouraged to respond on the given information and (3) to share own experiences of discrimination. Important is to gain insight in the way they prioritize and experience discrimination and how this differs from known numbers, research and the focus in policy. A cyclical process of data collection, analysis, relating findings to theoretical concepts (violence, citizenship, prevalence and appearances of discrimination and racism, social capital) and dialogue with the participants was designed. A community of practice is a learning partnership among people who learn from and with each other about a particular domain (Wenger, Trayner, & Laat, 2011).

Participants use each other's experience and mutual reflection as a resource for learning and development, and addressing challenges they face individually or collectively. The community of practice formula is used also to meet the objective of training, as formulated in the project proposal.

Part of the qualitative approach is the relevance of an emic perspective aiming at investigating the local understanding of social phenomena, in the lived environment, in their own words and in the context relevant for their experience. This includes an approach that takes experience and interpretation of norms and rules of reference in the daily living, what has meaning for the people involved, their symbolic world and how they imagine and explain things. To get this type of understanding of experiences and explanations, qualitative data collection instruments (in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, qualitative content analysis, participant observation) are necessary and used. This generates insights and understanding in social phenomena based on (generally) data collection methods fit to bring the complexities of experiences and subjectivity to the surface, in their micro-meso-macro social contexts. Given the research question research is to a

large extent descriptive and focused on the search for interrelation and coherence in the experiences reported by the participants and grounded in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This content is analyzed, but also looking for structures of behaviors hiding and propelling direction, limiting choices and possibilities, supporting and obstructing agency.

4.2 Participant selection

The project is developed in cooperation with relevant NGO's from the three communities (consortium partners) in Rotterdam and participants are proposed by these NGO's and recruited from the network of cooperating individuals RADAR/Art1 has in Rotterdam. Purposive sampling was sought after by the project team, but not completely possible. Purpose would be to have a cross-section of the community. Because of limitations in access to the community a mix of purposively sampling, and convenience/ snowball sampling was executed. The participants represent a vanguard that cares and is prepared to act as an advocate, and has relevant experiences and knowledge relating to the research question at hand. Informants are representative of the composition of the targeted community they represent and with each participant an introductory meeting was held to asses if the participation would be appropriate. In the meetings presence was recorded and signed for.

4.3 Setting.

The research on the bonding and bridging phase of the project was executed in the period of October 2021 till October 2022.
Three groups (total n=50) have been created of participants who identified themselves as part of a specific community and consented in working together in the project. A generous compensation of costs of participation was offered to each participant to avoid precariousness of everyday life interfering with participation (Wong, 2007). Per community they came together in three bonding-meetings which started with a common meal, served by a local neighborhood kitchen and community catering: 'Wereldvrouwen' (Women of the world). These focus group meetings were organized in the community library in the 'Oud Westen'-neighborhood', well known and very accessible for the participants. Meetings started at 17:00 h. or 18:00 h. and finished at 21:00 h or 22:00 h. at night. Bridging meetings where organized in the 'Timmerhuis' the municipality offices.

4.4 Data collection

Data are collected in focus group sessions. A focus group is a semi-structured discussion with a group of people aiming at exploring a specific set of issues, led by a moderator opening with broad questions and slowly focusing on the topic of interest. In the project three bonding meetings per community, four bridging meetings for participants form the three communities together, and four linking meetings are organized (total of 17 meetings). In the bonding phase aggregated knowledge from previous meetings was fed back to the participants in the form of presentations and memos.

	Bonding phase	Bridging phase	Linking phase	Overall evaluation	Dissemina-tion phase
Community Participants	1.1	1.2	1.3	1	3
Consortium partners[1]	1.1a	1.2a	1.3a		3a
Local authorities			2		4

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Community leaders					5
Professionals in institutions					6

Figure 1: six separate evaluations
[1] Consortium partners reflect on the results of each phase

The researcher was present in all these meetings, observed the group and participants during and around the meeting, taking notes to make a thorough report of the proceedings of the meeting and every other verbal and nonverbal aspect of communication through participant observation. If necessary he asked individual participants for clarification during the meeting or a break. Every meeting finished with a round of 'what do you take away from this meeting'-remarks. Results were recorded as a way of evaluation of participant satisfaction. Every phase (see figure 1) concluded with an evaluation questionnaire measuring relevance of the program for the participants' personal situation, building of social capital and satisfaction with the organization of the meeting.
The items of questionnaire are assessed based on a five point scale (agree completely-almost completely-neutral-not at all-totally not). The scores are converted to a grade on a scale from 1-10 and the average mark for each category of assessment was evaluated against the criterion of success of 75 % of participants who are of the opinion that the topic improved based on the meetings (grades >6) and 75 % who are of the opinion that their feelings of trust in local authorities ameliorated (grades >6).

Finally, during the process in-depth-interviews were held with 8 participants specifically on their ideas on and assessment of the phases of social capital building.

5.   **Data (processing) and analysis**

In the research ten meetings with participants from the three communities were organized (two online meetings due to corona crisis restrictions). Methods of data collection were participant observation, meticulously written reports of the conversations organized in the project, and collecting views on and reports of the effects and satisfaction (oral evaluation per meeting and questionnaire for the whole phase), and field notes made by the researcher on stories told in the sidelines of the focus groups, one to one conversation during breaks or after the meeting, email traffic around the meetings, and other types of informal communication.

The 14-item questionnaire at the end of the bonding phase asked participants for an assessment of personal and topic-related relevance of the meetings in the bonding-phase, for their assessment of the bonding effect (increase in trust and contacts) and for their satisfaction with the organization of the meetings on a five point scale (agree completely-almost completely-neutral-not at all-totally not).

Data from meetings and interviews were analyzed in a three step process of coding (open, axial and selective coding) with the use of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data AnalysiS (CAQDAS: Atlas.ti), and results were described in an overview per community and per phase (Friese, 2012). Coding and analysis was in the first place directed at thematic analysis and grounded theory, but also included aspects of discourse analysis to uncover the discourse underlying the texts. To get a better grip on these discourses the analysis of the problems as formulated by the initiators of the project were collected, to get a better grip on their implicit motivations and analysis of the problem, responsibilities for the solution, ownership of the problem, and the implicit frameworks in which the problem has to be solved, specifically by introducing the social capital theory (based on Putnam) as an constituting framework (Liamputtong, 2009).

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All the (anonymized) reports have been checked and if necessary supplemented and corrected by the participating project team members and after that coded and analyzed. An extensive overview of the results of the analysis per community was presented to the participating team members and assessed by them based on their presence in the meeting and knowledge of the community (triangulation). A condensed summary of the three communities was reported back to the participants in the community meetings, discussed with them and later on discussed within the initiating organizations.

This data collection was completed by literature review on discrimination, racism, hate crime, violence and their impact on people's life, and on social capital (building) and diversity, to deepen insights in the concepts used by participants, and to provide participants with knowledge to better understand and interpret their experiences.

Based on the coding of the experiences reported overlapping and non-overlapping aspects of the experience of discrimination of the three communities were identified.
Final results of the bonding, bridging and linking phase research were presented to the initiating organizations together with their consortium partners and discussed with them.

For the development of a manual for social capital building to counter discrimination and racism a methodology model (Beijers, 2006) is used for description of (1) underlying view on man and society; (2) ambitions and functions of the intervention; (3) intervention strategies and processes aimed at; (4) working principles and principles of action; (5) the interrelation of professional and client/participant.

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