



Combating Inequalities through Innovative Social Practices of and for Young People in Cities across
Europe

Cities in their national contexts

ROTTERDAM

Symptoms and causes of inequality affecting young people

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This report is part of Work Package 2 of the research project entitled “Combating Inequalities through Innovative Social Practices of and for Young People in Cities across Europe” (CITISPYCE). CITISPYCE has been devised against the back drop of research which shows the disproportionate impact of the global economic crisis on young people across Europe. This includes excessively high rates of youth unemployment (particularly amongst those who face multiple social, economic and cultural disadvantages) and threats to the social provision enjoyed by previous generations. CITISPYCE partners are working on a three year multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral programme to examine the current state of the art and ideas concerning social innovation against inequalities faced by young people, explore socially innovative practices being developed by and for young people in urban areas, and test the transferability of local models of innovative practice in order to develop new policy approaches. The CITISPYCE consortium covers ten European countries and is funded by the European Commission (FP7, Socio-economic Sciences & Humanities).

1. The city – a presentation	2
1.1. Introduction to the city	2
1.2. Demography	3
2. Inequality in the city and the response to it	5
2.1. The welfare state in transition	5
2.2. Economy, labour market and unemployment	7
2.2.1. Economy and employment	7
2.2.2. Unemployment	8
2.2.3. Youth unemployment	9
2.2.4. Labour market paradox	12
2.3. Access to social income, social and health services	12
2.3.1. Social assistance and social security	12
2.3.2. Healthcare and youth (health) care	13
2.3.3. Health and wellbeing in Rotterdam	14
2.4. Housing	15
2.5. Education and training	17
2.5.1. The educational system	17
2.5.2. Education results	18
2.6. Power, democracy, citizenship and civil participation	19
2.7. Policies and organisations	21
3. Life for young people in the city	23
References	25

1. The city – a presentation

1.1. Introduction to the city

Rotterdam is a large harbour town in the Southwest of The Netherlands. It is the second largest city after Amsterdam. Around 1.2 million people live in the wider city-region, the most urbanised area in The Netherlands, of whom 616,528 (January 1st, 2013) live in the city of Rotterdam.

Rotterdam is part of the *Randstad*, a metropolitan area in the west of The Netherlands that comprises the four biggest cities, and is one of the most important urban areas in North-Western Europe. The Netherlands has almost 17 million inhabitants, of whom 7 million live in this metropolitan area.

Rotterdam is divided into two parts (north and south) by a river, the Nieuwe Maas, one of the rivers in the Rhine and Maas delta. This river is one of the connections between the harbour and the rest of Europe, especially the *Ruhrgebiet* in Germany.

The Rotterdam harbour is the largest and most important in Europe, and also one of the most important harbours in the world. The most important activities are container and bulk handling (especially oil).

The harbour and the city expanded rapidly since the 19th century, attracting workers from everywhere, but mostly from the poorer south of the Netherlands, that suffered from an agricultural crisis. Between 1880

and 1900 the city expanded from 160,000 inhabitants to 315,000, and by 1920 it had already grown to 500,000.

Many cheap houses were built on the south side (the left bank of the Nieuwe Maas), which is still the poorest part of the city. When the ministry of housing, spatial organisation and environment compiled a list in 2009 of the 20 ‘most problematic neighbourhoods’ in The Netherlands (for internal use), eight of the 20 neighbourhoods are in Rotterdam, the majority of them in the south part.

In the beginning of the Second World War the inner city was completely destroyed by a bombardment. The inner city was not rebuilt, but was newly developed by modern architects. The skyline nowadays consists mostly of skyscrapers, with very little reminder of the long history of the town.

Rotterdam is a working class city, not only by income, but also by mentality. A popular saying is that in Rotterdam the money is earned, and in Amsterdam it is spent – reflecting the rivalry between the two cities. Politically, the social-democratic party is traditionally the biggest party. Rotterdam was also one of the first cities where the populist parties that grew up in The Netherlands after 2000, became popular. The then leader of the national populist party LPF, Pim Fortuyn, who was murdered in 2002 for political reasons, was a resident of Rotterdam.

Culturally, Rotterdam is a modern city with mostly modern architecture, art museums, theatre and dance companies. It is also a culturally very diverse city, with as many as 173 different nationalities in 2009. Because of the harbour there has always been an influx of people from all over the world. There are, therefore, some specific minority groups in Rotterdam that are not found in other Dutch cities, e.g. a relatively large (but in absolute numbers still small) Cape Verdean community.

1.2. Demography

Rotterdam is a culturally diverse and relatively young city, and increasingly so. The tables below show the increase of the share of inhabitants of migrant descent in Rotterdam and The Netherlands, and the age structure of Rotterdam compared to The Netherlands.¹

¹ Most of our data are from the website of the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS): statline.cbs.nl/statweb. When ‘CBS’ is mentioned as a source we are referring to this data set. Publications by the CBS are referred to in the regular way.

Table 1: The Netherlands: increase of migrant population

	2005	2005	2012	2012
Indigenous	13,182,809	80.85%	13,236,155	79.12%
Non-western migrants ²	1,699,042	10.42%	1,937,651	11.58%
Western migrants	1,423,675	8.73%	1,556,542	9.30%
Total population	16,305,526	100%	16,730,348	100%

Data: CBS

The indigenous population in The Netherlands decreases with 1.73% between 2005 and 2012, whereas the migrant population from non-western origin increases with 1.16%, and from western origin with 0.57% (Table 1).

Table 2: Rotterdam: increase of migrant population

	2005	2005	2012	2012
Indigenous	327,730	54.95%	318,435	51.67%
Non-western migrants	20,9410	35.11%	227,762	36.96%
Western migrants	59,267	9.94%	70,063	11.37%
Total population Rotterdam	59,6407	100%	616,260	100%

Data: CBS

The indigenous population in Rotterdam decreased with 3.28% between 2005 and 2012 – almost twice as much as the national figures. The migrant population from non-western origin increases with 1.85%, and from western origin with 1.43% - more than twice as much as the national figures.

² In the definition of CBS people born abroad and people born in The Netherlands with at least one migrated parent are considered migrants. Sometimes a further distinction is made between non-western and western migrants. Non-western migrants come from Asia (including Turkey, but excluding Japan and the former colony of Indonesia), Africa and South America. Migrants from other countries are considered western migrants.

Table 3: Age structure Rotterdam and The Netherlands in percentages

	Rotterdam	Rotterdam	The Netherlands	The Netherlands
Age group in years	1-1-2005	1-1-2010	1-1-2005	1-1-2010
0-15	17.16	16.49	18.44	17.57
15-25	13.80	13.86	11.95	12.24
25-65	54.69	55.40	55.56	54.86
65 and older	14.35	14.24	14.02	15.11

Data: CBS and COS

Contrary to the rest of the country, Rotterdam has a relatively large population of 15-25 year olds – which is common for cities that attract students. It is also a city that, faster than the rest of the country, is becoming multicultural: in 2012, 48% of the population in Rotterdam is counted as migrant. The prognosis is that by 2017 almost half of the population will be of non-western origin (Bik, Ergun and Stolk, 2006).

2. Inequality in the city and the response to it

2.1. The welfare state in transition

The Dutch welfare state has been characterised as a ‘Rhineland model’, corporatist welfare state, or ‘polder model’, based on consensus building. Over the last 20 years the Dutch welfare state, however, has been in transition, partly guided by elements from Anglo-Saxon welfare state models, partly guided by populist sentiments, and partly through windows of opportunity arising from among others changing political constellations.

The most important issues on the welfare state agenda seem to have been:

- Too many people are on incapacity benefits and sick leave (1980s - 1990s). Work has become top-sport (something for the super-fit), and too many people are permanently excluded from the labour market;
- Health costs are continuously rising, and make up approximately half of the government budget. This rise cannot go on forever (1990s-2000s)
- The state has taken on too many responsibilities (2000s)
- The state is not very efficient in policy delivery because of bureaucracy (2000s)

- An ageing population (1990s-2000s)
- Limited participation of women in work (1980s-1990s-2000s)
- Policy development is too top-down; development and implementation of policies are not integrated enough (2000s)
- There are real problems with integration of migrants (1990s-2000s)

‘Solutions’ that have been found, and that change the nature of the welfare state, include:

- Increasing the obligation to work. Almost all municipalities in The Netherlands have adopted a form of ‘work first’ policy, partly substituting the right to a benefit with the right to a (subsidised or created) job. This is especially true for young people.
- Limiting access to benefits and to social support, increasing the responsibility of people themselves and their social networks. There is more pressure on being or becoming self-reliant.
- Privatisation or marketization of services, as the private sector is seen as more efficient in delivering services than the public sector.
- Decentralisation of responsibilities and resources to local government, to fill the gap between policy development and policy implementation, and to counter silo-approaches. This started in the field of social assistance in 2004, and is currently broadened to three more policy areas: youth care, social support, and public health care. The aim is to facilitate the development of integrated approaches, close to the users of services, and to put policy development and implementation responsibility in the same (municipal) hand.
- Individualisation of rights and responsibilities, rather than at a household level, to promote women’s emancipation and labour market participation.
- Other developments, that may have less impact on the welfare state model as such, include a stronger focus on individual and integrated services (e.g. individual plan for clients in social assistance, ‘one family, one plan’ in youth care), a shift from cure to prevention, stimulating an inclusive economy in which less productive people can also participate (work as a ‘solution’ instead of a ‘problem’).
- Budget cuts as a response to the economic crisis may intensify the increased emphasis on a person’s own responsibility (i.e. intensify the developments outlined above). For example, the budget for reintegration activities aimed at bringing people (back) into employment, over a period of four years has been cut by approximately 60%, in Rotterdam from approximately 200 million euro in 2011 to 60 million in 2015. Most of the remaining budget will have to be spent on long-term commitments from previous policies, in other words: there is hardly any budget for new policies, while the number of social assistance clients is rapidly rising. The decentralisations

mentioned above are also accompanied by budget cuts of approximately 15% - legitimised by an envisaged better efficiency of an integrated local delivery.

Although it is probably too early to tell where these developments are taking the Dutch welfare state, it seems plausible to assume that privatisation, decentralisation and an increased emphasis on a person's own responsibility, are changing the welfare state as we know it. These reforms seem to have a two-sided effect, in that for many people their situation (eventually) improves, that they may be more self-sufficient than was assumed before, but at the expense of (further) marginalising effects for a minority – usually those who already had the worst starting position (Spies, 1996; 2001; forthcoming). Quantitative successes seem to go hand in hand with small-scale worsening of qualitative problems.

2.2. Economy, labour market and unemployment

2.2.1. Economy and employment

From the 19th century onward the harbour and the economic activity that comes with it, has been the most important source of employment in the region. Low-skilled work and low-skilled workers have traditionally dominated the labour market. Because of technological developments a lot of low-skilled work has disappeared, and still is disappearing. For example, where before 20-30 men were needed to off-load containers from a ship, it now takes only six, and the prospects are that through computerisation this will decrease even further to two to three people.

The fastest growing economic sectors in Rotterdam are the health care sector, education and the government sector. These are all dependent on government funding, so budget cuts may affect employment opportunities. Most job openings are found in the health care sector and through temporary work agencies; on a low-skilled level also in consumer services, on a middle to average skilled level also in transport and knowledge services, and on a high-skilled level also in knowledge services and the educational system (COS, 2011). Even though unemployment is currently high because of the economic crisis, in the next few years shortages on the labour market are expected as the baby boom generation will start leaving the labour market. Education, industry, construction and transport sectors will be most affected by this, leading to new job openings even though the sectors themselves are not growing or even shrinking. Employment has remained stable in Rotterdam, even though the economic crisis that started in 2008.

A recent study shows that flexibility on the labour market is increasing in The Netherlands. Of the economically active, fewer people have a permanent job. Employees with a flexible employment relationship and the self-employed form an increasing proportion of the working population.³ In 2001

³ Definitions: having a permanent jobs means the employee has a contract for a job of unlimited duration for a fixed number of hours per week. Having a flexible employment relationship or flexible contract means either having a contract for a limited period of time, or having a contract for a flexible amount of hours. The category 'self-employed' encompasses both entrepreneurs with personnel and enterprises consisting of one person.

76% of the economically active had a permanent job, in 2012 this was 69%. In the same period, the proportion of employees with a flexible contract increased from 12% to 16%, and the proportion of self-employed from 12% to 15%. Employees with a flexible contract become unemployed or inactive more often, and change job more often than employees in permanent jobs. They have less job security, they experience more pressure and little autonomy in the workplace. They risk more health issues and have fewer learning and development options (Van Galen e.a., 2013).

The Dutch are European champions when it comes to part-time work. In 2008 almost half of the working population worked part-time. Sweden follows in second place with 26% part-timers, other countries have even lower percentages. Three quarter of working women in The Netherlands work part-time, compared to half in other EU countries. Part-time work in The Netherlands is also quite common among young men (62%), mostly students who have a job on the side (Portegijs, 2009).

2.2.2. Unemployment

According to European statistics, the Dutch unemployment rate is 5.3% in 2012. This is low compared to other European countries. It is roughly half of the average of the EU-27 (10.5% in 2012). Although the unemployment rate may be low in a European perspective, it is a topic of great concern to the Dutch government. The unemployment rate - rose from 2.5% in 2001, to 5.3% in 2012 (Eurostat).⁴ In February 2013 it further increased to 6.2% (CBS).

Eurostat uses the ILO-definition of unemployment, which is based on the age category of people between 15-74.⁵ Dutch data are collected by the Central Bureau for the Statistics (CBS) which uses a different definition for unemployment: the number of people aged 15 to 64, who have no job or work less than 12 hours a week, who are actively searching for a job of 12 hours a week or more, and who are available for such a job. As people aged 65-74 are not included in unemployment data, Dutch statistics show higher rates than the European data on The Netherlands. To be able to dive deeper into the national and Rotterdam data, we need to use data from the Dutch Central Bureau for the Statistics.

⁴ Data from Eurostat: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/images/2/20/Unemployment_rate%2C_2001-2012_%28%25%29.png.

⁵ An unemployed person is defined by Eurostat, according to the guidelines of the International Labour Organization, as someone aged 15 to 74 without work during the reference week who is available to start work within the next two weeks and who has actively sought employment at some time during the last four weeks. The unemployment rate is the number of people unemployed as a percentage of the labour force.

Table 4. National unemployment rate (%) and economic growth (%) 1996 – 2012.

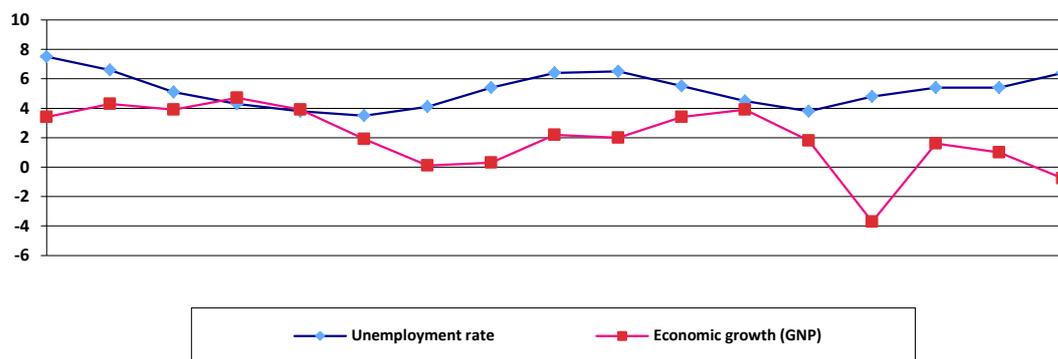


Figure: CBS

The economic crisis has led to increasing unemployment, although not as severe as expected at the beginning of the crisis. As a result of the continued crisis, however, and possibly a time-lag effect, unemployment has increased to 8.1% in April 2013 (CBS). Compared to the national average and to other big cities, Rotterdam has a high unemployment rate. In 2011 the average national unemployment rate was 5.4%, compared to 9.5% in Rotterdam, 8.3% in The Hague, 7.1% in Amsterdam, and 5.2% in Utrecht. Unemployment increased more among men than among women, probably because the economic crisis hit traditional male sectors (e.g. building industry) hardest.

The self-employed have been hit harder by the economic crisis than the employed, but do not show up in unemployment statistics. The self-employed face having less work (assignments), increasing competition and decreasing rates of pay because of this. Of households with an entrepreneur as breadwinner 12% are living below the poverty line, compared to 3% of households with an employed breadwinner. In 2011 the number of entrepreneurs living in poverty exceeded the number of poor people in employment for the first time (175,000 and 170,000 people respectively) (SCP/CBS, 2012).

Other forms of hidden unemployment are people in part time jobs who would like to work more hours, people who are in education because of the bad labour market, and graduated students who are getting working experience as a volunteer or trainee.

2.2.3. Youth unemployment

The youth unemployment rate in The Netherlands increased from 7.6% in 2011 to 9.5% in 2012. However, it is among the lowest in Europe, and much lower than the average unemployment rate of 22.8% of the EU-27 in 2012. (European Commission, 2012). The youth unemployment ratio, i.e. the share of unemployed among the population aged 15-24, increased from 5.3% in 2011 to 6.6% in 2012, while the EU-27 average in 2012 was 9.7% (European Commission, 2012).

Youth unemployment rates are generally much higher than unemployment rates for all ages. This also applies for The Netherlands. In 2012 youth unemployment is 1.8 times higher as overall unemployment (9.7% versus 5.3%).

In the Rotterdam region, youth unemployment is somewhat above the national average from 2010 onwards – the economic crisis has affected young people in Rotterdam more than in other regions (UWV/SBB, 2013).

A low educational level increases the chances of becoming and remaining unemployed. Two third of unemployed young people do not have a starting qualification (i.e. two years of vocational training on top of secondary education). In Rotterdam in 2008 this percentage was 89% of those on social assistance.

Table 5: Unemployed youth aged 15-23 years in the Netherlands and Rotterdam by sex

	The Netherlands			Rotterdam		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
2007	23,550	11,310	12,230	1,050	410	640
2008	16,900	8,170	8,703	880	380	500
2009	17,650	9,490	8,160	840	440	400
2010	27,940	16,440	11,500	1,600	910	690
2011	24,260	14,360	9,910	1,750	1,050	700
2012	23,980	13,980	10,000	1,880	1,070	800

Data: CBS Jeugdmonitor⁶

Table 5 shows that between 2007 and 2009 the number of unemployed young people aged 15-23 in The Netherlands decreased substantially, and strongly increased in 2010 due to the economic crisis. After 2010 numbers decreased again until the amount of unemployed youth in 2012 reached roughly the same level as in 2007. In Rotterdam we see a more modest drop of unemployment numbers between 2007 and 2009, and a much larger increase (doubling) of youth unemployment compared to The Netherlands in 2010. After 2010 unemployment further increases while in the Netherlands as a whole numbers decrease.

When we look at the division between the sexes, we see that young men are hit much harder by the economic crisis than young women, and this effect is even stronger in Rotterdam. Before the crisis more young women than men are unemployed and in 2009 this turns around: men are roughly 1.5 times more often unemployed than women.

⁶ The Central Bureau for the Statistics has a separate dataset on youth called the CBS Jeugdmonitor. This dataset is available at: jeugdstatline.cbs.nl. When 'CBS Jeugdmonitor' is mentioned as a source, we are referring to this data set.

Table 6: Unemployed youth aged 15-23 years in the Netherlands and Rotterdam by origin

	The Netherlands			Rotterdam		
	Total	Indigenous	Migrant	Total	Indigenous	Migrant
2007	23,550	14,410	9,140	1,050	300	750
2008	16,900	9,770	7,130	880	190	690
2009	17,650	10,410	7,230	840	180	660
2010	27,940	17,430	10,390	1,600	400	1,170
2011	24,260	14,510	9,410	1,750	410	1,310
2012	23,980	14,750	8,870	1,880	410	1,410

Data: CBS Jeugdmonitor

When we look at origin (table 6), we see for The Netherlands as a whole that unemployment decreased much more among indigenous Dutch young people between 2007 and 2009, but also increased more in the period after 2009. The division between unemployed young people of indigenous and migrant origin remains roughly the same though when data of 2007 and 2012 are compared. The ethnic composition of youth in The Netherlands aged 15-23 did not change in this period, nor did it in Rotterdam. In Rotterdam, however, much more young people from migrant origin became unemployed between 2007 and 2012: of the extra 830 people that become unemployed in this period, 110 are indigenous and 660 are of migrant origin, so six sevenths of the increase can be contributed to migrant youth. In contrast with the rest of The Netherlands, in Rotterdam young migrants were hit much harder by the economic crisis – on top of already high unemployment among young migrants. Of the 1,880 unemployed young people in Rotterdam in 2012, 410 persons are indigenous, 120 are western migrants, and 1,280 non-western.

Unemployed people are generally less healthy than employed people. A survey of the Rotterdam public health department in 2003 showed that unemployed people had lower scores on all health aspects, ranging from physical functioning to bodily pain, mental health, vitality, role limitations for emotional or physical reasons (Gezondheidsonderzoek 2003, GGD Rotterdam). A study by Schuring et al (2011) showed that for unemployed people a better health increases the likelihood of finding employment, and that health improves in all aspects for re-employed people.

Long-term unemployment is rising among young unemployed in the Rotterdam region. While short-term unemployment (less than 6 months) increased only slightly between 2011 and 2012, longer-term unemployment (6-12 months) increased with 25%, and long-term unemployment (>12 months) increased with 21%. Long-term unemployment in itself can limit chances on the labour market.

2.2.4. Labour market paradox

Relatively high youth unemployment that is increasingly becoming long-term unemployment, and a vast amount of job opportunities emerging in a few years because of the ageing work force, create a labour market paradox in Rotterdam (and the region). The challenge is, somewhat cynically, to keep the current unemployed fit enough so that they will be able to fill the upcoming vacancies.

2.3. Access to social income, social and health services

2.3.1. Social assistance and social security

One in five people in Rotterdam receives an incapacity, unemployment or social assistance benefit. In the other big cities the percentage of benefit recipients is lower. Nationally this percentage is 16%. The mean income in Rotterdam is 19,600 euro per household per year, which is lower than the national average of 21,600 euro and also lower than in the other big cities.

Social security in The Netherlands consists of employee insurance and minimum income provisions by the state. The most important benefits are currently WW (unemployment insurance for employees), WIA (work incapacity insurance for employees), and WWB (general minimum income provision). A right to WW exists if one has worked in 26 of the last 36 weeks. This level amounts to 70% of the last wage for a period of 3 months minimum and 38 months maximum, depending on one's work history. A right to WIA exists if one's earning capacity has decreased at least 35% due to medical reasons. The level amounts to 70% of the last wage (75% if permanently work disabled). The employer continues to pay for two years, with optional private insurance for this risk. The WWB is a last resort for citizens with insufficient income, no rights to other benefits and no property or fortune. For individuals the level amounts to 50% (661 euro) of the minimum wage plus a housing cost allowance of a maximum of 20% (264 euro). Couples receive 100% of the minimum wage (1322 euro), single parents 70%. For young people aged 18 – 20 years old the amounts are lower: 228 euro for individuals, 457 euro for married couples, 493 euro for single parents, 721 for married couples with children.

Over the years, entitlement for employee insurance (unemployment and incapacity) has been tightened and the duration of unemployment insurance benefits has been shortened. Restricting access to employee insurance has not led to a (relative) rise in social assistance claimants (Table 7). The relative importance of social assistance compared to insurance has remained stable. The number of people on social assistance has dropped even faster between 2000 and 2008 than the number of people on unemployment benefit. Activation policies are seen as an important explanation for this. The shift in the relative importance of unemployment benefit and social assistance in 2011 can be interpreted as a result of growing unemployment resulting from the economic crisis. The strong increase of the importance of unemployment benefit will probably lead to a further increase of the importance of social assistance, as

the economic crisis continues and unemployed people reach the time limit of their unemployment insurance (Spies and Van de Vrie, forthcoming).

Table 7: Division of insurance and social assistance in 2000, 2008 and 2011

	ABW/WWB	WW	WAO/WIA	Total
2000	23.6%	12.6%	63.8%	1,499,970 (100%)
2008	23.6%	13.8%	62.7%	1,241,200 (100%)
2011	24.5%	18.6%	56.6%	1,451,000 (100%)

Data: CBS

Social assistance for young people in many cases may take the form of a (created or subsidised) job and/or training offer rather than a benefit. Recently a four week waiting period has been introduced for young people. When becoming unemployed, they have actively to look for work for four weeks before they can claim a benefit, which – if granted – will also cover these first four weeks. From 2009-2012 there was a special social assistance act for young people under 27 years of age, granting them the right and obligation to an activation offer rather than to a benefit (activation meaning the person gets help to become active on the labour market). If they do not have a starting qualification (two years of vocational training) the aim is to get them back to school. Other activation offers can include subsidised, created or voluntary work, training and education, or combinations of these.

2.3.2. Healthcare and youth (health) care

Health services in the Netherlands are covered by private insurance. All citizens are obliged to have a more or less fixed priced basic health insurance. Children are insured for free until the age of 18. People with a lower income are entitled to a tax-credit based on their income, to be able to pay for their health insurance. This counts for young adults as well, whether they are employed, unemployed, studying or on benefits. Health care covered by the state consists of long-term care for the elderly, chronically ill and handicapped: health care that cannot be profitably organised through private insurance. This way there is a wide system of good and affordable healthcare available for everyone.

The costs of the Dutch health care system are of great concern though, as costs are rising and the Dutch population is ageing. The Netherlands spent 70.1 billion euro on health care in 2010. This expenditure corresponds to 11.9 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), the second highest percentage in the world after the United States, although the difference against a number of other European countries is small (CBS 2012a). A debate on budget cuts concentrates on more efficiency and on contributions of people with a higher income. Young people are not experiencing inequality when it comes to (access to) health care.

Municipalities organise the youth health care system: all children aged 0-19 are invited for routine health examinations. This service is free of charge and organized in the neighbourhood. It consists of several services for every age group, amongst which are the vaccination programme for younger children and education on a healthy lifestyle (smoking, drinking, drugs, sexual transmitted diseases) for older young people. The youth health care system plays an important role in the early identification of physical, psychosocial and child-raising problems. Youth health care works closely together with organizations that need to help and protect children in order to develop safely.

In order to adapt better to contemporary problems, youth health care organizations are changing course in two directions. Attention is being focused more on specific groups at risk instead of one general treatment for all, and attention is being focused more on socio-medical aspects of life.⁷

The Youth Care office aims to help youth at risk and their parents. Youth care has two functions: prevention of a worsening of the situation by referring to lighter or heavier means of help, and intervention when a young person is at risk. Youth care participates in a structure with signalling parties like the youth health care system, social workers and schools on the one hand, and with the police and judicial organizations on the other hand, when protection of children at risk, guardianship or foster care is needed.

As mentioned before the organization of youth care is being revised at the moment. From 2015 on municipalities will be responsible for offering youth care. A transfer to the local level will have to solve two major problems. First of all, not all children at risk are seen by the system. Especially among people of non-western origin there is lack of trust and a lot of fear of the youth care taking the children away. In general, migrant children get seen too late, when problems are more severe than necessary. Secondly, there are too many different types of specific help executed by too many different organizations.

2.3.3. Health and wellbeing in Rotterdam

The services mentioned above, and the conditions for getting access to them, do not cause problems of inequality. These social income, social and health services, however, cannot prevent a number of problems continuing to exist. Almost all of these problems are more pronounced in Rotterdam than in the rest of the country. In Rotterdam 28.7% of all children aged 12-18 years old grow up in poverty (CBS Jeugdmonitor). Nationally this is 11.9% (CBS/SCP 2012).

- In Rotterdam 4.8% of young people run into contact with the police, nationally this is 2.6% (CBS Jeugdmonitor)
- Rotterdam has the lowest percentage of people saying their health is good or very good (77.5% in 2009-2011, Dutch average 80.5%), and people in Rotterdam score higher on mental health problems, obesity, diabetes, physical limitations, chronic respiratory problems and the degree of

⁷ www.ggd.nl/over-ggd-nederland/standpunten/innovatie-jeugdgezondheidszorg

contact with a general practitioner and with medical specialists. Rotterdam has the highest percentage of smokers in The Netherlands (30.4%) and the least physically active inhabitants in the country, with only 48.8% having sufficient physical activity (according to prevailing norm). In the period 2008-2011 the proportion of overweight children in The Netherlands was 13.3%, in Rotterdam 17%. Young people of Moroccan or Turkish origin are likely to be twice as often overweight and obese as indigenous youth (TNO, 2010). Rotterdam has significantly fewer heavy drinkers though, with 6.1% one of the lowest scores of The Netherlands (average 9.8%).⁸

Research shows that an unhealthy lifestyle is mostly related to gender, educational level, broken families, and not so much to ethnicity. Teenagers in lower secondary education in particular seem to be less able to control their behaviour with regard to substance abuse (Verdurmen et al., 2012).

People on benefits have a three to four times higher likelihood of psychological disorders (anxiety, depression, mood disorders, attention deficit, behavioural disorder, substance abuse). Unemployed people use facilities for psychological help twice as much as people with a job, and get medication prescribed three times as much (De Graaf et al., 2010).

- Of all children aged 0-16 in Rotterdam, 9% are severely threatened in their development. 4% of them are in an acutely dangerous situation. Child abuse can be physical, psychological, sexual and emotional. Neglect is part of the definition of child abuse, as is witnessing domestic violence. (GGD Rotterdam, 2010).
- In Rotterdam there are significantly more teenage mothers than in other big cities in The Netherlands. Although absolute numbers are not high (316 in Rotterdam in 2011) and seems to be declining, the problem is concentrated especially with girls from the Antilles, among whom there are six times as many teenage mothers than average (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2012b).
- There are too few general practitioners in many ‘problematic’ neighbourhoods in Rotterdam, as work for them is difficult there; they often see people who stay illegally in the country, do not have health insurance, but do need medical help; because there are already few general practitioners, they have too many patients; and as people living in these neighbourhoods are relatively unhealthy and more readily visit a doctor, work pressure increases even more.

2.4. Housing

In The Netherlands, in 2012, 57% of all houses are owned, 43% are rented: 37% under a social housing price regulation, 4% on free market prices. 82% of all social housing estates are owned by housing corporations (CBS, 2013). Between 2011 and 2012 there is a slight (1%) increase in house ownership, probably because housing corporations tried to sell some of their houses to raise capital, that has shrunk because of the economic crisis. People with a low income most likely live in a house rented from a

⁸ (<http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=81976NED&LA=NL>)

housing corporation. Municipalities have an Internet system for allocating these houses. In most municipalities there are waiting lists. Waiting time can vary between approximately one year (Rotterdam) and six years (Amsterdam). In the regulations there are income criteria (below 34,229 euro per year) to qualify for social housing. The size of, and number of rooms in the house, depend on the number of people in the household. People with low incomes are compensated via the tax-system.

Although social housing is reserved for people with a low income, many houses are rented by people who choose to stay in the relatively cheap social housing when they are doing better financially. There is therefore a constant shortage of social housing. Attempts to stimulate people to move on to a house that fits their income have not been very successful. The most important problem is that the 'entrance level' to buy a house is quite high, especially in bigger cities where one income is not enough to buy a family home. To get a mortgage one must have a steady job, which is increasingly difficult in a flexible labour market.

In Rotterdam the total percentage of social housing is 69%, considerably more than the national average. More than two thirds consist of houses owned by housing corporations, one sixth are rented out by private owners, and one sixth is owned by its occupants (cheap houses below 140,000 euro) (COS, 2012).

Other ways to obtain a house are through squatting, and more popular: cheaply to rent without normal legal protection as a way to prevent squatting (anti-squatting). If houses or offices are temporarily not used, owners often prefer to rent their property out cheaply in this way. In some neighbourhoods in Rotterdam youth work organisations can use government buildings for a period of for example two years, to use these buildings for community activities, and to develop and rebuild these buildings together with young people. Collectives of artists also sometimes use buildings and offices in a way similar to 'anti-squatting'.

The average age of young people leaving their parental homes is 21.7 years old.

Although there is much social housing in Rotterdam, and waiting lists are relatively short compared to other big cities, there are still several problems with regard to housing. The most important is the concentration of problems in certain areas, creating 'problematic neighbourhoods'. These neighbourhoods are generally characterised by combinations of low income, debts, unemployment, school dropout, criminality, health problems, concentration of specific ethnic groups, family violence, criminality, and so on. This means that a significant proportion of young people in Rotterdam grow up in an unsafe environment. 56% of 10 and 11 year olds mention they sometimes or (very) often do not feel safe in their neighbourhood. 10% of the 12-13 and 14-15 aged have committed a violent crime themselves in the preceding 12 months; of youth aged 14-15, 9% carry a weapon. More than one fifth of the age group of 12-15 years suffer from problems at home (GGD Rotterdam, 2010). In many of these areas 70% or more of the population are migrants.

Lastly, homelessness is increasing. It is estimated that there are 9,000 homeless young people in The Netherlands each year (Brummelhuis and Drouven, 2011). Homeless young people are defined as "de

facto homeless young people below 23 years of age, and those living in care institutions, with multiple problems". In Rotterdam the Youth Counter organises an integrated approach for homeless young people, in cooperation with a multitude of organisations. In 2011 there were in total 142 young people without a roof over their head, 147 homeless young people (a bed for the night, no permanent address), 387 potentially homeless young people (at risk), and 214 others. This makes for a total of 890. As a rule of thumb, Rotterdam normally has 10% of the national figures when it comes to social problems, so the national estimates and the (somewhat lacking) municipal registration seem to point in the same direction.

The relatively new integrated approach of homeless young people in Rotterdam does not seem to decrease the total number, but does help making problems less acute; that is, there is a shift from 'no roof over their head' and 'homeless' towards 'at risk'.

2.5. Education and training

2.5.1. The educational system

The educational system in The Netherlands is organised by age: primary education from 4-12 years of age, secondary education from 12-16/18 years of age, vocational training or scientific education from 16/18-22 years of age. Secondary education is divided in several educational levels: practical education, preparatory vocational education (both 'blue collar' and 'white collar'), higher administrative education and preparatory scientific education. Schools can be public schools or special schools, based on ideology, religion, or pedagogical background; for example, catholic schools, Islamic schools, anthroposophist schools, Montessori schools. Children have to choose an educational level at aged 12, but it is possible to change or to stack (after finishing a lower level of education entering a higher level mid way). Primary education is closed off with a test (CITO) that determines the level of further education. Private schools and home schooling are not common, but do exist. The Programme for International Student Assessment (OESO) ranked the Dutch education system as the 11th best in the world in 2009. In recent years the emphasis in education has shifted from gaining knowledge to acquiring competences, where competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and (professional) attitude.

Going to school is free until 18 years of age, or as long as one is still in secondary education. After that a fee has to be paid. There is a system for study financing through government loans, but it is increasingly difficult to study for a long time or to stack educational experiences.

There is a policy that everyone should obtain a starting qualification: two years of vocational training on top of (lower) secondary education, or finish higher secondary education. Roughly speaking: successfully stay at school until 18 years old. Education is compulsory between 5 and 16 years old; parents can be fined if their children do not go to school. Until 18 years old there is the obligation to obtain a starting qualification. As long as one does not have this, you are not allowed to work fulltime – work is only

allowed if it can be combined with education. If one does not meet this obligation, he or she can be fined, child allowance can be withdrawn, or schools (i.e. school directors) can be prosecuted.

Special education exists for children with specific problems, organised in four clusters (1. visually impaired children, 2. deaf or hard-hearing children, 3. other physically handicapped children and children with severe learning difficulties (e.g. Down syndrome), and 4. children with behavioural or psychiatric disorders). Access to special education requires an indication by a committee. There are also possibilities for additional guidance and support for pupils in regular education. Schools receive additional funding for those pupils (Leerling Gebonden Financiering).

Schools for vocational training have developed special 'entrance classes' for school drop outs from secondary education (AKA, qualifying for an 'assistant' level).

As with many measures that aim to raise the bar, the requirement to obtain a starting qualification has a double-sided effect: it stimulates pupils to acquire higher educational levels, but at the same time has an excluding effect on those who in all probability will not be able to attain those levels.

The transition from school to work is especially hard for pupils from practical education (indication: IQ between 55 and 80), early school leavers, drop outs in the transition from secondary education to vocational training, and pupils in special education (mainly the ones with severe learning difficulties (indication: IQ less than 55), and psychiatric disorders. For other groups with 'obvious' handicaps there are relatively good supportive structures, in the form of subsidies, work place adaptation, job coaching and so on. For people with mental problems support is generally less evident, as their problems are less visible for untrained professionals.

Approximately 50% of all pupils in practical education flow into the 'Wajong', a regulation that provides special support for people who were handicapped before they are 18 years old. The uncertain factor being 'handicapped'. In the Rotterdam region only 24% enter this regulation (Spies et al, 2010). Pupils from cluster 3 schools generally all enter the Wajong regulation, as their handicaps are relatively obvious. From cluster 4 schools (for behavioural and psychiatric disorders), however, only 10% enters the Wajong (Stoutjesdijk and Berendsen, 2007). This is worrying; indications at the Rotterdam Youth Counter are that these young people make up a substantial part of the 'hard core' young unemployed. As their background is not registered as such when they enter social assistance, they are often not 'recognised', and often considered as lacking motivation rather than lacking competences, i.e. approached in a more suppressed way rather than in a supportive way. Also, the 'time horizon' used in social assistance is much more short-term (an action plan is often for six months) than the time horizon used in the Wajong, where an action plan can take up to ten years.

2.5.2. Education results

The average level of pupils in primary school in Rotterdam is lower than in the rest of the country, including other big cities. In the south part of Rotterdam the level is especially low. Compared to other

big cities in The Netherlands, a higher percentage of 60% attend preparatory vocational education (lower secondary education). Compared to other cities, there is a relatively high proportion of pupils from indigenous background among them. This is in line with a picture of Rotterdam as a working class city (Van Rhee and Roode, 2012).

In upper secondary education migrants are under-represented. In Rotterdam, the percentage of pupils that get their diploma is lower than in other big cities.

Early school leaving (i.e. at most lower secondary education and who is no longer in education or training) has dropped in The Netherlands from 15% in 2000 to less than 10% in 2011 (European Commission 2012). In line with the situation in other European countries, men are more affected than women. Almost 80% of the 20-24 year olds have at least finished upper secondary education in 2010, in which The Netherlands stand at the average in Europe.

The number of NEETs (not in employment, education or training) is the lowest in Europa with 3.8% in 2011 in The Netherlands and a EU average of 12.9% in 2011.⁹ School drop out has been on the policy agenda in The Netherlands for at least 10 years. Policies that have developed include an active policy in social assistance provision to get young people back to school rather than into work; organising guidance and social work at schools; and monitoring school drop out and follow up with house visits. Rotterdam has developed an active and integrated approach on NEETs early on, since 2004 with the establishment of the Youth Counter, and this is often regarded as a good practice. It should be noted, however, that registration of NEETs may not always reflect the actual situation; if a NEET cannot be motivated to take up school or work again, they may be taken off the list as being 'processed', not necessarily as being back on track.

Early school leaving in many cases occurs in the transition between preparatory vocational education and vocational education. This is a transition from a rather small scale school where people know your name, to a large, anonymous school of close to 30,000 pupils where it is easy to get lost or unnoticed. Another problem in some sectors is a lack of trainee places. But on the other hand there is a demand for people with a technical education (too much vacancies and trainee places) that cannot be filled as too few pupils choose a technical education.

2.6. Power, democracy, citizenship and civil participation

Interest in politics is considered a stepping-stone to involvement in community affairs. According to the European Social Survey (ESS), one in three young people (aged 15 to 29) in The Netherlands was at least 'quite interested' in politics in 2010 (European Commission, 2012).

In 2006, however, only 2% of the Dutch aged 18 to 25 and 25 to 35 had actually tried to influence politics through a political party or political organisation in the previous five years, or was a member of a political

⁹ (http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/17_youth_unemployment.pdf).

party. 30% of the 18-25 year olds and 24% of the 25-35 year olds consider themselves to be able to play an active role in politics if they wanted though. In the national elections of 2006 71% of youth aged 18 to 25 and 68% of youth aged 25 to 35 voted (CBS).

Analyses of Dutch voters show that the lower the education the least trust people have in politics and politicians. People of non-western descent and people with little education vote the least (CBS). Not surprisingly in Rotterdam the turnout of voters is lower than in The Netherlands as a whole.

In Rotterdam youth voted considerably less than older inhabitants. Prior to the council elections of 2006, the city of Rotterdam invested in activities stimulating her inhabitants to vote. Special attention was given to two subgroups: migrants and youth. Activities for youth were developed and organised in close cooperation with youth and youth organisations (Aghris, 2005).

In The Netherlands youth participation is seen as important for developing citizenship skills, and for realising a positive youth policy. The former Ministry of Youth and Family stated in 2007 that by 2011 every municipality should have organised some form of youth participation: young people should have a say in local policies that affect young people. (Ministerie voor Jeugd en Gezin, 2007).

In order to get a grasp of the status quo of young people's participation, the Ministry ordered an investigation among the Dutch municipalities. A consortium of research and youth organisations defined five stages of youth participation in municipalities, ranging from informing to actual participation and encouraging young people to set up their own activities and give advice not asked for.

The outcome was that 95% of all municipalities had a policy on youth participation, and more than 90% had a budget for it in 2009. The majority of municipalities formulated her policy on youth participation in the broader context of youth policy; 10% of the municipalities had specific youth participation policy. Young people mainly participated in the field of leisure facilities, neighbourhood facilities and the design of the public space. Regarding the first two topics there was consultation, engagement in dialogue and voicing, next to informing. On most topics though, informing was the level of involving youth (Vandenbroucke et al, 2010).

Youth policy in Rotterdam is partly carried out at the city level, and partly at the city-district level. Rotterdam youth has a say in local policies in many different ways and youth is stimulated to develop their own talents. The Youth Council of Rotterdam, which has an official status in the municipality, is one of these ways. The Youth Council can advise the local government, but also initiate plans and help to carry them out. There are also youth councils on the city-district level. The youth panel in the district Overschie, for example, won a price for the best youth project in a contest for positive youth policy. The project consisted of young people helping to find internships and work experience jobs for other young people in Overschie. Other examples are 'Talenthouse' in IJsselmonde (youth workers do not organise activities for youth, but stimulate them to make their own plans, carry them out and evaluate them), and 'Wijkpedagogiek' ('neighbourhood pedagogy') in several neighbourhoods, in which everyone involved

works together on a good and save climate for youth to grow up and strengthen own initiatives of youth themselves (Nederlands Jeugd Instituut, Dossier Lokaal Jeugdbeleid).

2.7. Policies and organisations

Since the early 1990s The Netherlands has developed an active youth policy. In 1992 came the Youth Employment Act, a first social assistance reform that focused on work rather than income. Young people who became unemployed were offered a guaranteed, created or subsidised job in the public sector, or a training and work experience place, with a work contract instead of a benefit. This act was later integrated into the general social assistance act. In 2009 there came another special act on the placing of young people, that was abolished again in 2012, and with some adjustments reintegrated into the general act on work and social assistance.

Rotterdam generally is an active city, where new policies are often piloted or even developed. It is also a big city with many policy layers, and more than one manager between policy design and implementation.

Rotterdam is divided into 10 districts that have their own (elected) authorities. Some policies are the responsibility of the district level, some of the city, some of the national government, and some are the responsibility of (mandated) regionally operating organisations and organisations cross-cutting localised authorities. City districts will be abolished from 2014 onwards.

Regarding young people there are several relevant policy areas. In short, we find social benefits and activation/reintegration/employment policies, educational policies (especially those on prevention of drop out), municipal health service and police policies on youth groups in public areas at the city level; special education and Youth Care are organised at the regional level; and social welfare is organised at the district level. Social housing corporations are not connected to a specific policy level.

A lot of effort is made to coordinate the different policy silos in order to realise an integrated approach. The most important coordinating instance is the 'youth counter' (Jongerenloket): the office in which social assistance administration for young people, the municipal education department and the public employment service and employee insurance organisation cooperate, and as an organisation cooperate with organisations in most other policy areas.

Other coordinating platforms are the DOSA (Deelgemeentelijke Organisatie Sluitende Aanpak) at district level: social teams with a coordinator that has delegated authority from the city level, that monitor young people that are known with several organisations, and that professionals (including the police) are worried about.

On a policy level, important themes are:

- Addressing the transition between lower secondary education and vocational education. There are three streams:

WP2 Rotterdam

- developing new educational forms: neighbourhood schools for stressed young people, close to where they live; craft schools and top schools that are a combination of lower secondary and of vocational education, in which pupils learn their profession from the first day on;
 - care and support at school, where they already spend most of their days, rather than in an unfamiliar environment;
 - additional information and guidance in choosing a profession and education (with an eye to possibilities on the labour market).
- Support and care for pupils to prevent drop out and to ensure that pupils develop their talents. In co-operation with Youth Care a plan called 'Every child wins' has been made to ensure a full coverage of social work at schools, and of care institutions.
 - Monitoring early school leaving without a starting qualification, and making plans with schools to combat drop out.
 - Youth unemployment: as a reaction to the economic crisis a campaign was launched to stimulate young people to continue education, rather than entering the labour market and becoming unemployed. Also additional work experience jobs and training opportunities are created.
 - Municipal team youth work: outreach youth workers go to areas where there is most nuisance. Youth work is carried out by an NGO.
 - Compulsory education, qualification obligation, and absence are strictly observed by a team of approximately 40 officers.
 - Youth Counter supports young people up to 27 years of age who need help in finding employment, education or some other daily activity, because they lack a starting qualification and/or because they have other (multiple) problems. Services and provisions include among others school and career advice, job search training, matching candidates to an education or a vacancy, wage subsidies, work experience jobs, created work, skills training, job coaching, day care for children, social work and so on.
 - Action plan on youth unemployment as a response to the crisis. The national government in 2009, 2010 and 2011 gave extra budgets to combat youth unemployment to 30 regions covering all of the country. Municipalities and their partners, such as schools and youth care together made action plans without much bureaucracy, in order to organise a swift response to rising youth unemployment. Actions in the Rotterdam region included careers guidance for final year students, subsidising and creating additional jobs, and life coaching for school leavers from practice education.

- DOSA: social teams with a director with delegated authority to address annoying and criminal youth groups that work in every city-district.
- Establishing centres for youth and families where organisations such as youth care, social work, public health and mental health cooperate in a single location.

3. Life for young people in the city

In a European comparative perspective, The Netherlands are generally doing quite well. Within The Netherlands, Rotterdam is quite a problematic city on a lot of indicators. It is traditionally a working class city, and a working class culture is handed over from one generation to the next; the educational level of young people (a high percentage of lower secondary education) is relatively low, just like the previous generation. Rotterdam is also a culturally very diverse city with migrants making up almost half of the population. Many problems are concentrated with migrant groups. Rotterdam is the city with the most 'problematic neighbourhoods' in The Netherlands, the highest unemployment of the big cities, and there is an unhealthy underclass. All of these 'symptoms' can also be seen with young people living in Rotterdam: there is intergenerational transmission.

At the same time, the employment structure of the city is changing. Blue-collar work, among others in the harbour, is declining. The economy requires better-educated workers. Although unemployment is high at the moment, the outlook is that there will be shortages on the labour market in just a few years, when the baby boom generation will retire. Especially in technical jobs there are already shortages. It is not just that 'the workforce will have to change jobs', it is also about people who have hardly any work experience, because of high unemployment, having to become employees.

The labour market discrepancies are partly 'solved' through mobility. Almost 170,000 people work in Rotterdam, but do not live there. Only approximately 75,000 people live in Rotterdam, but do not work there. This means that people from outside meet a lot of the economic needs of the city. This is to some extent true for all big cities (in Amsterdam even more). But there is a constant threat that a large part of the inhabitants will not profit from economic successes, and that two worlds coexist close together: the skyscrapers and their business, and problematic neighbourhoods with their unemployed, unhealthy, low educated, mostly migrant populations.

Of course such a pessimistic picture does not do justice to the vitality, innovation and hands on mentality that also defines the city. A lot of (initially) controversial policies have been developed in Rotterdam. For example, preventive body searches by the police in problematic neighbourhoods in the 1990s, allowed them to stop any citizen to search for weapons or drugs. Many criticized this as a violation of citizen's freedom, but it was also one of the things that has helped to 'conquer' back the no-go areas that existed in the 1990s. Other unorthodox measures that were taken include the appointment of 'city marines' who would have the authority to coordinate municipal departments to address urgent problems, but also, for

example, setting up a (then new) organization for social activation, called ‘unused qualities’, by providing long-term unemployed people with opportunities for voluntary work and meeting other people, to help them become less socially isolated.

Current initiatives include a policy on who can establish oneself in some neighbourhoods (to ensure diversity); a full engagement policy for unemployed, aimed at getting all unemployed active in one way or another, through ‘obligatory voluntary work’; a project to get migrant boys a blue collar job in the harbour, where workers are generally still white and grey-haired, to name just a few initiatives.

Rotterdam is generally seen as an innovative city. In the government sector, because there is a continuous need for social innovation, as problems are bigger (and often earlier) than in other cities. In the economy, it is needed because a lot of industrial work is affected by technological developments and there is a need for constant technological innovation. Culturally, there is a lot of room for innovation, and a necessity to ‘make things work’ in a culturally diverse city.

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