



# Building Bridges between Heritage Values and Tourism Management

PERSUING SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES IN AMSTERDAM

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Building Bridges between Heritage Values and Tourism Management: Pursuing Sustainable Outcomes in Amsterdam.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In contemporary times, to be a tourist is considered as being ‘healthy’ and part of the modern experience (Urry 1990; Urry 2002, 5). Today, most people have a great desire to participate in acts of tourism, and, due to a rise in global wealth, and easier and cheaper ways to get around, tourism has been turned into a worldwide phenomenon (Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 86; Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 1; Urry and Larsen 2011, 5). This makes tourism one of the largest industries of the globe and it is responsible for considerable inputs to job markets, revenue flows, and local development (Edgell 2015, 26). In 2019, a record of 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals were reported across the globe, which was a growth of 4 percent since last year and was the tenth consecutive year of growth (UNWTO 2020a). This development can be illustrated by examining cities, such as, Venice, Barcelona, Prague, Paris, London, Berlin and Amsterdam, which all receive large streams of visitors every year (Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 85; Van Loon and Rouwendal 2017, 109; Rawding 2000, 167).

However, at the same time, these destinations are increasingly facing challenges managing their urban environments due to these incoming tourists. Congestion of public spaces, scarcity on housing markets, and nuisance from visitors are just a couple of the often-named issues (Coccossis 2009, 49; Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 86; Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 3; Rabzauskaitė 2015, 125). Despite these growing challenges and the well-established documentation of these issues, and not to forget about global climate change which tourism also contributes to (Edgell 2015, 30), tourism remains to grow each year. This can mostly be explained by the economic benefits tourism allegedly provides for local economies. However, this creates a bias towards development opportunities and gives little weight to the observed issues or to finding sustainable solutions for these issues (Cheung and Li 2019, 1197-1198; Cotterell *et al.* 2019, 882-883; Torkington *et al.* 2020, 1041). It especially negates the carrying capacity a destination can sustain regarding tourists. It is for this reason that the term ‘overtourism’ has become popularized in recent years (Cheung and Li 2019, 1197). Tourism both impacts and depends on the sustainability of economies, ecologies, nature, cultures and the built environment. The challenge, thus, becomes how to manage the continuous rise of visitors, while at the same time preserving the

resources tourism utilizes. Especially if the industry wishes for future generations to enjoy the same perks that present people savour (Edgell 2015, 25-26). The urgency to reform the tourist industry cannot be ignored anymore given the rate at which humanity is consuming and depleting its planetary resources (Higham and Miller 2018, 1-3). This makes it interesting to have a closer look at how contemporary tourism practices are performed and how destinations are responding to these practices.

One aspect that forms a vital part of the tourism matrix is heritage, as heritage is a major pull for tourists to visit a given destination (Coccossis 2009, 50; Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 2-3; Throsby 2009, 13; Van Loon and Rouwendal 2017, 109-110). However, contemporary cities have a great desire to formulate a strong international competitive reputation in light of the visitor economy. This produces a constant incentive for growth and development by these urban spaces, which is often at odds with preservation of cultural heritage and resident's way of living (Zukin 2012, 281-283). Despite the continuous call for sustainability for the tourism industry, many attempts to achieve this seem to rather appropriate the language of sustainability rather than building a solid foundation for sustainable outcomes (Chueng and Li 2019, 1197-1198; Cotterell *et al.* 2019, 882-883; Torkington *et al.* 2020, 1041). In this thesis, it will be examined what heritage's place is within the tourism conglomerate and how heritage is affected by the visitor economy. To assert these interactions, the city of Amsterdam will be used as a case study, as it is one of the many major contemporary tourist destination, attracting many tourists year round, and, in addition, showcases many of the previously named issues caused by the industry (Geritsma and Vork 2017, 86; Rawding 2000, 167; Van Benthem *et al.* 2017, i). Amsterdam is a major place of heritage, since the seventeenth-century canal area is enlisted as UNESCO World Heritage (Pinkster and Boterman 2017, 458; Van Loon and Rouwendal 2017, 110; UNESCO 2010) and many people visit to spectate its museums, cultural heritage, and atmosphere the city provides (Dahles 1998, 58; Rawding 2000; Van Leeuwen *et al.* 2013, 1081; Van Loon and Rouwendal 2017, 110). This makes Amsterdam a relevant case study for heritage management as well.

Lastly, a side-note has to be made on the current outbreak of COVID-19. The virus has completely changed the position of the tourist industry. The pandemic has put tourism to a full halt, as it is seeing a drop of 97% of international arrivals globally. This translates to a total loss of 195 billion USD for the industry and causes millions of peoples to lose their jobs (UNWTO 2020b). Moreover, it will undoubtedly have repercussions for heritage

management as well. Despite the devastating effects the virus has caused the world, it also provides a possible opportunity to rethink tourism, which could have repercussions for heritage management as well. For a while now, there has been a wide call for making the tourism industry more sustainable (Edgell 2015, 25-26; Higham and Miller 2018, 1-3), and this might be the perfect time to achieve it. “Sustainability must no longer be a niche part of tourism but must be the new norm for every part of our sector” (UNWTO 2020c).

## 1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The intention of the thesis is to investigate the correlation between tourism and heritage values, and to unearth how this relationship can form a proxy to understand how tourism and heritage management operate together. Secondly, the thesis functions as an evaluation of different sustainability approaches. Thirdly, these approaches will be related to heritage discourse, to what extent these distribute heritage values, and how this potentially influences sustainable outcomes. It establishes the importance of heritage inside debates of tourism, as it often seems to be left out of the picture. Especially intangible or living heritage (Bui *et al.* 2020, 1025). Finally, the thesis should provide an overview of sustainability approaches towards tourism to see what our options are for the given future and to examine which approach could potentially be the most effective for creating a more balanced tourism and heritage management.

In order to investigate the previously named goals, the following research questions were utilized to examine the relationship between tourism and heritage in the context of Amsterdam, and what the implications are for sustainable solutions for tourism and heritage alike:

1. *How does Amsterdam as case study of tourism and heritage showcases the need for sustainable approaches?*
2. *Is there a correlation between the effects that tourism causes and the heritage values of Amsterdam? If so, how is this expressed?*
3. *How does Amsterdam’s AHD relate itself to its tourism management, and how does the AHD correlate to effects of tourism?*



4. *Do tourism policies offer sustainable solutions to issues of tourism? What are the implications for heritage values?*
5. *Do practices of creative tourism provide effective sustainability solutions for tourism? What are the implications for heritage values?*

To investigate these questions, two different approaches towards sustainable tourism in Amsterdam will be examined. The first is a top-down approach by the municipality of Amsterdam, which is formulated in their policy *Stad in Balans* (Amsterdam 2018). The document articulates several strategies how Amsterdam wishes to engage with tourism in the future. The second approach is a bottom-up initiative created by *The Untourist Guide to Amsterdam* (Simons and Hamer 2019). It wishes to transform tourism from a passive, consumptive act into an active contributing one, while maintaining the leisure aspect of tourism. Both approaches will be analysed using discourse analysis. In addition, the Untourist Guide will be supported through means of an interview and a participant observation.

### **1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

In the first following chapter, the theoretical framework will be described. It will discuss how heritage as discourse functions and how heritage values are constructed. Furthermore, it will be explored how tourism makes use of heritage and its values and how discourse plays into this process. An overview of the sustainable approach will be provided and how sustainable tourism situates itself on this spectrum. The third chapter introduces the methodology that was conducted to research the case study of Amsterdam. It contains the qualitative research methods of discourse analysis, interviewing and participant observation, and how these have helped to understand the sources. In the fourth chapter, the results of the analysis will be presented. It starts by presenting the contemporary situation of Amsterdam as destination by critically reviewing existing literature and research on the subject. This is followed by analysing Amsterdam's AHD. Next, two sustainable approaches towards tourism will be identified, which have been divided into a top-down and bottom-up approach. Chapter five represents the discussing of the results. The final chapter will conclude the proposed research questions and provides recommendations for further research.

## 2 DEFINITIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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Before moving into the data, it is necessary to establish the key concepts that are involved when discussing sustainable approaches for heritage and tourism management in the context of Amsterdam. Starting with heritage. It is a concept shrouded in ambiguity (Harrison 2013, 14; Schofield 2008, 19) and, therefore, there is a need to unpack and define it. Of special importance is ‘discourse’ and how it shapes the understanding of heritage (Smith 2006). From this vantage point, heritage values will be discussed. After this has been established, tourism as social phenomenon will be investigated. First, a quick note will be given on ‘mobility’, and how tourism situates itself in the larger context of contemporary global mobilities (Frisch *et al.* 2019; Sheller and Urry 2004). Next, a closer look will be given to practices of tourism, which are constructed by the *tourist gaze* (Urry 1990; Urry 2002; Urry and Larsen 2011). To conclude, sustainability will enter the mix (Baker 2006; Clark 2008; Girard and Nijkamp 2009). Concepts of sustainability will provide a backdrop for formulating sustainable tourism approaches and how it can potentially reshape interactions with heritage. A creative tourism model (Rabazauskaitė 2015; Richards 2011; 2019) will be explored as an example of such an approach.

### 2.1 HERITAGE AS DISCOURSE

Many different scholars have defined heritage in numerous different ways (Fairclough *et al.* 2008; Harrison 2010; 2013; Lowenthal 1998; 2015; Schofield 2008; Smith 2006; Stig Sørensen and Carman 2009). As Harrison (2013) puts it: “Heritage has been used to describe everything from buildings to cooking styles, songs to personal belongings, ethnicity to religion” (Harrison 2013, 14). It seems as if heritage, by its essence, can be anything and everything (Schofield 2008, 19). This was not always the case. The concept of heritage as it is today, started out as grand monumental buildings and sites that exemplified the exceptional pieces of one’s culture. However, throughout the last decades, this idea of heritage has been criticized, making heritage more mundane, less Western orientated, and less focused on the material (Lowenthal 1998; Smith 2006; Harrison 2013). It shows how “[...]”

heritage is open to change” (Lowenthal 1998, 18-19). And it is exactly this constant process of modifying the definition of heritage what makes it so elusive (Schofield 2008, 16).

However, this does not mean that heritage is meaningless. At its core, heritage can be defined as a relationship with the past to the present, which has been created through a selective process of the past to shape the future by contemporary society (Fairclough *et al.* 2008, 1; Harvey and Perry 2015, 4-6). This relationship is embodied in selected objects, practices or places that are believed to showcase a past that is valued by a present culture. An important characteristic of this relationship, is that heritage is a fabrication of the human imagination and, is therefore, dependent on people and their cultural processes to exist. No form of heritage possesses any intrinsic qualities. It is the use and experience of heritage in a specific context at a specific time by people which makes it heritage (Smith 2006, 46-47). Heritage, therefore, is a process bound by time and space (Fairclough *et al.* 2008, 2-4; Harrison 2013, 14-17; Smith 2006, 3).

Perceiving heritage as a process, is what has led some people to refer to heritage as a discourse (Smith 2006; Waterton *et al.* 2006). ‘Discourse’ can be described as a way of interpreting and talking about the world, which, in turn, shapes how people act and think about their lives and the environment they live in. Discourse, therefore, is not merely the act of talking, but a social action in and of itself (Bryman 2016, 531-535). Discourse decides what constitutes as knowledge and shapes power relations and ideologies (Smith 2006, 2-7), because, it is in a discourse where social and political relations are being manifested.

*“Political realities – the patterns of power that join and separate the various stakeholders in the heritage – are ever present: they are sometimes on the surface of conservation activities; often they just lurk beneath”* (Mason 2008, 107).

Therefore, to understand heritage is to understand discursive practices (Wu and Hou 2009, 37).

An important concept in thinking of heritage as a discourse, is Laurajane Smith’s Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD), which is a predominantly Western discourse which naturalizes:

*“[...] a range of assumptions about the innate and immutable cultural values of heritage that are linked to and defined by the concepts of monumentality and aesthetics”* (Smith 2006, 4).

Furthermore, the AHD:

*“[...] privileges expert values and knowledge about the past and its material manifestations and dominates and regulates professional heritage practices” (Smith 2006, 4-5).*

The AHD determines how we think and act regarding heritage. It confines heritage to be something of the past, making it exclusively accessible to ‘experts’ to analyse it and it therefore excludes alternative discourses. In addition, it confines people to interact with heritage to either (1) preservation and conservation practices or (2) visitation, tourism and leisure (Smith 2006, 12). This creates a perception of the public as ‘empty vessels’ and passive consumers of heritage (Smith 2006, 29-32).

## **2.2 HERITAGE VALUES**

With heritage being a discourse, there are certain values that are ingrained in such a discourse. Values can be explained as:

*“[...] a set of standards against which things are compared. These standards trigger feelings and emotions and provide the basis for emotional commitment. Such standards are commonly but not universally held, they are constantly being renegotiated and changed, and their formulation and acceptance is a consensual matter” (Schofield 2008, 24).*

According to Mason (2008), values can guide individuals or groups towards specific lines of actions by providing them with a set of morals, principles or ideas. (Mason 2008, 99-100). When anything is said to hold any value, therefore, implies that it has a function or has a benefit for a society. Or put differently, heritage is a: “[...] dynamic expression of societal values” (Harvey and Perry 2015, 4). In this way, heritage can be seen as a materialization of what societies think is important and can be the driving force of shaping society (Harvey and Perry 2015, 4-6).

Value is impregnated into the heritage from outside by social processes and negotiations by different stakeholders (Lipe 1984, 2; Mason 2008, 99-100). Each stakeholder will have their own conceptions of what is valuable about a given heritage, which can complement or contradict with other stakeholders. This web of values is an inherent part of what heritage is. It is why heritage has the potential to be a forum for contestation and

debate, and it is why value assessment of heritage needs to be approached in a pluralistic manner (Lipe 1984, 2; Mason 2008, 100). Assessing heritage values includes discussing who has the power to decide what is of value and how something should be valued, which stakeholders have a say, and which do not (Harrison 2013, 32). This makes heritage a highly political act as well (Fairclough *et al.* 2008, 7; Mason 2008, 104).

Different authors have tried to categorize and define values of heritage in various manners (Lipe 1984; Carver 1996; Carmen *et al.* 1999; Darvil 2007; Mason 2008), but for this thesis, the dichotomy of economic vs sociocultural values, suggested by Mason (2008), will be applied. Sociocultural values can be defined as holding value, because:

*“[...] it holds meaning for people or social groups due to its age, beauty, artistry, or association with a significant person or event or contributes to processes of cultural affiliation”* (Mason 2008, 104).

Sociocultural values showcase the overlapping collection of historical, symbolic, social, spiritual or aesthetic attributes that heritage can contain. These are the values that portray knowledge, relate to ways of living, showcase ideas, build emotional attachment and social cohesion, and contribute to overall well-being (Mason 2008, 104-105). In contrast, economic values are:

*“[...] one of the most powerful ways in which society identifies, assesses, and decides on the relative value of things”* (Mason 2008, 106).

Economic value can be understood as the ‘use’ value based on the goods and services heritage provides, which are subjugated to market economics. Sociocultural values can therefore also be seen as ‘non-use’ values, as they cannot be priced or traded (Mason 2008, 106).

Heritage is often perceived as a public good that has to be valued and managed as such. For this reason, it has been argued that heritage cannot be subjected to regular market economics, because it is impossible to put a price on heritage (Clark 2008, 89). Especially archaeologists or managers of heritage are keen on ascribing value to heritage simply because it is heritage (Carmen *et al.* 1999). Nonetheless, in reality heritage is constantly subjected to economic interests, because it is part of the larger nexus of social and cultural process, and it has to compete with other resources for space, energy and time. Making it inevitable that monetary value acts on heritage (Carver 1996, 46; Clark 2008, 86-87; Lipe

1984, 8). For many contemporary cities, the value that heritage brings to the table is increasingly being used as a resource for enhancing quality of life for local residents.

*“Heritage is not only selected; it is also used. This implies commodification [...]. This is especially the case in tourism for tourism involves the packaging and sale of experiences”* (Wall 2009, 32).

This already showcases the ‘use’ value that heritage holds. However, economic value should not become the dominant force for heritage management, because that would mean that heritage managers would have to dispose of all the other heritages that do not make a profit (Lipe 1984, 9).

## 2.3 MOBILITY AND TOURISM

One major way in which heritage is put to work is by tourism (Coccosis 2009, 49; Wall 2009). Tourism includes an arsenal of senses that construct experiences which make tourism acts “performative, embodied practices [...]” (Urry and Larsen 2011, 11). Tourism involves the:

*“[...] social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.”* (www.unwto.org).

Nowadays, there is barely a place left untouched by tourism’s influence, making it an integral part of contemporary lives (Urry 1990; Urry 2002, 5; Urry and Larsen 2011). This is in part because large parts of the Western world have moved into an economy that puts leisure and experiences over services, goods and commodities. This has come to be known as the *experience economy* (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Together with rising levels of wealth and the compression of time and space, there has been an incredible increase in tourism (Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 1). However, tourism is not the only way in which people move around as processes of globalization have given way for many sectors to increase their scale of mobility. Tourism, therefore, is part of a larger development of interconnected global processes (Sheller and Urry 2004, 2-3; Urry and Larsen 2011, 19). It is why it is important to frame tourism in a bigger context.

In the book *Tourism Mobilities: Places to Play, Places in Play*, Sheller and Urry (2004) discuss how places are 'moved' by different modes of mobilities. They showcase that places are not just passive destinations where people travel to, but, places are living entities which are changed physically and conceptually through the interactions of locals and external vessels coming in and out.

*"Places are about relationships, about the placing of peoples, materials, images and the systems of difference that they perform. In particular, places are located in relation to material environments and objects as well as to human meanings and interactions"* (Sheller and Urry 2004, 5-6).

In addition, places contain many different fluxes of people (age, gender, class, ethnicity, etc.). Places should be understood as hybrid spaces in which a constellation of mobilities, practices and actors come together to create it (Wildish and Spierings 2019, 142). The tourist is just one piece of this puzzle. Especially in the contemporary world, tourist practices and the place in which they are performed, have become deeply intertwined and connected to everyday life. This causes for the blurring the lines between locals and visitors as both engage more and more often in similar practices in the wider cityscape (Stors *et al.* 2019, 1-6; Sheller and Urry 2004, 4; 10).

Ever since the establishment of the modern tourism experience, there have been several attempts to analyse this social act. Some of the earlier works referred to tourism as a pseudo-event or related it to religious acts such as pilgrimage or rite of passage (Boorstin 1962; Cohen 1979; Urry 1990; 2002). Others have called it a 'staged authenticity' (McCannell 1999). However, it is Urry's (1990; 2002) 'tourist gaze' that seems to be the most applicable for analysing the practices of visitors in relation to heritage. Urry notes that tourism is not just a simple search for the authentic. It stems from the division between the familiar and the unfamiliar. For this reason, to 'gaze' upon any 'thing' always includes relating the gazed object to the self and what one knows (Urry and Larsen 2011, 1).

*"[The tourist gaze] emphasize[s] the systemic and regularised nature of various gazes, each of which depends upon social discourses and practices, as well as aspects of buildings, design and restoration that foster the necessary 'look' of a place or an environment [...]. [and] are organised by many professionals [...] to 'construct' visitor attractions [...]"* (Urry and Larsen 2011, 12).

The tourist gaze, therefore, is heavily tied to acts of discourse and it can be recognized how this further tie into the Authorised Heritage Discourse as a tourist gaze partially relies on its construction by professionals.

Any tourist gaze is dependent on a few criteria in order to be constructed. First, there needs to be a unique and/or famous object to gaze upon. Often this includes a capital city of a site of global importance. Second, there have to be particular signifiers for tourists to read a given landscape. Often created by a discourse. Thirdly, through the gaze the tourist spectates peculiar aspects that were thought to be familiar. In addition, through the gaze the tourists also expects to see practices of the everyday in a foreign setting. Finally, tourists are searching for specific signs which indicate an object's meaning (Urry 2002, 1-2; Urry and Larsen 2011, 11).

The tourist gaze highlights how cultural tourists love to see local products and practices that showcase the uniqueness of a destination's cultural identity. Visitors are attracted in large part to these local life images, the everyday life, and they are increasingly searching for the 'authentic' local experience (Dahles 1998, 65; Frisch *et al.* 2019, 2). This is exemplified by the increase of services like AirBnB, who markets itself with "living like a local." Tourists mostly wish to see the places where locals hang out, they value these places and want to feel like one of the locals for a fleeting moment (Wildish and Spierings 2019, 139; 155). Both the host and visitor play into these processes, and, both the tourist and the local are engaging in specific performances of a place which creates the tourist experience (Sheller and Urry 2004, 7). In addition, there is not 'one' tourist, as there are many different target groups, each valuing a different aspect of a destination (Van Leeuwen *et al.* 2013, 1077; Van Loon and Rouwendal 2017, 111), each constructing their own gaze (Urry and Larsen 2011).

## **2.4 THE SUSTAINABLE APPROACH**

In recent decades, issues regarding tourism have been popping up more often and have increasingly been affecting heritage and residents' lives at different levels (Coccosis 2009, 49; Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 86; Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 3; Rabazauskaitė 2015, 125). For this reason, many governments and other organizations have embraced a sustainable approach for solving these (Edgell 2015; Higham and Miller 2018; Torkington *et al.* 2020). At its essence, 'sustainability' builds around the idea that the world and its resources are finite. It then becomes necessary to find ways in which people can put those resources to



work while ensuring that, not only the needs of current generations are met, but, also those of future generations. To achieve this goal, it needs to be accepted that economic development and preservation are not mutually exclusive, but part of the same coin (Baker 2006, 22; Clark 2008, 82). This counts just as much for heritage as it is often regarded as a non-reusable resource (Holtorf 2008).

The key to any successful sustainable approach is the assumption that the environment, economy and social practices are all inherently interconnected with one another. The environment cannot be preserved if it does not interact with economic and social issues, but, at the same time, the economy and social spheres will be worse off if the environment is lost (Baker 2006, 23; Clark 2008, 83). Applying this to heritage, these ‘spheres’ can all be ascribed to different sets of values and stakeholders, which are in turn all dependent on each other. Understanding the different values at a heritage site and to which sphere and stakeholder they belong to, therefore, is fundamental for implementing an effective heritage management plan (Clark 2008, 91). This means it is quintessential to account for as many stakeholders (and their values) as possible, and to provide them with an opportunity to participate in the heritage management process (Keitumetse 2009, 202).

Although sustainability seems to be a straightforward concept, it is swarmed by inconsistency, contingency, and is subject to interpretation. What might be sustainable for some, might not be sustainable for others (Baker 2006, 35-36; Torkington *et al.* 2020, 1046; Wall 2009, 35-40). This means that it is important to be clear about how a sustainable approach is defined. For this thesis, a ‘strong sustainability’ position will be considered when evaluating sustainable approaches. A strong sustainability position:

*“[...] asserts that environmental protection is a precondition for economic development. [It] [...] imposes strict limits on how much human capital can compensate for running down natural [or cultural] capital. [...] Strong sustainable development also seeks a shift from quantitative growth, where growth is seen as an end in itself and measured only in material terms, to qualitative development, where quality of life is prioritised”* (Baker 2006, 42-43).

Strong sustainability presupposes that development is not always a better option and that preservation can even be preferred, since, certain values simply cannot be replaced. This means that there is zero substitutability of these values. When considering heritage, it is capable of producing unique sociocultural values which cannot be provided in any other form, meaning, there is zero substitutability of these heritage values (Throsby 2009, 17-

18). If tourism would damage heritage to the point it exceeds its carrying capacity, this would mean that the associated heritage values will be lost forever. Seeing that tourism is dependent on heritage for providing tourism attractions, when heritage values are lost, this would mean that the tourist industry would be hurt as well (Coccossis 2009, 47-52; Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 3). However, due to a strong pro-growth mentality within the industry the strong sustainable position is often pushed to the margins (Cotterell *et al.* 2019, 883-884).

An important factor in the sustainability debate surrounding heritage and tourism, is the concept of 'liveability'. It refers to:

*"[...] characteristics of urban environment that make them attractive as places to live. These characteristics include tangible features such as the existence of public infrastructure [...] and intangible features such as a sense of place, a distinctive local identity, [and] well-established social networks [...]"* (Throsby 2009, 18).

So, when levels of liveability would be severely affected, this would hold consequences for the sustainable position of a place as well. Heritage plays an integral part in the liveability debate because heritage provides people with an idea of continuity of a space for its inhabitants. This also connects to characteristics of 'living' heritage. Living heritage stresses how historic towns are places that are still in use by local communities, and that a destination is not mere material that needs to be conserved. Living heritage: "[...] encompasses the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills handed down from generation to generation" (Bui *et al.* 2020, 1025). This is best exemplified through what Zukin (2012) calls 'vernacular urban spaces. Within these spaces all the social, cultural and economic exchanges of a city take place. It is these exchanges at these spaces that construct cultural heritage and constitute the urban cultural ecosystem wherein the cultural authenticity and identity of a place are sustained (Zukin 2012, 281-283; 290). Local residents depend on these systems of exchange and they stand at the heart of safeguarding the heritage (Bui *et al.* 2020, 1026). It is in these spaces where the sociocultural values are created, recreated and exchanged.

## 2.5 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Thus far, it has been showcased how heritage operates, is valued, and how tourism needs and uses heritage and its values. When practices of tourism are utilizing heritage, it is, of course, also influencing that same heritage. Observing tourist destinations, tourism can impact a place, both materially, by ways of transforming infrastructure, reshape urbanization, agriculture and food importation, but also conceptually as a place can 'brand' itself in a certain way which influences local identity and lifestyle (Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 1; Sheller and Urry 2004, 4). Allegedly, tourism can give an impulse to revenue incomes, regional income, employment, possible second-round effects, stimulus to economic growth, strengthen local identity or help preserve the natural and cultural environment, and therefore improve the quality of life (Coccosis 2009 49; Wall 2009, 36-37). Providing 'pride' of one's heritage is another often named effect (Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 88). However, tourist interests can also often be at odds with economic, ecological or social needs of residents or other stakeholders. Tourists can, for instance, cause for a decline in the quality of life, destroy social and cultural uniqueness, take a toll on local infrastructure, creates noise and waste pollution, congestion, rising costs of services, land-use change and competition, the commercialization of cultures, loss of tradition, to name just a few (Coccosis 2009, 49; Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 3; Rabzauskaitė 2015, 125).

Consequently, taking a sustainable approach towards tourism is vital. In order to achieve sustainable outcomes, the entire system needs to be taken into account, because, when sustainability is only applied to a single sector, in this case tourism, it defeats the purpose of using an sustainable approach (Wall 2009, 41-43). Sustainability would then only mean that it would sustain the industry, which could still mean damage to the system at large. For this reason, it is necessary to have a holistic angle of a place with all its mobilities (Sheller and Urry 2004). When discussing places of heritage, this means that the starting point is to recognize that places of heritage hold many different values, not just economic (Throsby 2009, 15). This also means recognizing the stakeholders that are involved that perform these values, and to include them in the decision-making process of heritage and tourism management (Noordeloos 2018, 133). Since there seems to be a positive correlation between resident participation and positive attitude towards tourism (Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 97).

Unfortunately, the solution is not just simply having everyone a seat at the table. Different stakeholders will have different attitudes towards the identity and liveability of a tourist area. For some, tourism might be a source of pride or income, while for others, it only offers frustration (Van Leeuwen *et al.* 2013, 1078). To make things even more difficult:

*“Tourists and residents are city users who visit the same places, engage in similar practices, share experiences, variably feel at home and interchangeably identify and are perceived as insiders and outsiders”* (Wildish and Spierings 2019, 139-140).

Which makes it difficult to accurately assess where issues within the cityscape stem from. Therefore, policymakers should let go of the hard distinction between tourists and locals if they wish to come to a sustainable balance (Wildish and Spierings 2019, 161). Despite these complications, two factors have been identified that can influence the satisfaction levels of residents regarding liveability and tourism. These are: (1) the amount of tourists distributed over time and space in relation to the amount of residents, and (2) the behaviour that tourists practice related to what residents measure as the norms for behaviour (Postma and Schmuecker 2017). These form a solid grounding to work from when investigating effects of the visitor economy.

To mitigate the negative effects tourism produces, a need for sustainable tourism approaches has been met (Edgell 2015; Higham and Miller 2018; Torkington *et al.* 2020). Sustainable tourism can be defined as to:

*“[...] avoid short-term exploitative practices in favour of long-term solution that maintain and enhance the economic, environmental, social and cultural capacities of a site, a city, a region or a country”* (Throsby 2009, 14).

Yet, this still leaves much room for interpretation. A more conclusive approach can be found in what has been named ‘creative tourism’ (Richards and Wilson 2006; Richards 2011; 2019). Creative tourism breaks with old tourism conventions that separate the visitor from the local by allowing for greater immersion in environments and communities (Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 97). Already it can be recognized that creative tourism fits well into perceiving the city as an interconnected space that combines many different fluxes of people (Sheller and Urry 2004; Frisch *et al.* 2019).

Furthermore, creative tourism preferences active participation, high level of engagement and collaboration between the local and the tourist. It allows the tourists to

become a co-producer of place, letting them contribute to local economies, environments, and social spheres, which in the process provides for a unique leisure experience (Rabauskaitė 2015, 126). This also showcases how creative tourism further fits into contemporary trends of selling and buying experience packages (Pine and Gilmore 1999). The co-creation between host and visitor provides for more flexible and authentic experiences. It shifts the perspective from traditional cultural tourism and tangible heritage to the intangible heritage and everyday life (Richards and Wilson 2006; Richards 2011, 1126-1130; 2019). Hence, creative tourism engages visitors into the vernacular urban spaces (Zukin 2012), showcasing its living heritage (Bui *et al.* 2020). Furthermore, it still involves tourist in the tourist gaze because creative tourism showcases cultural signifiers of the landscape from up close. It provides an excellent chance for spectators to observe unfamiliar practices in familiar settings, or vice versa (Urry 1990; 2002; Urry and Larsen 2011). The greater focus on intangible heritage would be a welcome change, since it would put more focus on the sociocultural values that often remain opaque. However, the pitfall could be that creative tourism further increases commodification of everyday life (Richards 2011; 2019).

## 2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the relevant theoretical principles. It has been discussed how heritage as a discourse can be a powerful tool for shaping people's understanding of the world and how they act in it. In particular, the Authorised Heritage Discourse (Smith 2006) plays a fundamental part in this process. It is responsible for the constructing of the values that are at play in heritage, and, therefore, decides which values are expressed and by whom. Heritage values can be expressed in several ways, but for this thesis, Mason's (2008) dichotomy of sociocultural versus economic values have been chosen. Since tourism makes use of heritage and its values, this poses questions to how tourism influences these. The tourist gaze (Urry 1990; Urry 2002; Urry and Larsen 2011) shows how visitors are interacting with the surroundings of their destination. The tourist gaze presupposes that tourists look for certain signifiers, and they act upon these in a particular way, which has been systemized through social discourses and practices often constructed by experts. It, therefore, is strongly linked to acts of AHD's. The chapter further explained how approaches of sustainability operate and how it is built from the idea of a finite world of

resources which interconnect economic, social and environmental aspects (Baker 2006; Clark 2008). Since certain values, such as sociocultural values put out by heritage, know zero substitutability, a strong sustainability position is preferred for this thesis (Throsby 2009). Finally, as a call for sustainable tourism has been popularized in the last years, it has been explored what that looks like. For this thesis, creative tourism (Richards 2011; 2019) practices have been taken as a model to build towards sustainable solutions for the tourism industry.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

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This chapter will explain the methodology that was used during the study. According to Stig Sørensen and Carman (2009), heritage is an inherently interdisciplinary field, that borrows from many other disciplines for its methods and research approaches. So, there exist many different tools to study heritage (Stig Sørensen and Carman 2009, 3-5). In this thesis, heritage values will be assessed by utilizing the role of discourse inside the debate of tourism management. Therefore, the methodology will be based on this foundation. First, the sources used in the study will be outlined, and how they were selected and accessed. After, the applied methods will be explained.

### 3.1 LIMITATIONS, DELIMITATIONS, AND ASSUMPTIONS

Before diving in the sources and methods, first some statements have to be made on the choices that had to be made for the thesis. As with any research, time and resources form great limitations that determine the level of detail of a study (Bryman 2012, 9). Especially regarding interviewing and observations as they consume a lot of time (Keitumetse 2009, 206; Stig Sørensen 2009, 176). The same holds true for this thesis. Another limitation for the research, was the level of access to sources. For both the interview as well as the participation observation, access was dependent on receiving permission before hand. This greatly affected the time schedule and limited the scope of the research design, causing the data that was collected from these sources only to be exploratory in nature. For the sample of Plastic Whale, the study was highly dependent on convenience sampling (Salkind 2010, 254) for obtaining respondents. In addition, the confinement of time and resources also meant that only a small fraction of alternative tourist initiatives could be studied. Furthermore, participating is often done till the point that people get fully adjusted to the researcher's presence (O'Reilly 2005, 97). However, this thesis only operated at a small research scale, so this was not a possibility, because there was inadequate time. This means that the thesis is never able to show a full picture of alternative, creative and sustainable tourism practices. This limits the extent to which a statement can be made on the effectiveness of creative tourism for sustainable outcomes. Also, it was only possible to gain insight

into how the narrative and practices are constructed, but not to how these are received by visitors, nor how they play out in practice.

Furthermore, since examining an entire city such as Amsterdam can become a daunting task quickly, some hard choices had to be made in order to make the thesis feasible. First off, by taking discourse analysis of documentation as the main analysis method, the source material was confined and made the analysis digestible. Secondly, by only analysing municipality documents for the top-down approach and AHD analysis, the available dataset was made viable as well. Thirdly, committing to one bottom-up alternative approach towards tourism provided equal focus. Finally, in order for the data to hold any meaning, certain assumptions had to be made. It has to be assumed that all used literature and previously performed research is not plagiarized, adequately conducted, and hold accurate conclusions based on their collected data. Furthermore, it has to be accepted that everything which is stated in the analysed documents by the organizations is transparent in describing their attitudes, believes and goals. Moreover, it has to be presumed that everything that was said during the interview was understood by the interviewee and the answers that were given held the truth. The same goes for the respondents during the participant observation.

### **3.2 SELECTION OF SOURCES AND PARTICIPANTS**

During the research, the following sources have been utilized to analyse the case study:

1. Secondary academic literature and professional research reports.
2. The policy document of *Stad in Balans* formulated by the municipality of Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018).
3. The policy document *Stad van Cultuur* formulated by the municipality of Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam 2019).
4. The policy document *Perspectief Bestemming Nederland 2030* formulated by the NBTC (NBTC 2019)
5. *The Untourist Guide to Amsterdam* booklet (Simons and Hamer 2019).
6. Semi-structured interview with open-ended questions with one of the co-founders of the Untourist Guide movement at a café in Amsterdam on 6 January 2020 (Appendix D).



7. A tour and focus group with Plastic Whale on the canals of Amsterdam on 11 January 2020 (Appendix II).

A number of governmental policy documents have been used in order to answer the research questions. These were selected because:

*“[...] policy documents convey current government values and objectives and project them into the future. National tourism policy document fulfils this function for a country’s tourism and helps to align public and private investments and direct resources in tourism to agreed national goals”* (Torkinton *et al.* 2020, 1042).

For this reason, a national perspective is incorporated as well, because it will contextualize the local policy of Amsterdam. This includes the policy document *Perspectief Bestemming Nederland 2030*, published by the National Bureau of Tourism and Conferences (NBTC 2019). It sets out to construct a new vision for the tourism industry in the Netherlands, which uses a sustainability position, and, therefore portrays well how sustainable approaches are treated in the country. As for the actual case of Amsterdam, the policy called *Stad in Balans*, has been utilized (Amsterdam 2018). It proposes a large array of measure that should mitigate the reported issues regarding tourism for the city. The municipality strives to work towards a new balance, which showcases how the city council is embracing a sustainable approach. In addition, the municipality’s program *Stad van Cultuur* (Amsterdam 2019) has also been examined to uncover the Authorised Heritage Discourse. It portrays the city’s vision for culture and arts and, therefore, acts on the city’s heritage discourse. For analysing the bottom-up approaches to sustainable tourism, the booklet of *The Untourist Guide to Amsterdam* (Simons and Hamer 2019) was used. The initiative proposes a guiding list of practices for tourists during their stay in Amsterdam. All of the listed activities are aimed to contribute to the city and to make the city and tourism more sustainable. All policy documents were available on the websites of the institutions and have been accessed by such. The Untourist Guide was bought from a bookstore.

To further the understanding of the Untourist Guide, a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions (Given 2008, 810) was held with one of the co-founders of the movement. Access for the interview was granted by going through the organizational lines and asking the organization for permission (Given 2008, 3). In addition, a participant observation was conducted during a Plastic Whale tour, since it is one of the suggested activities from the Untourist Guide booklet. The participation was done with a focus group

(Salkind 2010, 500) of 8 tourists, in addition to the skipper and me. One group consisted of a family from Australia with a husband and wife in their forties and their two daughters of school age. Another group consisted out of three middle-aged related women from the USA. Finally, there was a single, middle-aged, Australian woman, a researcher on tourism. And, of course, the skipper who was a Dutch man of middle-aged. All participants were Caucasian. They each formed their own separate groups that were selected by convenience sampling (Salkind 2010, 254). Again, access was granted by contacting the organizational lines (Given 2008, 3) of Plastic Whale, and by asking permission for performing research during the trip.

### **3.3 METHODS**

The goal for this thesis is to investigate the heritage values at play in the context of Amsterdam as tourist destination and what the implications are for sustainable practices. However, studying heritage values comes with its own sets of issues. Since values stem from people, this means that they are subjective and contingent (Lipe 1984, 2; Mason 2008, 99-100). Therefore, no method is able to give a full answer, hence, being aware of these shortcomings and selecting the right tools to counter these issues is fundamental. Mason (2008) proposes a 'toolbox approach' in order "[...] to get all relevant heritage values on the table [...]" (Mason 2008, 108-111). During the thesis, the following list of methods have been conducted:

1. Critical Review and Discussing of Secondary Literature
2. Critical Discourse Analysis
3. Semi-Structured Interview with Open-Ended Questions (Appendix III; IV)
4. Participant Observation in Focus Group Format (Appendix V)

These will be discussed in-depth further down below.

### 3.3.1 *Critical Literature Review*

The foundation for the thesis formed an thorough literature review on the case study of Amsterdam. Amsterdam as a place of tourism and heritage has been already extensively analysed, both by academics and public research organisations (Dahles 1998; Fedorova *et al.* 2019; Gerritsma and Vork 2017; Mak 2001; Nijman 1999; Noordeloos 2018; Pinkster and Boterman 2017; Rawding 2000; Sleutjes *et al.* 2019; Van Benthem *et al.* 2017; Van Leeuwen *et al.* 2013; Van Limburg 1997), therefore, knowing what has been researched before is vital if one wants to add to the data record. Engaging in a literature review, means to engage in the ongoing discussion and laying bear the complexity of a case study. It is used to understand the context, which further helps to formulate the research proposal and its methodology (Given 2008, 489). Reviewing existing literature, hence, formed a vital starting point for the thesis. It granted the investigation on the sustainable position of Amsterdam as destination, how heritage values are affected by tourism, and equally how experts have contributed to the construction of Amsterdam's AHD.

### 3.3.2 *Critical Discourse Analysis*

In order to investigate how heritage values in Amsterdam are constructed and expressed within the AHD, a closer look at the discourse in which they are used has to be given. An essential tool to illuminate how discourse operates, is by performing a Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA). A Discourse analysis is, in essence, “[...] an approach to language that can be applied to forms of communication other than talk” (Bryman 2016, 531). It assumes that people are using language to accomplish a certain goal, and discourse analyses unearths how this goal is established. Critical Discourse Analysis, in particular, stresses language as power source and discourse as constructing social reality. “CDA involves exploring why some meanings become privileged or taken for granted and other become marginalized” (Bryman 2016, 531-532; 540). The way that people interact with their world and how they perceive it, their norms and values, will always leave a mark, and these will shine through in discursive acts. Since for this thesis it has been taken that discourse constructs heritage and its representation, CDA becomes the perfect tool for unveiling this construction. It asks

us to re-evaluate what is considered ‘heritage’ and shows how it includes or excludes particular stakeholders (Waterton *et al.* 2006, 339-343).

On a practical level, CDA is applied to ‘penetrate’ a text by conducting a close reading, unveiling linguistic, rhetorical and semantical techniques (Bryman 2012, 531-532). After this is established, it becomes possible to examine how these discursive practices nest themselves in society, and to investigate in how far the discourse is being accepted or rejected. An important part of CDA is the concept of intertextuality, or how texts refer and relate to each other. This can unearth what is being included and what is not, or what is accepted or rejected, or if there is any negotiation or interaction between discourses. The dialogical also plays a part in this, as it is expressive of the level of naturalisation of a particular discourse. Ways of assessing the dialogicality is by analysing vocabulary and modality. Modality meaning the extent to which an author is committed to a discourse or idea and is also revealing to how that author identifies him or herself. The difference in using the word “is” versus “may” showcases this aspect (Waterton *et al.* 2006, 344-345). All of these techniques have been applied to unearth the particular discursive practices that are expressed in the Authorized Heritage Discourse of Amsterdam and how it constructs heritage values.

### 3.3.3 *Interviewing*

To further increase the understanding of the use of heritage values within the AHD, and following Mason’s (2008) toolbox approach, the study also including interviewing and participant observation. Interviews can be useful tool in unveiling people’s attitudes towards heritage (Stig Sørensen 2009, 164). Interviews can have different purposes, and this purpose can substantially influence the information that can be collected. The level of ‘control’ an interviewer wishes to have during the interviews plays a substantial part in this. It will decide how the interview will take form, how questions are framed, and how the roles of the interviewer and interviewee are shaped. For this research, an anthropological approach, which is heavily based on participant observation, has been chosen. This entails that the interviewer acts as a listener and strives to be as unobtrusive as possible during the interview (Stig Sørensen 2009, 164-165). To achieve this, the use of a semi-structured interviewing technique with open-ended questions has been applied (Bryman 2012, pp). The

reason for chosen this method, is because a semi-structured interview provides room to respond or follow-up on certain answers that the interviewee gives. It is a more flexible approach with a focus on detailed answers to be analysed (Bryman 2012, 465-467). Furthermore, open-ended questions allow the research to explore subjects in-depth and discover what is to be found. It does not confine the researcher in obtaining certain answers, but it gives room for finding novel insights (Stig Sørensen 2009, 169). Since the thesis was partially an orientation and exploration of the effectiveness or sustainable tourism practices, a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions suited the thesis the best.

When performing interviews, there is always the chance that the respondent will not understand a question put forward by the interviewer. This might not only be because they misinterpret it, but it can be because the respondent might have a different way of looking at the world than academics (Stig Sørensen 2009, 170-171). As a researcher, you will bring preconceived notions to the field. Words such as ‘heritage’ may be completely obvious to the researcher, but people that live in the social-cultural place to be studied might have a quite different idea of what that means (Keitumetse 2009, 203). It is therefore important to be aware of language and how it constructs meaning (O’Reilly 2005, 95). The same can apply to the answers put forward by the interviewee. It is, therefore, absolutely vital to formulate questions in an understandable manner for respondents (Stig Sørensen 2009, 172). Lastly, people do not only communicate through their words, but also through their actions. In the case of interviews, body language and other forms of non-verbal communication can tell much information (Keitumetse 2009, 207-213; Stig Sørensen 2009, 174).

To analyse interviews, transcription and coding are often used methods. During this thesis, this was done through ‘thematic analysis’ (Bryman 2012, 585-588). This incorporates finding reoccurring ‘themes’ in the transcript and code these appropriately. In addition, they can be categorized further in larger baskets by using overarching themes (Bryman 2016, 585-593).

### *3.3.4 Participant Observation*

Both participant and non-participant observations can form useful tools to check if what people have been saying, is also what they are actually doing. It has to be kept in mind

though that any form of ethnographic research, large or small, can be invasive for the people that are participating during the research, and, thus, it has the potential to breach people's privacy (Bryman 2012, 121-127). Therefore, it is critical to find a balance between respecting people's rights and finding data for the research. This conundrum is often shown in the covert vs overt distinction. A rule of thumb, however, should always be to not cause any harm to the participants in any way or form. Gaining fully informed consent from participants is key in this process (O'Reilly 2005, 59-62). The question of 'disclosure' is another integral part in operating transparent. In order for researchers to respect privacy boundaries of respondent, it is necessary to ask their view on the matter. Occasionally this means that academics have to change names of people, places or obscure hints of identity to protect participants' privacy. Other questions that arise are: how secure are your field notes? How likely is it that other people will see them? Do participants mind you documenting them? Asking for permission is again key. Finally, research of a qualitative nature is often a two-way process. Researchers are asking for something (time and knowledge) from participants, so, it only makes sense that academics give something in return (Emerson *et al.* 1995, 21; O'Reilly 2005, 63-67).

As for the analysing of the participation observation, a similar strategy was utilized as with the interviewing. This means that a code map has been crafted which engaged in thematic analysis (Bryman 2012, 585-593).

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

#### *3.4.1 Prior to Data Collection*

For analysing both the tourism policy documents of the NBTC and municipality of Amsterdam, not much preparation had to be conducted. The most important part was to access the texts so that they could be analysed. For the interviews and participant observation, however, more homework was required. First, creating a guiding questionnaire for interviews forms a vital aspect to keep the research consistent and focused (Keitumetse 2009, 206; Appendix III). The same can be said for participant observations (Appendix V). As was decided for a semi-structured interview with open-ended interview questions, a

questionnaire should not function as something fixed or complete. Rather, it acts as a guide, something to fall back on. But it should never take the lead. Because, the main focus of a semi-structured interview is to remain flexible, open-ended, and to allow the interviewee to get as much space as needed to answer the questions (Bryman 2016, 465-468). A disclosure document for the interviewee's functions in a similar way for the participants so that they know what is to be expected of them. For this reason, a written consent form had been formulated. This included a full explanation of the research subject as well as a statement of what private information might be included for the thesis and how it will be stored and circulated after. Moreover, it was made clear to the interviewee that, in case that delicate subjects would be discussed which the interviewee would feel not comfortable with, it was possible to decline from discussing these at any moment (Appendix IV). A similar disclosure was provided for the participant observation. However, due to the nature of the tour, it was decided to provide this orally as it would obstruct the activity less vigorously. Finally, all respondents were given the opportunity to keep up with my research and gain access to the results of the thesis.

#### *3.4.2 During Data Collection*

Taking notes formed the centre for the data collection process. Taking notes is critical for any type of social research, but writing down everything during an interview, observation, or text analysis is exhausting and even unproductive. Moreover, there will always be things that will be forgotten or missed by the researcher (Emerson *et al.* 1995, 17; 23). The biggest challenge is often the choice of what to write down and what to filter out. This of course reduces information and creates bias as the researcher is making choices based on his or her own judgment. This cannot be avoided, but, being aware of this process could mitigate some of the created bias (O'Reilly 2005, 98-100). In general, writing notes should be done as quickly as possible. Relying on memory is not a safe method as humans are forgetful creatures. However, during intensive participation, it might not be possible to write things down in the moment as they happen. In that case, the only option is to write notes after the events, and the only source then becomes memory. Every scientist will feel torn between their research and the will to participate, because when you are taking notes, it means you are not engaging fully into the activity. Another issue when writing notes that comes up, is

that participants can become uneasy or change their behaviour when notes are being written in front of them. Short jottings might be a good alternative to solve these problems (Emerson *et al.* 1995, 17-20). As for considering ethics, it was again communicated to the respondents, both during the interview and the participant observation, that notes would be part of my involvement (Appendix IV). In addition, permission was asked to take pictures during the participation. For both taking notes and pictures it was again disclosed that when any respondent had any objections to this at any moment, they had the opportunity to let this be known. In that case, these would not be included in the research.

### **3.5 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, it was discussed how the methodology and relevant sources and methods were applied to find, collect, and analyse the case study. In the next chapter, the data and its results will be presented, which should provide a foundation for answering the research questions.



## 4 GRAND HOTEL AMSTERDAM

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This chapter will contain a full analysis of the case study of Amsterdam as place of heritage and tourism (fig. 1). To start off, a glance at the contemporary situation will be provided, which should establish an understanding for the need for sustainable approaches in both heritage and tourism management. This will be structured by presenting, first, the statistical evidence and, second, by examining the affective experiences and attitudes from tourists and residents alike. It will showcase how difficult it has become to distinguish between local residents or global tourists, to separate fantasy from reality. Next, a deconstruction of Amsterdam's AHD (Smith 2006) will be portrayed. This will be analysed by using both primary and secondary sources. Both the review of Amsterdam as tourist destination and Amsterdam's AHD will show how tourism is deeply ingrained into the DNA of Amsterdam, which is why the city can be called Grand Hotel Amsterdam. Especially the AHD showcased a strong affiliation with tourism as the city projects itself as a Global Republic.

Furthermore, sustainable approaches regarding tourism for the city will be examined, which are divided into top-down and bottom-up approaches. To start, the National Bureau of Tourism and Conferences (NBTC) will provide a grander context for the current trend that can be observed in tourism strategies. This will be related to a recent study performed by Torkington *et al.* (2020), in which they examined multiple national tourism policies across Europe. Once this has been established, the approach by the municipality of Amsterdam will be investigated. It will come to show how sustainable language has been weaved into every facet of these policies. However, it established true sustainable outcomes remains to be seen. To finish this chapter, a glance will be given to The Untourist Guide of Amsterdam (Simons and Hamer 2019), and how they, first, compare to the AHD of Amsterdam, and, second, how they provide alternative practices for tourism that allow for more sustainability in the tourism sector. The Untourist Guide will be discussed as a mode of creative tourism (Richards 2011; 2019). Part of this analysis forms the Plastic Whale tour, which is one of the recommended activities put forward by the Untourist Guide.

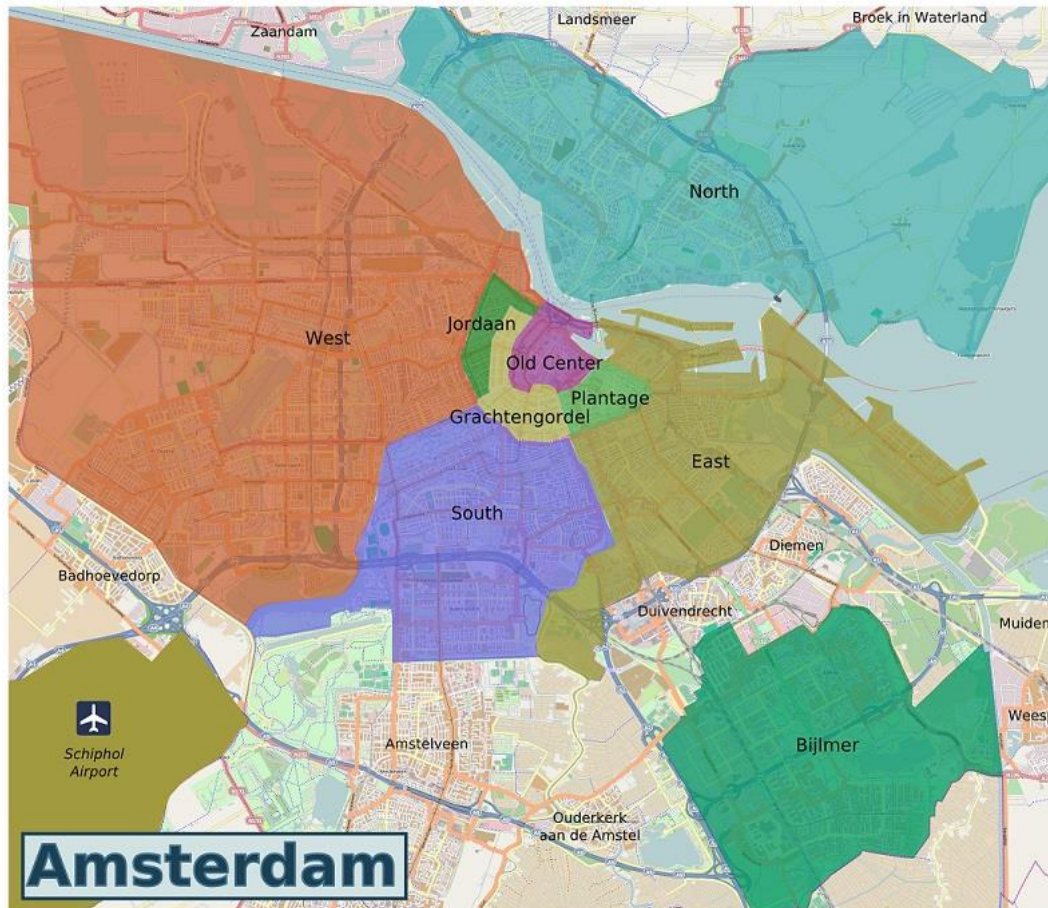


Figure 1 Map of the municipality of Amsterdam highlighting the individual neighbourhoods within the larger metropolitan area ([www.perfecthousing.com](http://www.perfecthousing.com)).

## 4.1 MAGICAL REALITIES

In recent years, the constant increase of tourists has been met by pushback by local residents as well. Especially since the city is not just growing in terms of tourists, but also in population size and businesses, causing for even more competition between stakeholders in the already tight urban space (Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 85-86; 97). Tourists have increasingly been affecting the “liveability, the environment, safe passage and quality of the canals as historical heritage” (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 17). Examining the western Canal District, one-third of the residents believe the situation has come to a tipping point. In addition. About 50% believe it is not as dire yet but believe a threshold will be reached in the near

future (Pinkster and Boterman 2017). Before diving in deeper into the attitudes and experiences of local communities, it is first necessary to have a look at the statistics as it will provide an idea of the scale of the situation.

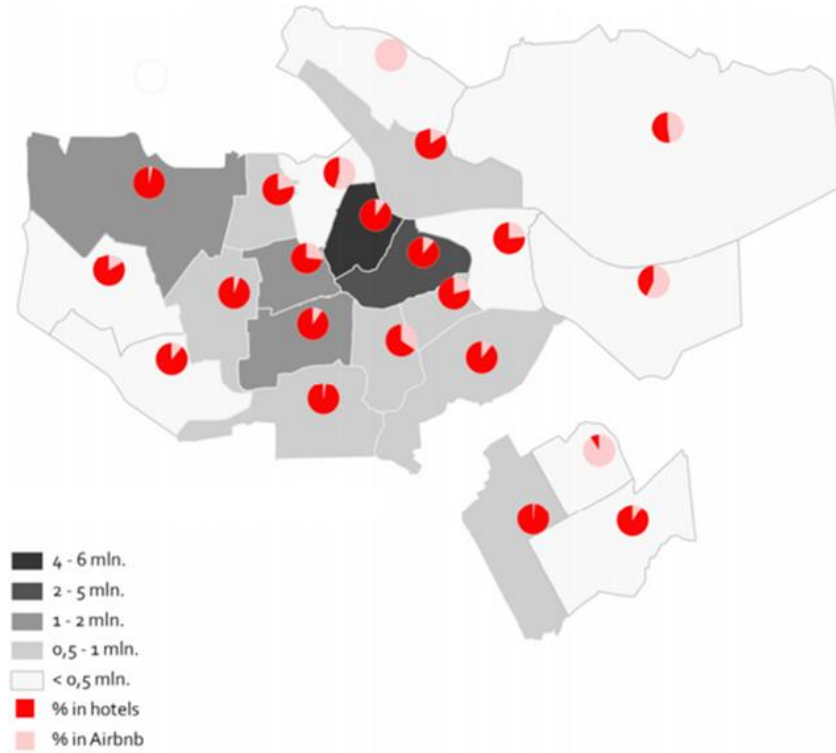


Figure 2 Total overnight stays of both hotels and AirBnB's in Amsterdam in 2018 visualized by a distribution per individual area (Fedorova et al. 2019, 13)

According to the latest report published by the National Bureau of Tourism and Conferences (NBTC), the Netherlands received 20,1 million international (excluding in-border travels) overnight visitors in 2019, which is an increase of 7% in relation to 2018 (NBTC 2020). Visitor numbers have been expected to grow for years already, so, this latest rapport comes as no surprise (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018; NBTC 2019, 11; Noordeloos 2018, 133; Van Benthem et al. 2017, I). In a prediction made by the NBTC, the number of international tourists will grow by a minimum of 50% to 29 million in 2030, related to a total of 18 million tourists in 2017. Would it grow exponentially, inbound visitors could reach even up to 42 million in 2030 (NBTC 2019, 4). Out of all destinations in the Netherlands, Amsterdam receives by far the most tourists (NBTC 2019, 13). When accounting for the total amount of hotel night stays in the Netherlands, 44% are located in the larger metropolitan area of Amsterdam, and 32% are found in Amsterdam specifically (Fedorova et

al. 2019, 2; fig. 2). Again, in recent years a steady rise has been observed of overnight stays in Amsterdam (Fedorova *et al.* 2019, 6; fig. 4). Taking a look at the development of absolute visitor numbers in Amsterdam, between 2005 and 2016 the amount of tourists Amsterdam received, grew from 11 million to 17,9 million (Van Benthem *et al.* 2017, i). Two years later in 2018, almost 20 million stays were reported, and 0,8 million cruise ship visitors were received in that same year (Fedorova *et al.* 2019, 12).

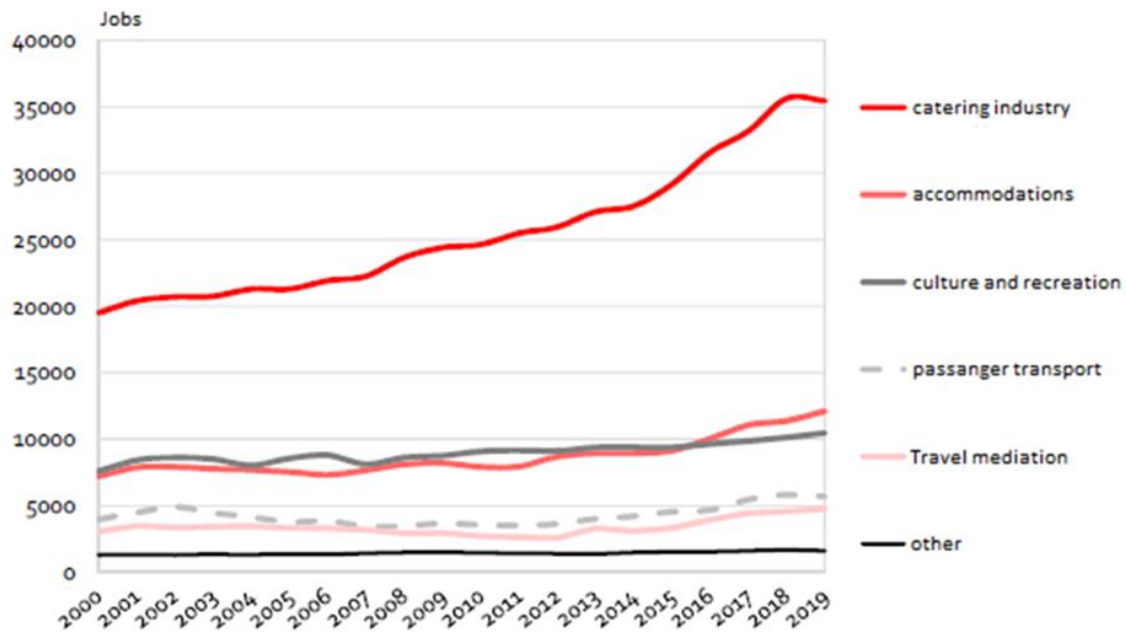


Figure 4 Graph showing growth of available jobs in the tourism sector in Amsterdam (fedorova *et al.* 2019, 52).

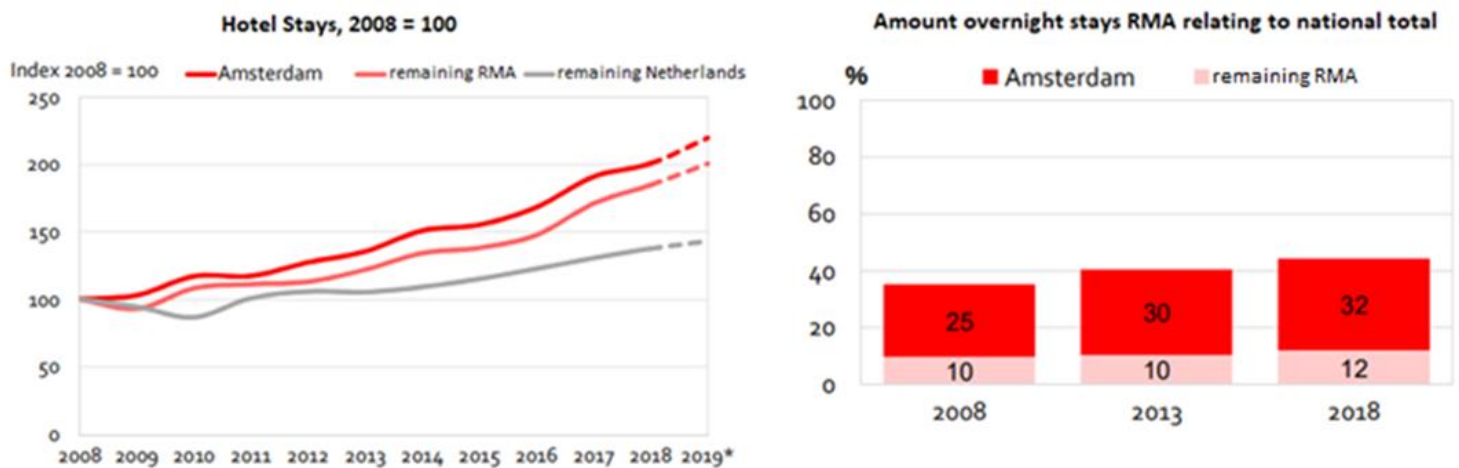


Figure 3 Growth overnight stays by tourists in Amsterdam in relation to the national total (Fedorova *et al.* 2019, 6).

All these flows of people coming in and out of Amsterdam provide many opportunities for the city and its citizens. Examining the income and expenditure that tourism generates in Amsterdam, in 2015 visitors spent about 6,3 billion euros, which accounted for 2-2,7 billion euros in added value for the local economy. In terms of tax incomes from tourists, there is an increase from 27,5 million in 2007 to 68,4 million in 2016 (Van Benthem *et al.* 2017, i; 21-25). In 2019, the amount of jobs has grown to 70.090, which, by then, accounts for 11% of the labour force and has also seen a steady increase in recent years (Fedorova *et al.* 2019, 52; fig. 3).

However, tourists do not only provide extra income. They also cost money since they are making use of many of a city's facilities. These include municipal subsidies that provide for local museums, city marketing, events and public transport. Moreover, public services, such as hospitals, cleaning and garbage management, law enforcement, restoration and maintenance of monuments, streets and canals maintenance, and maintenance of green areas are also used by tourists. These together make up of a cost of 45 million (Van Benthem *et al.* 2017, 23-24). It is also with these costs where for the first time it can be recognized how the lines between residents and visitors have been blurred (Frisch *et al.* 2019). Since both tourists and local communities utilize these public services, it is nearly impossible to accurately assess how the visitor economy is impacting its destination. This also brings heritage into the picture, because, it is equally difficult to quantify how tourists impact heritage and its values in such mixed spaces. This does not just include monuments, but also streets, canals and green areas when conceptualizing these as vernacular urban spaces (Zukin 2012). It is clear that heritage is an integral part of the public space and valued both by tourists and residents (Van Leeuwen *et al.* 2013, 1090). It is equally well-defined how the built environment of Amsterdam and its cultural heritage have come under pressure by the growing number of people (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 17). Unfortunately, because of the many different people making use of these public areas, it remains elusive how to precisely quantify how these are affected by tourism. Further research of how heritage is affected is neither mentioned nor performed by the municipality.

Tourism itself is of course not a new phenomenon and is definitely not novel for Amsterdam. Debates regarding carrying capacity regarding tourism were already being held in the 90's (Dahles 1998, 60). However, interestingly, during the mid- to late-90's, tourism numbers to Amsterdam had become stagnant, with the city's market share even declining both in the Netherlands and Europe (Dahles 1998, 57; Van Limburg 1997, 466;



Rawding 2000, 167). Amsterdam had, apparently, cultivated a global imagination as a ‘dirt bag’ city, attracting a ‘rowdy’ type of tourist lured in by its liberal attitude towards sex and drugs (Dahles 1998, 56; Pinkster and Boterman 2017, 458).

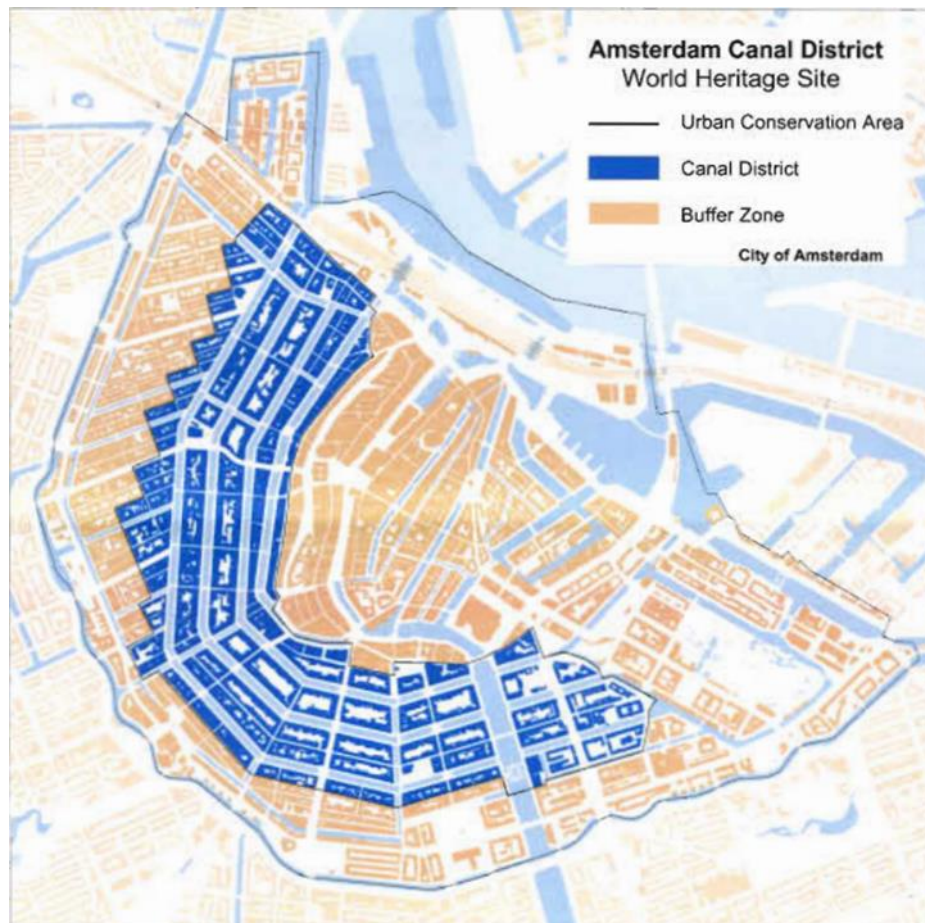


Figure 5 Floor plan of the 2010 UNESCO World Heritage Status inscribed area of Amsterdam's Seventeenth-Century Canal Area ([whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org)).

To combat this, in the second half of the 90's, Amsterdam started to focus on a ‘higher’ quality type of visitor. One that is drawn towards the cultural heritage of the city, rather than the liberal image of sex and drugs. Urban spaces were being redesigned towards the experience of visitors. Amsterdam was to be made the epiphany of Dutchness, which was to be showcased in every facet (Dahles 1998, 60-62). This direction eventually accumulated in assigning the Seventeenth-Century Canal Ring Area as UNESCO world heritage in 2010 (Pinkster and Boterman 2017, 458; UNESCO 2010; fig. 5). In an article published by Jan Nijman in 1999, he provides some insights of the situation at that time (Nijman 1999, 146-147). According to Nijman, this increase in popularity transformed the

city into a 'theme park' in which 'tolerance' had become the prime attraction, which showed little connection to its historical roots. Giving the appearance of being authentic, but in actuality, ordinary life has become the décor for tourism (Nijman 1999, 160). This attitude already portrays how a tourist gaze is applied within a growing experience economy inside Amsterdam.

Although much time has passed since Nijman's article, when looking at the attitudes of residents today it seems that the same criticism is still being observed. Taking a study that investigated residents' experiences of tourism in the Canal Belt. Respondents described the situation either as a 'theme park' or 'museum', accusing tourism practices as 'novel' entertainment, which holds no connection to Amsterdam's history or tradition (Pinkster and Boterman 2017). This seems terribly similar to what Nijman (1999) already described, which suggests that the city's efforts to shed their 'dirty bag' identity has not been successful. Of course, a more nuanced position is in order. Residents also acknowledge that they do appreciate the interest their city and neighbourhood is receiving. However, they are critical to how tourism is affecting and transforming their neighbourhoods, which gives them a feeling of powerlessness (Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 86-87; Pinkster and Boterman 2017, 462-464).

Diving deeper into the attitudes and experiences of Amsterdam's residents towards tourism, whenever residents referred to the situation as a theme park, it concerned the day-to-day experience of visitors by residents and how tourists interact with their neighbourhood. This mostly relates to 'inappropriate' behaviour, which can be traced back to the city's liberal reputation of sex and drugs, resulting in physical and noise pollution, general nuisance and crowdedness (Noordeloos 2018, 133-136; Pinkster and Boterman 2017, 464). This, then, reflects how tourists impact the liveability of an area. In the theoretical framework it was identified that crowdedness and behaviour are two major components to measure levels of liveability (Postma and Schmuecker 2017). Looking at how these factors are reflected in the data, Amsterdam experiences the most 'nuisance' out of all Dutch places, with 6%-11% more on average in relation to nuisance in other places. Amsterdam also scores high on overcrowding at public spaces. For both factors, the city centre scores the highest (Van Benthem *et al.* 2017, 51; fig. 6). However, again, it is difficult to exactly measure to what degree tourists account to these issues as residents also make use of these

spaces. Again, showcasing how the city is a performative hybrid space (Sheller and Urry 2004; Frisch *et al.* 2019).

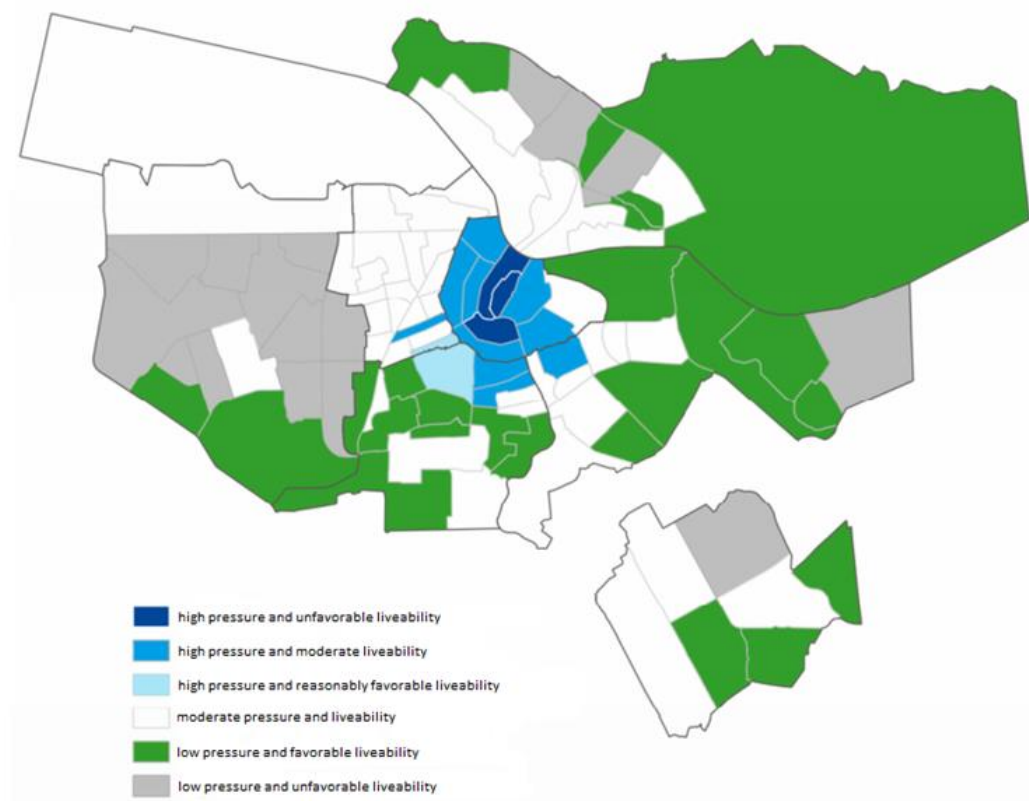


Figure 6 Geographic spread of Amsterdam's neighbourhoods portraying the relation between pressure from tourism and liveability. 'Pressure' is defined by behaviour of tourists and the level of contestation caused by tourism (Sleutjes *et al.* 2019, 9).

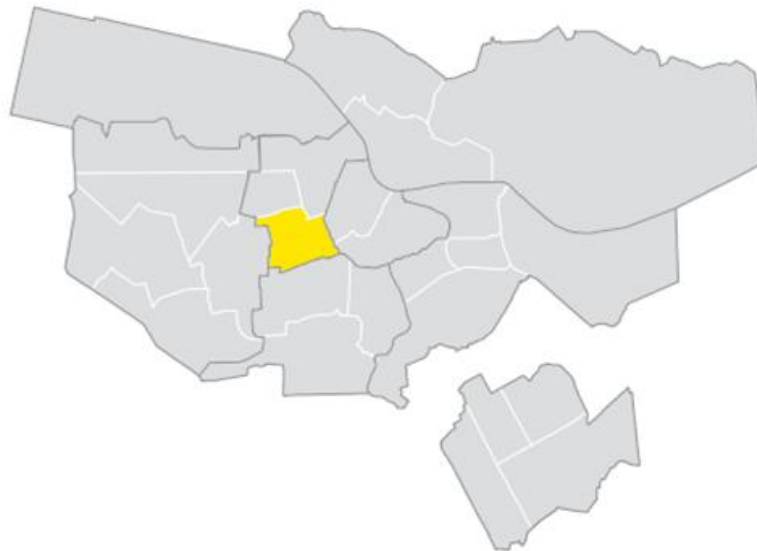
When examining density of tourists in relation to residents more closely, in 2018, at a given day Amsterdam received 5,3 hotel guests for every 100 Amsterdam residents. When including other type of stays, such as AirBnB's and camping, this number rises to even 6,6 to a 100. Meaning, that for every 15 Amsterdammers, there is at least 1 visitor. Counting by square meters, Amsterdam receives 339 visitors per square meter. The city centre has the highest intensity, as it receives 21 visitors for every 100 residents and 2.890 hotel visitors per square meter. This makes Amsterdam the most tourist intense place in the Netherlands, and even one of Europe's most visitor dense cities (Fedorova *et al.* 2019, 10). Especially when relating these numbers to visitor distribution per area (Fedorova *et al.* 2019, 13; fig. 2), there seems to be a correlation between tourism and the sustainable situation of Amsterdam's liveability levels.



Moving on, when residents of the Canal District refer to how Amsterdam is being used as a museum, it addresses the sense of ‘loss of place’, the loss of the everyday experiences, and that the neighbourhood is losing its primary function for residents. This can be showcased by the disappearance of certain shops, such as bakeries or butchers, and how they are being replaced by lunchrooms, hotels and boutiques aimed at tourists. AirBnB and additional short stay renting out of one’s houses also plays into this (Pinkster and Boterman 2017, 465-466). This also illustrates two other reported issues, namely, scarcity on the housing market and an increase in monoculture of retail shops. The data shows an obvious rise in housing prices, indicating a rise in scarcity. Unfortunately, once again, it is unclear to what extent exactly the visitor economy is responsible for this, and what can be ascribed to local development management and policy. Nevertheless, holiday renting, such as AirBnB, seems to enforce a negative development (Van Benthem *et al.* 2017, 32; 40).

As for the alleged diminish in retail diversity and quality, observing the data, there is a definite rise of certain type of shops, and a decrease of others. The rise is caused by food related retail. It is yet unclear if this is caused by the increase of tourists, or if it stems from changing consumer preferences and upcoming internet retail. Mostly because there is no detailed description if these shops are marketed for tourists or residents. A possible indicator for tourists effecting the retail sector, is the rise in rental prices for shops in the city. The centre has experienced the most significant increase in rent, while outside the centre a drop can be observed. As tourists mainly visit the city centre, they could be an influential factor for this phenomenon (Van Benthem *et al.* 2017, 38-39). Both issues of the housing market and of the retail sector suggest that tourism highly affects the vernacular urban spaces of Amsterdam (Zukin 2012), and the ongoing living heritage that takes place in the historical city (Bui *et al.* 2020). Given how residents feel a loss of place (Pinkster and Boterman), it suggests that tourism in these parts of Amsterdam are highly affecting the cultural heritage and the sociocultural values that are created in these spaces. Which is especially alarming when considering this is precisely the part of Amsterdam that received UNESCO’s world heritage status. It indicates that the sociocultural values have come under pressure, leading to an unsustainable situation for sociocultural values and the liveability aspect they establish.

So far, the debate has mostly focussed on the city centre. But what about the areas surrounding it? This becomes especially relevant considering Amsterdam's intentions to attract tourists to less popular areas to counter the issues experienced in the centre (Amsterdam 2018; Noordeloos 2018). At first glance, neighbourhoods outside the centre often give a more positive picture. Although, there are also many neighbourhoods that are in the danger zone of shifting to the same levels of nuisance as the centre (Sleutjes *et al.* 2019, 8; fig. 6). Examining attitudes of residents in Amsterdam Noord and West for example, most residents felt pride by the fact that their neighbourhoods were visited by tourists. When asked about nuisance coming from tourists, only 6% experienced negative feelings (Geritsma and Vork 2017, 90-94).



*Figure 7 Map of Amsterdam's districts and neighbourhoods. Oud-West is highlighted in yellow (Gemeente Amsterdam 2020a, 2).*

Focusing on the Oud-West area (Noordeloos 2018, 133; fig 7), it appears that tourism has also not led to any major nuisances here as well. Residents note that the neighbourhood is being invested in and there is more entertainment, which contribute to a higher quality of life. Even an increase in diversity through interaction with tourists is named as a positive marker (Noordeloos 2018, 137-140). So, it seems these neighbourhoods still find themselves in a sustainable position, and tourism is even contributing to levels of liveability. However, despite these positive developments, there are also signs of negative effects

in Oud-West. Increase in real estate prices is a notable one. In addition, the nuisance of drunk tourists together with an increase of littering is experienced as well. Even some first signs of loss in social cohesion inside the neighbourhood are reported, with residents starting to move out the neighbourhood, notably because of these observed issues, and being replaced by expatriates (Noordeloos 2018, 137-140).

So, it can be recognized how Amsterdam as destination of tourism is a complex place hosting various interaction between people and the environment. Amsterdam receives millions of visitors every year, which are all acting within its cityscape and affecting its surroundings. However, it often remains difficult to pinpoint the exact nature of these effects. Nevertheless, it seems clear that a threshold has been reached, especially within the city centre, since issues regarding tourism seem to concentrate themselves in this area. Consequently, sustainable solutions must be developed if Amsterdam wishes to maintain its historic centre.

## **4.2 THE GLOBAL REPUBLIC**

Within the narrative of Amsterdam's Authorized Heritage Discourse (Smith 2006), three overarching themes can be recognized, which are all built on a historical foundation. The first theme is based on the portrayal of Amsterdam as epiphany of Dutch culture exemplified by the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century urban landscape (Dahles 1998; Mak 2001; Nijman 1999), strengthened by its UNESCO world heritage status (UNESCO 2010). The second is characterized by the city's identity of tolerance (Mak 2001; Nijman 1999), which, by a tourist gaze, is largely expressed through sexual liberalism and a tolerant attitude towards drugs (Dahles 1998, 55-56; Nijman 1999). The third and final theme is based on Amsterdam's international character, in which tourism has been intrinsically woven (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018; Mak 2001). These three attributes are all interacting with and complementing one another.

Starting with the first theme, Amsterdam is perceived as standing at the heart of Dutch society and culture ever since the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Nijman 1999, 151-153), and, during the 90's, it has also been deliberately constructed as such by city marketing tools (Dahles 1998, 62). In addition, Amsterdam is signified as having a unique urban landscape with

distinct architecture and canals recognized as World Heritage (UNESCO 2010), which further hallmarks this point. The city council proclaims that Amsterdam is a ‘city of culture’, being: “[...] one of the most cultural cities of the world” (Gemeente Amsterdam 2019, 4-5). It shows how Amsterdam strongly wishes to be the best place of heritage, culture and arts of the Netherlands. This is also noticeable in the following passage:

*“Amsterdam is a city with history. We have the most national monuments in the country. This cultural heritage is in part deciding of our identity, a visible part of our culture and accessible to all. That heritage deserves to be protected [...]”* (Gemeente Amsterdam 2019, 7).

This brings us to the second theme: tolerance. Historically, this meant tolerance towards other religions and ethnicities, which caused many different migrant groups to travel to Amsterdam around the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century (Mak 2001, 63-65). The tolerant attitude of Amsterdam is one of the reasons for the city’s economic success, while at the same time building the foundation for its international climate. Tolerance still takes a prominent place in the daily heritage discourse of Amsterdam. This is exemplified by how the municipality wishes to strive towards “[...] a stronger, more open and inclusive cultural city” (Gemeente Amsterdam 2019, 5-6;). Moreover, the city council states that: “[freedom] is a self-evident part of the culture of Amsterdam,” which further showcases a tolerant attitude (Gemeente Amsterdam 2019, 7). By the city stating that freedom is an integral quality of Amsterdam, this means that the municipality also upholds a tolerant attitude towards those people living their lives differently. One must be tolerant if one wishes to give people individual freedom. However, tourism and the industry have transformed tolerance into a liberal use of sex and drugs, which is mostly appropriated from a late 20<sup>th</sup> century imagination of the concept (Nijman 1999; Pinkster and Boterman 2017).

It is the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century which started the sexual revolution and legalization of drugs. It is where the contemporary re-imagination of the concept of tolerance stems from, but, how tourists use tolerance is still a far cry from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Visitors now come to “let it all out and enjoy the entertaining spectacle of ‘tolerance’. Tolerance [...] is increasingly packaged and labelled to meet the demands of mass tourism and instant gratification” (Nijman 1999, 154-156). Although this sounds like a rather cynical outlook on the situation, looking back at the previous section, the reports and research on residents’ attitudes and experiences of tourists point towards this direction as well. Especially those in the city centre. It is the tolerant characteristic of Amsterdam’s AHD that showcases how tourism refurbishes a heritage discourse and the values that lurk within. It causes for a

specific interaction with the heritage discourse, which is set in motion by the tourist gaze. It is important to stress again here that this mostly concerns the city centre.

The cultural landscape of Amsterdam together with its tolerant identity construct the tourist gaze of Amsterdam (Urry 1990; 2002; Urry and Larsen 2011). As was showcased in the theoretical framework, a tourist gaze often is biased towards sites and objects of global popularity. Amsterdam, taking the UNESCO status as example, functions perfectly as such a site. Furthermore, a tourist through the gaze needs particular signifiers constructed by a discourse within the landscape that it can read. For Amsterdam, this includes not just the monumental architecture and canals, but also the multitude of drugs shops, people smoking weed, and, of course, the Red-Light District as hallmark of sexual liberation (Chapuis 2017). It is the signifiers of tolerance that tourists are searching for, which showcases why tourists are perpetually seeking to engage in Amsterdam with practices related to sex and drugs. Besides spectating on these symbols of Amsterdam's AHD, the visitor is also looking to gaze upon unfamiliar aspects in the ordinary life of the destination's environment. At the same time, the tourist is pursuing to find mundane, everyday activities that are being performed in an unfamiliar setting. Both these aspects can best be exemplified by how tourists are increasingly searching to blend in with their destinations. How they wish to experience the 'real' and 'authentic' life of the host environment (Frisch *et al.* 2019). This can be showcased by the rise of AirBnB and how it sells the 'local' experience, bringing tourists more and more into everyday urban spaces (Wildisch and Spierings 2019). Blurring the lines between residents and visitors, between 'reality' and 'fantasy'. While this can be a tourist's dream, it also continues commodification of the everyday life marketed as experiences of leisure and consumption (Pinkster and Boterman 2017, 458; Richards 2019). It, hence, is the ideal example of the experience economy at work (Pine and Gilmore 1999).

The final core theme is Amsterdam's international nature. Amsterdam's international ambitions cannot be missed when the city is stating how: "The world comes to Amsterdam, and Amsterdam goes into the world" (Gemeente Amsterdam 2019, 49). A good example of the cosmopolitan atmosphere is how Amsterdam does not just have visitors from all over the world, but also more than half of Amsterdam's residents find their roots outside of the Netherlands (Gemeente Amsterdam 2020b, 2). The city council also underscores this by saying that: "[...] large groups of Amsterdammers find their origins [abroad]" (Gemeente Amsterdam 2019, 50). Residents of the city centre also experience

Amsterdam as a hub to visit the rest of the world (Pinskter and Boterman 2017, 463). This international attitude of Amsterdam was already true during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century as many migrant groups came to the city (Mak 2001, 99-102). It was because of the tolerant attitude that many people felt welcome and were able to live their lives as they wished to in Amsterdam. In addition, Amsterdam was one of the largest trading hub of the world during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, with large streams of goods and merchants coming in and out (Mak 2001, 1-5; 30-35; Nijman 1999, 151-154). It allowed for immense growth and development leading to economic success.

The international character of Amsterdam is, at the same time, why the tourism industry is so persistent in the city. Tourism has nested itself in this international identity. As the city states:

*“Tourism is a fundamental part of Amsterdam’s international character and we must continue to cherish that”* (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 5).

For this reason, the city refuses to obstruct the growth of tourism. To them, it is foundational to Amsterdam’s values of being internationally orientated, inclusive, and hospitable (Noordeloos 2018, 134). Tourism has become part of its story, and, therefore, part of its AHD. Amsterdam, its AHD, and tourism have become inherently interconnected.

## **4.3 DIVIDE AND CONQUER**

### *4.3.1 A National Perspective*

Tourism is not a phenomenon that is constricted to a single place or space, and neither is its management (Edgell 2015; Torkington *et al.* 2020). For this reason, to understand Amsterdam’s contemporary tourism management, it is necessary to examine the international and national perspective as well. To begin, a brief note on a study on national tourism policies across Europe conducted by Torkington *et al.* (2020) will be given. In recent years, the concept of sustainability has become increasingly relevant for tourism policies, and it has been applied in many different countries. However, Torkington *et al.* (2020) observe that:

*“while most national tourism policies appear to endorse sustainable tourism, few include actions to mitigate climate change or limit the growth of tourism”* (Torkington *et al.* 2020, 1042).

This mostly stems from a lack of defining what sustainability should entail in these documents, leading to an appropriation of the concept sustainability only to endorse economic growth. This usage of sustainability gives the appearance that growth is natural and always desirable. Tourism is seen as a tool for wider development and benefits for society at large, and it gives the indication that economic values are taking a priority over environmental or others (Cotterell *et al.* 2019, 883; Torkington *et al.* 2020).

The most prominent player at the national Dutch scale is the National Bureau of Tourism and Conferences (NBTC). It is the destination management and organisation of the Netherlands and they work together with multiple partners to establish the positioning, development and marketing of the Netherlands ([www.nbtc.nl](http://www.nbtc.nl)). In 2019, the NBTC published a new vision for tourism in the Netherlands, called *Perspectief Bestemming Nederland 2030*, or Perspective Destination Netherlands 2030. The policy document states that tourism has brought many benefits for the country. Nevertheless, in the last few years it has also put more pressure on the liveability of certain places with Amsterdam being the prime example. The NBTC acknowledges that more visitors cannot always be a desired outcome. Especially given that tourism is only expected to keep growing (NBTC 2019, 4; 11-13). However, they also acknowledge the elusive nature of these issues that are seemingly caused by visitors. “Not all crowdedness is caused through foreign visitors. The Dutch population grows, and we are receiving more expats and students.” (NBTC 2019, 25). So far, this seems to confirm what has been established in the first section of this chapter.

The prime goal for the NBTC’s approach is to cherish and maintain the developing “force” that tourism provides so that the entire population can benefit from it. The organization states:

*“Tourism is not a goal in and of itself, but, a powerful tool which can contribute solving societal challenges that serve the greater good (wellbeing and wealth) for the Netherlands”* (NBTC 2019, 2-3; 23).

This framing of tourism as a tool for society hints at Torkington *et al.* ’s (2020) analysis of how national tourism policies endorse a language of sustainable solutions, but, in actuality,

seem to focus rather on sustaining the continuous growth of the industry than providing sustainable outcomes.

So how is this transformative power of tourism put into practice? In the Perspective Netherlands text, the NBTC argues that tourism contributes to strengthening identity, enlarge liveability, help realise environmental sustainability goals and create jobs (NBTC 2019, 16-17). Strengthening identity and job output have been well-argued effects that tourism contributes to (Coccosis 2009 49; Wall 2009, 36-37). However, although it has been argued how tourism can add to the quality of life, there are also plenty of indicators suggesting how tourism does anything but contribute to liveability (Coccosis 2009, 49; Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 3) or environmental sustainability goals (Edgell 2015; Higham and Miller 2018). Nonetheless, the NBTC claims that: “tourism visitation can give an important socio-economic impulse to the development and liveability of [shrinking areas].” (NBTC 2019, 16). Yet, it is only assumed that tourism will lead to economic development, but no further evidence is provided to support this statement. The word “can” also signify this uncertainty. As for environmental sustainability, they state that the visitor economy can: “[...] structurally contribute to, among other, sustainability of traffic, stay, and entertainment” (NBTC 2019, 16). But again, the NBTC does not show how this works. As was discussed in the theory, under no circumstances can it be assumed that tourism either brings positive or negative effects (Throsby 2009). The strategy of the NBTC thus appears to further confirms Torkington *et al.* (2020) statement that it is often not well-defined what sustainability should entail nor how to accomplish it precisely within national tourism policies.

Nevertheless, to realise their vision, the NBTC has formulated five strategical pillars (NBTC 2019). These have been merged into two general categories for the purpose of this thesis, because, the others mostly work to support these two goals. The first pillar is named ‘lusts and burdens in balance’. On the one hand, this pillar states that the benefits of the visitor economy need to be expanded to all stakeholders, and everyone should be made aware of these. On the other hand, the pillar wishes frustrations to come to an acceptable minimum. This includes making sure that parties that benefit from tourism, also put effort in minimizing the negative effects of it. At the same time, the NBTC states that fiscal incomes should not only flow to the tourism sector, but also to residents. Especially since residents have been left out of the conversation and have benefited the least from the visitor economy. The NBTC proposes for transparent and true involvement of residents in the



decision-making processes of management institutions. However, after these measures will not mitigate the issues adequately, the reason for visitation has to be taken away as a final method (NBTC 2019, 19-25). The ‘lusts and burdens’ pillar seems to be in line with the published advices for creating more sustainability (Clark 2008, 91; Noordeloos 2018), or at the very least to create a more positive attitude towards tourists among residents (Gerritsma and Vork 2017). The only criticism at this point is, however, that many of these strategies are not specified, so, it is difficult to fully assess how this will contribute further to sustainable outcomes.

The second pillar is dubbed: “Netherlands attractive everywhere.” The NBTC notices that while some destinations are experiencing issues of overtourism, others are suffering from a lack of development in general. Hence, attracting visitors to these unpopular places could possibly provide for economic opportunities. In addition, attracting tourist to other areas could also help mitigate the issues at the overcrowded destinations (NBTC 2019, 23). This will be accomplished by both developing the supply for tourism at other places and promoting these places at the same time. However, the NBTC also argues that this will be difficult to accomplish, since:

*“At the basis, spreading is ‘against human nature’ of tourists. People come with a certain goal [to a certain place], and they do not easily let themselves be persuaded to travel from that destination, or instead of visiting that destination, to alternative places”* (NBTC 2019, 26).

This statement instantly pulls the rug under their own feet. While first the spreading of visitors is portrayed as mitigating overtourism, the NBTC then instantaneously follows this up by arguing this is nearly impossible to achieve. Therefore, this method does not give the impression it will deliver sustainable solutions. Rather, it seems it is allowing tourism to grow in other regions of the country, while tourism at the already popular destinations will remain as they are. Again, Torkington *et al.*’s (2020) examination can be observed.

The remaining three pillars of the NBTC all serve to support the previous two. The third pillar is ‘accessibility and reachable’. This aims to increase the mobility opportunities for people to get them on their wanted destination optimally. Interestingly, the NBTC also discusses that this has to be done in a sustainable way, because, traffic contributes to large parts of emissions. This ties into their fourth pillar: ‘sustainability is a must’. With this pillar, the NBTC states that the visitor economy has the obligation to become sustainable and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (NBTC 2019, 29-33). However, this seems difficult to reconcile

with the wish to remain growing as an industry as well and there are also not specifications of how they wish to accomplish this. In Particular when considering how tourism contributes to large portions of CO2 emissions (Edgell 2015; Higham and Miller 2018). The fifth and final pillar is named 'a hospitable sector'. Stating that hospitality is the key to becoming an attractive destination. This means improving the image, professionalism, and attractiveness as sector as job creator (NBTC 2019, 5).

Interestingly, throughout the text some quotes are given, which are linked to the second pillar, and, subsequently, brings heritage into the mix as well. One quote reads: "What is our new Kinderdijk? Netherlands needs new icons which are the heritage of tomorrow" (NBTC 2019, 27). While another goes as: "Cultural funds operated by the governmental are insufficiently aimed at developing new icons at new destinations. That should change" (NBTC 2019, 38). By giving these quotes in this document, they are inherently linked to tourism, and developing and executing of the NBTC's policy. Since these mention heritage, it too is linked to this execution, which gives the impression that heritage is perceived as a tool to attract tourist to new destinations. It is an example of how heritage and its values are used for the packaging and selling of leisure experiences (Wall 2009).

There seem to be steps taken towards sustainable outcomes by the NBTC. However, much of what the organisation formulates, seems to rather be aimed to sustain the tourist industry, than anything else. This goes against a strong sustainability position, which is necessary to obtain true levels of sustainability for future generations (Baker 2006). As they state: "[The pressure on liveability] causes for a diminished support base for tourism. If we do not intervene now, chances will be missed and liveability and hospitality will come in danger" (NBTC 2019, 13). There is recognition that a problem exists within the industry and that it needs to counter-act this by using sustainable approaches. Unfortunately, it reads as if the NBTC only wishes to achieve sustainability in order to not miss any opportunities for tourism.

#### 4.3.2 *Situating Amsterdam*

In 2018, Amsterdam launched a new policy on tourism, called: *Stad in Balans* (City in Balance): *Naar een nieuw evenwicht tussen leefbaarheid en gastvrijheid* (towards a new equilibrium between liveability and hospitality). The main goal of the text is to:

“Find a new balance between visitors on the one hand, and residents on the other. A new balance between quality of life, and hospitality. The visitor is welcome, but the resident stands at the centre” (Amsterdam 2018, 2).

The municipality had already decreed several legislations in an attempt to mitigate the situation regarding tourism. For example, they have employed a halt for new hotels in parts of town, deployed strict rules for holiday renting, restricted new tourist shops to be developed, touring cars are forced out of the centre, regulated entertainment traffic, and cleaning and police departments have been deployed at higher rates at crowded areas. However, tourist numbers remain growing at such a rate that additional measures have to be taken. Particularly, since the city states that Amsterdam’s residents are paying a high price for this growth (Amsterdam 2018, 2-7).

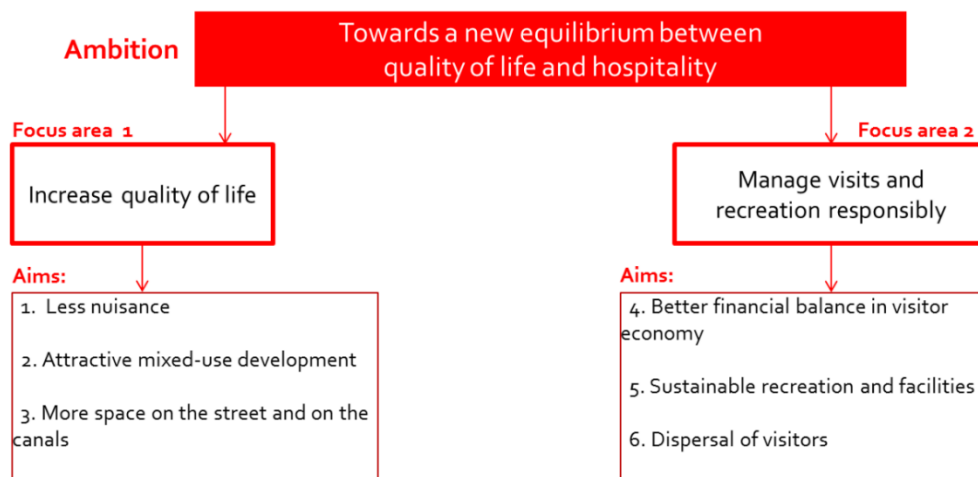


Figure 8 Visualization of policy strategies by the municipality of Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 8).

Noordeloos (2018) boils the *Stad in Balans* policy down to four spearpoints: (1) “more quality and diversity in shopping and hospitality industry, (2) reduce nuisance and create boundaries regarding tourism growth, (3) to spread visitors over the entire city, [and] (4) to create more space on the streets and in urban areas” (Noordeloos 2018, 134). This is added with the balancing of the visitor economy in terms of profits and burdens between residents and visitors. Additionally, the municipality wishes to improve on the environmental sustainability of the recreation sector and facilities (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 8;

fig. 8). These goals together have about 70 operational measures that the city council wishes to implement. In the coming part, a selection of these is made to showcase the approach.



Figure 9 example communication strategy by municipality of Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 10).

For reducing nuisance caused by visitors, the municipality is deploying several tools to diminish this. Among others, the city council wishes to banish activities that encourage nuisance behaviour, such as heavy drinking, from the city centre where possible. In addition, behaviour that is approved will be stimulated through communication campaigns or nudging certain behaviour (fig. 9). One example is the “I live here” communication campaign, which is co-created by the residents of ‘De Wallen’ area, also known as the ‘Red-Light District’ (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 13). It is aimed to teach visitors that De Wallen is also a place where people live, and not just a place for visitation and

entertainment. This measure seems especially aimed at enforcing the social sustainability on the area.

Something similar can be spotted in the creating higher quality and diversity in retail shops. It is specifically aimed to serve residents and to preserve the function of neighbourhoods. Increasingly, shops are aiming primarily towards tourists, which makes it less attractive for residents to keep living in these areas. Creating a diverse and qualitative retail sector helps accomplish this goal, which will maintain the social cohesion and sustainability of a neighbourhood. To accomplish this, the municipality aims to work together with branches to work towards a neighbourhood vision, and by developing tools which are able to block shops fully dressed for tourists. Moreover, the city council is working to restrict hotels and holiday renting, maybe even ban where necessary, and to root out illegal holiday rentals (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 14-16). This corresponds to vernacular urban spaces (Zukin 2012), of which retail shops are a vital part. Maintaining the quality of the retail thus serves to preserve these cultural ecosystems and the living heritage that takes place in these (Bui *et al.* 2020). This spearpoint is therefore aimed to work on the social sustainability of the city.

The following spearpoint is aimed to create more space in the city centre. This is especially focused to preserving the environmental sustainability, most notably that of the built environment, and therefore, the material heritage of Amsterdam. Moreover, social sustainability and liveability levels are deeply interconnected to this as well. The document states that because of the historical centre, public space is limited since it was not designed for such large fluxes of people that are coming in by tourism. This is taking its toll on the built environment and is making the liveability suffer of these areas. Avoiding car traffic plays a key role for this point. Regulating tour busses and boats forms part of this. Just as taxi's and entertainment transport (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 18-19).

For creating more financial balance between the visitor economy and residents, the municipality is aiming to ensure that visiting Amsterdam is prized fairly, since visitors make use of many facilities that the city has to offer. These public facilities cost money to maintain, which is mostly payed for by taxes from local communities. Therefore, increasing taxes for inbound tourists is suggested to mitigate this error. The council will also be looking in taxing the use of the environment by tour guides, both on land and water (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 21-22). The fifth point emerges from the wish to reduce the ecological

footprint that the visitor economy leaves behind. The council states it wishes to obstruct the growth of flight transport at Schiphol. In addition, it wants to ensure boat traffic to be fully emission free by 2025. They further wish to create a vision to increase environmental sustainability for hotels, events, and the tourist sector (Amsterdam 23-25). However, there remain many black spots in how the council wishes to accomplish these exactly.

Lastly, Amsterdam is just as the NBTC putting its efforts on spreading visitors to other areas. Again, this spearpoint is used to relieve specific areas in Amsterdam of tourists by attracting visitors to less well-known places in Amsterdam, in the metropolitan area, or in other parts of the Netherlands. One of the tactics they are using, is the moving of events or entertainment activities to periphery areas. Another strategy is the slogan of “visiting Amsterdam, seeing Holland.” This should tempt visitors to explore regions in the greater landscape of Holland (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 27-28). However, Amsterdam’s local government also acknowledges that the effectiveness of this strategy knows its limits:

*“In practice, the effectiveness of a dispersal policy has its limits. The vigorous autonomous growth of tourism means that current hotspots will continue to attract large crowds of people”* (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018, 26).

It can be recognized how Amsterdam’s policy relates on a several levels with the NBTC, but, the council of Amsterdam has put forward more measures, which are in addition more fleshed-out as well. It has yet to be seen in how far these will be successful. Nevertheless, Amsterdam’s approach appears to hold promise for sustainable outcomes in general, but also for protecting the living heritage of vernacular urban spaces that the city contains and the heritage values that are exchanged in these.

## **4.4 CREATIVITY CHANGE**

### *4.4.1 How to Untourist?*

For the following part, the Untourist Guide to Amsterdam will be investigated. This recently founded movement strives to shift tourism by presenting alternative and sustainable activities for visitors to perform within Amsterdam, which have been published in *The Untourist Guide to Amsterdam: Change with a Smile* (Simons and Hamer 2019). The main

focus of the guide is to initiate transformative behavioural practices for tourism that potentially contribute to the well-being of the earth. In an interview with one of the co-founders of the organisation, Elena Simons, she notes that:

*“[...] we actually started to notice that there was a shift in paradigm in thinking about tourism [...]. That, from our point of view, it moved away from passive consumption, the automatic [thought] that leisure is consumption [...] (appendix I, 93; 108).*

The Untourist Guide thus searches to make tourism into an active practice which provides opportunities, not just economically, but also socially and environmentally for both destinations and the world at large. This is expressed through, what the Untourist Guide calls ‘joyful contributions’ (appendix I, 93; 108). Hence, it can be observed how the Untourist movement draws inspiration from modes of creative tourism which equally focus on visitors engaging in participation practices that contribute to communities and environments (Rabazauskaitė 2015; Richards 2011; 2019). Another thing to consider, is how the Untourist Guide takes seemingly part in processes that accelerate integration of the tourist in the everyday life of a place (Frisch *et al.* 2019; Sheller and Urry 2004). Additionally, when relating the Untourist Guide to the two identified factors of tourism that impact levels of liveability (Postma and Schmuecker 2017), it can be recognized that the guide focusses on mending the issues surrounding the behaviour of individual tourists which cause for nuisance. This also came forward by the interview I had with Elena. She states: “[...] it is about behavioural change” (appendix I, 94; 109). Later on, she also states again: “We want to change practices” (appendix I, 98; 113).

To accomplish their ambitions, the Untourist Guide has formulated three goals to work towards with the publishing of their booklet. First, the guide defines the vision to evolve tourism into a joyful and contributing act for the city, its residents, and the world. Second, the guide lays out a list of practices that showcase these joyful and contributing activities for the reader to do during their stay in Amsterdam. Third, the guide serves as an open call to everyone to become part of the movement, not only by joining the activities, but also by supporting the guide by adding your own ideas (Appendix I, 95; 110; Simons and Hamer 2019). Looking at the title and cover of the guidebook, these themes jump off the pages. The word ‘Untourist’ indicates strongly that it does not wish to participate or associate itself with (traditional) tourism. Instead, it is telling that the guide wants to transcend the mainstream norms and values of tourism. In addition, one could also read the word as a verb, ‘to untourist’, which puts more emphasis on the activism side of the movement;

of bringing change to tourism. At the same time, the booklet is a 'guide', providing the reader with information on 'Untouristic' scenes and activities that are found in Amsterdam. Guiding you into the world of 'Untourism'. Looking further at the subtitle: "Change with a Smile," indicates the fun and playful nature of the Untourist Guide.

*"Happiness favours change; seeing the positive effects will make you happy. Change with a smile."*  
(Hamer and Simons 2019, 4-5).

This playful aspect is further stressed by the colourful cover of the booklet (fig. 10).

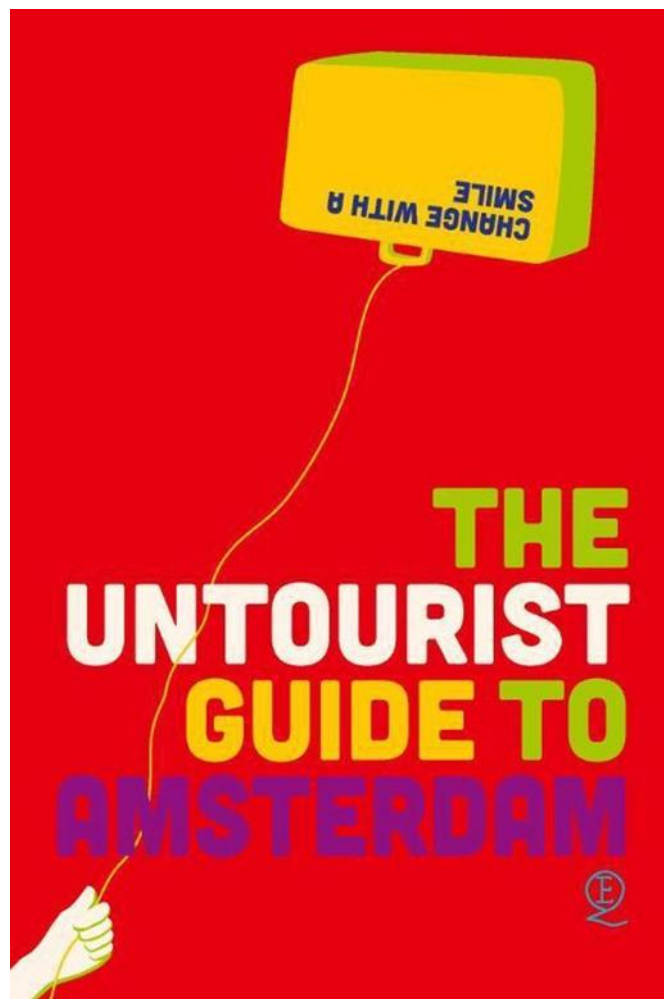


Figure 10 Front cover of the Untourist Guide to Amsterdam booklet  
([www.bol.com](http://www.bol.com)).



When examining the narrative that the Untourist Guide depicts, it, interestingly, is highly connected to the AHD of Amsterdam. As discussed in the AHD section of this chapter, Amsterdam is trademarked by an international and tolerant identity and knows a rich history that has left its traces on its cityscape. The Untourist Guide acknowledges this narrative and, moreover, equally acknowledges the behaviours and narratives put forward by the tourist industry that originate from the Authorised Heritage Discourse. “The tourist industry fantasy of Amsterdam is, after all, a part of Amsterdam” (Hamer and Simons 2019, 10). This plays into the municipality’s statement of perceiving tourists as an inherent part of Amsterdam’s international identity as well. However, the Untourist movement uses the heritage discourse to frame Amsterdam as the ideal setting for transforming tourism practices. As they state: “Amsterdam is just the place to [change tourism]. The city’s open atmosphere has given rise to an abundance of green, social and playful innovation” (Simons and Hamer 2019, 5). Reading the next passage from the interview, this reconfiguration of the AHD can again be recognised as Elena states:

*“[...] I think Amsterdam [...] [is] a very interesting context, because it is well-known as a very liberal city, very creative, entrepreneurial. And the past and future step into that as well. [...] the liberal and creative could also be seen as basis for [...] new practices of humanity [...]”* (appendix I, 101; 117)

It can be seen how she stresses Amsterdam’s tolerant identity by naming the city as ‘liberal’, and how she connects this using that liberal attitudes to develop ‘new practices of humanity’. Furthermore, she uses a heritage vocabulary to argue her point by connecting the past and future. The following quote from the interview stresses this link with Amsterdam’s heritage even further:

*“There is also something from the heritage of Amsterdam in which being open minded towards other religions and cultures helps to do business here, a city also of immigrants. And also, to develop the economy with this instead of sitting in your own inner circle and trying something else. But also, that you forgive people for having different norms and values.”* (Appendix I, 104; 120)

#### 4.4.2 Joyful Contributions

Moving on, in total the Untourist Guide has listed up to 34 different activities, which are sub-grouped into three categories: (1) Change Amsterdam, (2) Change the World, and (3)

Change Tourism. In the coming part, a small selection of these will be highlighted to illustrate how the guide operates. These include: ‘marry an Amsterdammer for the day’, ‘grow a global tradition’, the ‘refugee canal tour’, and, finally, ‘plastic fishing’, for which a participant observation was conducted. Starting off with the “marry an Amsterdammer for a day” activity: “Wed & Walk offers people the unique opportunity to get married for one day only. Dressed in second-hand attire and bearing plastic flowers, their tagline reads ‘only the emotions are real’” (Simons and Hamer 2019, 26). For this practice, tourists are able to make bids on Amsterdammers that they wish to marry for just a day. The activity provides the opportunity to experience someone else’s point of view. “[...] [the Amsterdammer’s] reality will be unveiled to you as you spend a brief but happy marriage together. Vice versa, this is a splendid opportunity for an Amsterdammer to come to see you as more than ‘just another tourist’” (Hamer and Simons 2019, 26).

What does this mean for the greater framework? It further emphasises the blending of the tourist with the everyday life (Frisch *et al.* 2019), and showcases how the Untourist Guides engages in practices that enforces the tourist gaze and packages mundane spectacles to market within the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore 1999). The tourist gaze (Urry 1990; 2002) showcases how visitors get drawn in by seeking ordinary things and performances within the host environment. What could give a better insight of the mundane than actually spending a day with a regular local resident? During the interview, Elena gives an example from the marriage activity that perfectly demonstrates this point. She states how there was one couple in which the local resident made the tourist mow the lawn.

*“I think it is such a beautiful example, because we put out: contribute to the Amsterdammer [...]. It is a completely different example of ‘leisure’ behaviour [...] it is a completely new experience.”* (Appendix I, 106; 122)

It exemplifies the emphasis on the ‘experience’ of the everyday, the authentic local life, and it is used to make contributions to the local community at the same time.

Diving deeper into the kind of contributions visitors can provide, taking a look at ‘grow a global tradition’ offers some insights. A local storyteller and entrepreneur have created a temporary Christmas trees forest in Amsterdam. “[...] a small but growing number of Amsterdammers collect their Christmas tree from the forest mid-December, only to bring it back in January for a year of good care” (Simons and Hamer 2019, 51). There is a clear environmental sustainability aspect to it as the practices is recycling trees that would

otherwise be wasted. In addition, the practice also strives to create new traditions by letting people from different cultures and backgrounds share their own traditions by adding yours by hanging them in the trees. This suggests it is adding to social sustainability aspects as well. However, there is also a heritage component to it in which sociocultural values are being discussed. During the interview, it came forward how:

*“During the Christmas tree forest, the dialogue is about traditions, and what those are. To tell something beautiful about your holiday celebrations, tell us something about the celebrations that you have in your country. What we might copy. So, to inspire each other”* (Appendix I, 103; 119).

Traditions stand at the root of what heritage is and does.

The case of the refugee canal tour organized by Rederij Lampedusa again portrays the connection between the Untourist practices and heritage discourse of Amsterdam. During this tour: “[...] a refugee will be your guide on a boat previously used to flee across the Mediterranean [...]. Your host will provide unorthodox insight into the role that immigration played in Amsterdam over the centuries” (Hamer and Simons 2019, 73). Immigrants are indeed a central part of the city’s history and success as is known from the AHD (Mak 2001). This thus serves as an excellent example of how alternative tourism practices are capable of presenting a heritage narrative. Additionally, it showcases the difference between the heritage discourse that is presented in the Untourist Guide, and the AHD of Amsterdam. Namely, Smith (2006) argues how AHD’s confine heritage as something of the past, and this is exactly happening in Amsterdam’s AHD as well. While the AHD acknowledges refugees’ importance for Amsterdam’s history, they are rarely represented in contemporary discourses by the municipality. The Untourist Guide, on the other hand, accepts the role that refugees had in Amsterdam’s past by accepting refugees as being part of the present narrative as well by demonstrating the ‘living’ heritage of contemporary Amsterdam (Bui *et al.* 2020). It is this subtle difference that creates the alternative heritage discourses for the Untourist Guide.

To close off, the Plastic Whale tour will be explored. Plastic Whale is an Amsterdam founded enterprise, who organize school trips, team-building tours, and, occasionally, trips for tourists (Simons and Hamer 2019, 14). Plastic Whale offers a symbiose of exploring Amsterdam from its canals on their self-made boats created from recycled plastic and adding the active contribution of fishing out plastic from the waters. As a visitor, you will

get to learn about aspects which are usually eluded for tourists, namely, waste management, plastic recycling, impact of contemporary lifestyles and tourism, and environmental sustainability, all in the context of Amsterdam (appendix II, 122).

Each of the previously mentioned aspects that came forward during the examination of the practices suggested by the Untourist Guide can also all be recognized in the Plastic Whale experience. First of all, the tour involves aspects of the tourist gaze (Urry 1990; 2002). Plastic Whale presents to the tourists the popular urban landscape of Amsterdam from its distinct canals. From this vantage point, the tourist is then able to read the signifiers to make sense of this urban city. In addition, narratives of municipal waste management or local pollution issues act as mundane experiences, but since they are presented in an unfamiliar context, it becomes a highly engaging experience for the tourist to gaze upon. As for sustainability, the tourists are participating in acts of recycling that contribute towards the environmental sustainability of Amsterdam. There is even a heritage aspect to it. When defining heritage as anything stemming from the past having a connection with the present and future (Fairclough *et al.* 2008, 1; Harvey and Perry 2015). Then, there is truly no better example as waste since it contains traces of past practices that leave their mark on the present and future.

The environmental sustainability is woven into every facet of Plastic Whale. This becomes apparent by the simple fact that they are fishing for plastic from the Amsterdam canals (fig. 11; fig. 12). Moreover, they recycle this plastic into furniture and the boats that they use. During the tour, many conversations between the tourists discussed either sustainability, the environment, global climate change, geopolitics, plastic pollution, recycling and its difficulties, or tourism and its environmental impact (Appendix II, 123-124). This then forms a natural transition to talk further about these subjects. It is symbolic for the alternative narrative that the organization wishes to proclaim. Plastic Whale is presenting a story, a past, of our impact as humans through plastic, and showing people how our actions in the past and present leave a mark on our surroundings, that will leave a trace for the future. This makes it an inherit heritage discourse. Furthermore, aspects of the tourist gaze were made clear by the respondents' actions. The participants were making photos and were commenting and asking questions about Amsterdam and its sites. The skipper occasionally provided information about the city, gave anecdotes on Dutch customs and sites, guiding the respondents through the city and Dutch culture (Appendix II, 125). These

are all signs of how the participants were reading and engaging in the larger heritage landscape of Amsterdam.



Figure 11 Photo from during the participant observation of participants picking up plastic from the water side and the skipper standing at the wheel (picture by author 2020).

A remaining concern, however, is how large of an audience the Untourist Guide can reach with practices such as Plastic Whale (or others), because this will influence the effectiveness of this sustainability approach. In previous research, it appears these acts of tourism mostly attract visitors that portray a biospheric-altruistic attitude (Vinzenz *et al.* 2019, 1663-1664). This was recognized during the participant observation as well (Appendix II, 124-125), and is further underscored by the fact that it remains difficult for the Untourist Guide to obtain traction (Appendix I, 94; 110). Almost all participants during the Plastic Whale tour were involved and interested in sustainability. An Australian participant, mother of her family, stated that she thought it important to teach her children about the world, especially the less pretty sights of life, as they are growing up in a very privileged environment. In addition, one of the American women also started to brainstorm on how

she could organize something similar for at the lakes in her own district, because they already participated on occasion to waste cleaning activism. When asked the respondents about why they booked the tour, one of the women from the U.S. answered by mentioning that she was very aware of the waste she left behind as a tourist, as she was consuming in the destination (appendix II, 122-124). She liked the idea of countering this by doing something positive for the city. This narrative that the organization is projecting, seems to target a specific type of tourist holding a biospheric-altruistic attitude.



*Figure 12 Photo from during the participant observation of participants fishing plastic from the waters and separating the trash into garbage bags (picture by respondent 2020).*

Regardless of these concerns, it has come apparent that the practices put forward by the Untourist Guide showcase a strong affinity with sustainable approaches and contribute both to levels of social and environmental sustainability. It engages strongly with a heritage discourse and with the AHD of Amsterdam, however, by taking a more present-centred position the movement is able to create an alternative narrative fitting of its mission. Still, the organization succeeds in acting on providing authentic experiences that involve practices of a tourist gaze and further interweaves tourists in the cityscape and its residents.

## 4.5 SUMMARY

It has been shown how Amsterdam has grounded itself firmly into the tourism industry as a popular destination, a Grand Hotel Amsterdam. While tourism has given many benefits for the city in terms of economic value, it is not without its shortcomings. These downsides can especially be felt inside the city centre of Amsterdam by residents with also signs of stress being reported in areas surrounding the centre affecting liveability of the area. Unfortunately, the city centre shows a deterioration of its cultural heritage as both the physical and the immaterial vernacular urban spaces have come under threat. This effects the socio-cultural values of the cultural heritage Amsterdam cherish, which suggesting that the social and environmental aspects of the city centre are in an unsustainable position.

It has come to show how the AHD of Amsterdam is constructed, validated, and expressed. The city proudly projects an identity of possessing a rich and elaborate history, which leaves its traces in its cityscape. Most notably, the tolerant culture and global attitude, both driven by economic prospects, are still very prominent to this day. However, these traits have also been highly refashioned for creating an authentic tourist experience, which has led to a certain type of behaviour that has been affecting levels of liveability for local communities. In addition, the international attitude of Amsterdam restrains the city from obstructing incoming tourists, making it more difficult to mitigate issues of overcrowding related to tourism. Nonetheless, the city council is attempting to solve these issues and it has decreed a tourism management that names sustainability as a prominent focal point. The Policy Stad in Balans proves more promise than the national strategy since it provides the reader with more detailed and exhausting list of measures. Despite this fact, it still remains to be seen how it will contribute to a more sustainable outcome for the city's tourism management.

The Untourist Guide offers a different approach towards sustainability. The movement gathered several innovative tourism practices, which is linked to modes of creative tourism. Interestingly, the heritage discourse does not seem to deviate a lot from the AHD, as it also puts forward Amsterdam's characteristics of being tolerant and international. However, it takes these preconditioned concepts and presents them in a novel manner for the visiting tourists to see. One that is more present-centred. This in combination with the 'joyful

contributions' that visitors get to partake in, offers a new tourist experience, but which still engages in aspects of a tourist gaze.



## 5 DISCUSSION

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The examination of Amsterdam's tourist arena has brought many different insights to light. In the following chapter, the theory and data will be evaluated in order to provide answers for the research questions. To conclude, the implications of the results will be discussed.

### 5.1 THE UNSUSTAINABLE POSITION OF AMSTERDAM'S CITY CENTRE

The case study of Amsterdam has been utilized in order to analyse the effectiveness of sustainable approaches of tourism and the effects it has for heritage and its values. Tourism is neither inherently good or bad, but both holds positive as well as negative effects (Coccosis 2009; Girard and Nijkamp 2009; Throsby 2009; Wall 2009). It has come to show how Amsterdam acts as a major tourist destination, receiving millions of tourists year round, which has given the city many benefits in terms of jobs and revenue (Fedorova *et al.* 2019; Gemeente Amsterdam 2018; Van Benthem *et al.* 2017). However, tourism also has its fair share of drawbacks. As tourist numbers continue to rise, so too have discussions of tourism issues in public debate. Allegedly, tourism has caused for a range of negative side-effects in the city of Amsterdam, such as overcrowding, scarcity on the housing market, monoculture in retail shops, nuisance, littering, and loss of social cohesion (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018; Van Benthem *et al.* 2017). By using Postma and Schmuecker's (2017) two indicators for assessing liveability aspects in relation to tourism, those of crowd density and behaviour nuisance, it can be assessed how the effects of tourism are mostly felt in the historical city centre (Gerritsma and Vork 2017; Sleutjes *et al.* 2019; Pinkster and Boterman 2018), but other neighbourhoods are experiencing these issues as well giving signs that the problems are growing (Gerritsma and Vork 2017; Noordeloos 2018; Sleutjes *et al.* 2019). This indicates the need for a sustainable approach as it can provide solutions and restore balance for the city.

However, there remain uncertainties to link these issues to tourism, because, they can also be ascribed to changes in local lifestyles or other transformations in society (Van

Bentham *et al.* 2017). This again underscores how places have become global playgrounds where the lines between locals and visitors have become hard to define (Frirsch *et al.* 2019; Sheller and Urry 2004; Wildish and Spierings 2019). It is equally hard saying how heritage is connected to these issues, as it is often left out of the debates, research, and analyses. There are some brief remarks of how tourism provides economic income to sustain heritage, or how it puts it under stress (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018), but that is where assessments stop. This indicates that heritage is not perceived as a relevant factor in debates regarding tourism management. Which is a missed opportunity. Tourism is very much interwoven with heritage, as it needs heritage and its values to maintain itself (Coccosis 2009, 50; Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 2-3; Van Loon and Rouwendal 2017, 109-110; Throsby 2009, 13). Moreover, heritage influences levels of liveability for local communities (Throsby 2009). So, understanding how heritage is affected by tourism deserves greater attention than it is currently receiving.

Fortunately, there are ways of investigating how tourism is affecting heritage and its values. All the way at the start of this thesis, it was stated how heritage values can be thought of in a dichotomy of sociocultural versus economic values (Mason 2008). Taking the concept of vernacular urban spaces (Zukin 2012), it becomes possible to articulate how tourism affects heritage and its sociocultural values. Vernacular urban spaces are responsible for producing cultural heritage through the ongoing exchanges of social, cultural, and economic practices. It is where cultural authenticity and identity are produced and sustained (Zukin 2012, 281-283; 290). These places function as a city's cultural ecosystems and it is where the living heritage of a historic city such as Amsterdam is expressed (Bui *et al.* 2020). The importance of these spaces can be displayed by the strong emotional attachment that residents of the canal district feel towards their homes and neighbourhoods. Local communities highly appreciate the material aesthetics and sensory experiences of the space. It creates a unique experience of an urban landscape invoking pride and a deep knowledge of the cityscape and its heritage, which has become part of the residents' identity (Boterman and Pinkster 2017, 461-462).

However, it is also exactly these kind of spaces that visitors are attracted to (Wildish and Spierings 2019), therefore, it is also exactly these places where tourism is impacting heritage values the most. This is exemplified by the worrying signals of the loss of shop diversity and the scarcity on the housing market in Amsterdam's city centre. Two essential aspects that initiate the cultural processes in these cultural ecosystems. As you need a

diverse array of shops to create a vernacular urban space, and residents in the neighbourhood that shop at these places to sustain them. In addition, overcrowding and nuisance can also play into alienation processes for residents (Pinkster and Boterman 2017). This all suggests the sociocultural heritage values have come under significant stress within the city centre of Amsterdam.

As for the economic values of heritage, an easier case can be made. Just by looking at the number of tourists coming to Amsterdam and the revenue they provide (Van Benthem *et al.* 2017), the importance of economic values of heritage can be indicated. Especially when one bears in mind that Amsterdam's cultural heritage is a major reason for tourists to visit the city and most visitors participate in activities that involve cultural heritage is some way or another and much of their expenditure is going to heritage (Van Loon and Rouwendal 2017). Unfortunately, it is also the attraction that economic value receives that leads to the continuous growth of the tourist industry and is causing for the unsustainable situation for destinations and places of heritage (Chueng and Li 2019, 1197-1198; Cotterell *et al.* 2019, 882-883; Torkington *et al.* 2020, 1041)

*“Neoliberalization of the housing market and commercial real estate in combination with the sale of public buildings to corporate investors, luxury hotels chains and international department stores have accelerated processes of commodification that are dislodging the area from the everyday lives of residents”* (Boterman and Pinkster 2017, 467-469).

This statement showcases how economic values are often in stark contrast to the sociocultural ones and are even gaining the upper hand, causing for an imbalanced position for Amsterdam in terms of heritage values.

## **5.2 HERITAGE DISCOURSE IN AMSTERDAM**

It has continuously come forward how heritage is an inherently ambiguous phenomenon. At its core, heritage is a social practice that creates a relationship between the past, the present and the future, and, that is imminently subjugated to contingency (Fairclough *et al.* 2008; Harrison 2013; Lowenthal 1998; 2015; Smith 2006). Heritage can be taken as a discourse which organizes the understanding of the world and defines people's thoughts and practices. The concept of AHD (Smith 2006) underscores how an expert-dominated

discourse of heritage dictates contemporary conservation and preservation practices. It prescribes an alleged fixed set of values and understandings of what heritage is and what it should be, by doing so, it subverts alternative discourses of heritage and limits the possibilities how people can interact with heritage. It is only within a certain discourse that society decides what is of value, and what is not. These are the values that push people towards a certain line of action (Mason 2008). Tourism is one of the major ways in which heritage values are put to work in contemporary society (Coccosis 2009, 49; Wall 2009),

The Authorized Heritage Discourse is an integral part for the configuration of a city's heritage values and tourism protocols as it helps to construct a tourist gaze and encourages certain practices, discourses and outlooks within tourism (Urry 1990; 2002; Urry and Larsen 2011). Therefore, analysing the AHD of Amsterdam is key. Especially considering how the city has consistently marketed itself as being the cultural centre of the Netherlands (Dahles 1998) and knowing that many visitors come to spectate Amsterdam for its cultural heritage (Van Loon and Rouwendal 2017). The dominant narrative that is found in Amsterdam is characterized by three factors: (1) a rich history materialized by its 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century architecture amplified by a UNESCO world heritage status, (2) an attitude of tolerance justified by the city's past success, and (3) a vibrant global identity in which tourism has saturated itself (Dahles 1998; Gemeente Amsterdam 2018; 2019; Mak 2001; Nijman 1999). Moreover, all three characteristics come together by Amsterdam's economic success, both in the present and past, as these three stand at the cradle of its prosperity.

The third characteristic, that of the international identity, also ties in how the city council interacts with tourism and how it formulates its tourism management. The international character of Amsterdam limits the municipality to take further measures for mitigating tourism (Noordeloos 2018). By stating that tourism is part of Amsterdam's international identity, the city cannot, and will not obstruct tourists coming to the city (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018). It would be too much against the tolerant and international parts of its AHD. On top of this, the tolerant and liberal attitude of the city gives way to a specific type of tourist performance. The tolerant identity of Amsterdam has been configured by tourists and the industry alike into a liberal use of sex and drugs that gives way for 'letting it all out' during one's stay in the city, inducing much unwanted behaviour, nuisance, and pollution (Dahles 1998; Gerritsma and Vork 2017; Nijman 1999; Pinkster and Boterman 2017). This image has become too ingrained into the tourist gaze for visitors of Amsterdam that it seems difficult to counter it since it has been perpetrating for many years already.

Going back to Postma and Schmuecker (2017) again and relating their indicators to Amsterdam's AHD, it can be observed that the criteria of visitor to resident density of public spaces can be correlated to the international identity that withholds the council from limiting tourism. Although it has to be said that the rise of tourism is greatly attributed to global developments rather than local one's (Gerritsma and Vork 2017, 86; Girard and Nijkamp 2009, 1; Urry and Larsen 2011, 5). The other criteria, that of frustration levels by residents due to tourist behaviour, can be referenced to behaviour tourists perform in light of the tolerant attitude of Amsterdam. Again, it is not to say that Amsterdam's AHD is the only reason that causes these issues. However, it does appear that the AHD of Amsterdam does have some part in amplifying these effects.

How does this translate to heritage values? It is difficult to say. Aspects such as liberalism and an international identity do not easily reveal which exact heritage values are at play. However, there are hints in which heritage values come to the foreground. Taking Mason's (2008) dichotomy of economic versus sociocultural values again, both of these are implicitly present within Amsterdam's AHD. Starting with the economic value, this is ingrained into every facet of Amsterdam and its past, present, and future. Looking again at all three identified components of the AHD, each of them has a fundamental basing in the city's economic success of the past (Mak 2001; Nijman 1999). For this reason, the historic centre symbolically functions as a business card for Amsterdam and its past success. At present, this heritage still contains economic power, showcased by the visitor economy. Especially since most visitors spent a lot of time and money on cultural heritage (Van Loon and Rouwendal 2017). Furthermore, this economic aspects are underscored by how the municipality constantly brings forward how the open, liberal, and international AHD of the city provides opportunities for many entrepreneurs (Gemeente Amsterdam 2018). Nonetheless, how heritage values are exactly expressed or influenced within the AHD is difficult to assess with the current data.

How the AHD is projected onto sociocultural values is more difficult to assess. Previously, it already was shown how effects of tourism cause for changes in vernacular urban spaces which are responsible for a large range of sociocultural and immaterial attributes. However, how the narrative of Amsterdam plays into this is less clear. Fortunately, there are still a signs of how the sociocultural values of the AHD are put to work. First, it can be recognized in the attitudes of local residents. Many of them state how they value the city's vibrant and international positioning. It is part of what makes the city feel alive. They

value how the city functions as a hub to jump to the rest of the world and to spectate how the dynamic cityscape comes alive in front of their eyes. Residents value the interactions they have with visitors as it enriches their lives. Tourism thus seems to be an inherent part of many residents' lifestyles and the social and cultural exchanges they appreciate (Noordeloos 2018; Pinkster and Boterman; Wildish and Spierings 2019). However, it far from a conclusive answer.

### **5.3 LIMITS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICIES**

Both on the national and on the local scale, new tourism management strategies have been formulated to combat the previously named issues, which are drawing inspiration from sustainable approaches. At the national Dutch scale, the National Bureau of Tourism and Conferences has formulated dispersing tourists across the country by attracting them to underdeveloped destinations as their main spearpoint. In addition, they wish to redistribute costs and benefits created by the tourist sector among all stakeholders (NBTC 2019). The prior strategy seems inherently flawed, as there is no constructive evidence given to validate the statement that relieving overcrowded tourist destinations by dispersing visitors actually work. Furthermore, the NBTC negates this argument even by stating that it will be nearly impossible to stop people travelling to the iconic and popular destinations (NBTC 2019, 26). This approach then only seems to serve sustaining the growth and development of the industry, and not the larger sustainability goals. This confirms Torkington *et al.*'s (2020) argument that national tourism policies only operate to endorse the continuation of growth of the tourism industry and is not looking for the greater sustainable solutions.

The approach to redistribute costs and benefits more evenly among stakeholders seems to have more promise. Especially since it seems to be in line with much of the existing literature regarding sustainability (Noordeloos 2018; Throsby 2009; Girard and Nijkamp 2009). In particular making sure relevant stakeholders receive a seat at the table is an important step towards building sustainable outcomes as it provides for a larger support base (Gerritsma and Vork 2017). However, the intentions, in particular by the NBTC, but also by the city council of Amsterdam, still have to be better articulated of how it will be implemented precisely. Only providing promises and intentions will not lead to actually

achieving sustainable goals, but it is a good step in the right direction. Looking closer at Amsterdam, the council appears to engage in a wider variety of tactics, while also providing a more detailed formulation. Next to the previously named policies, there are two other approaches that stand out from the municipality's policy, which are: (1) maintaining and increasing the diversity of retail shops, and (2) enforcing on nuisance behaviour. Especially when regarding heritage values, the preserving of a diverse retail sector seems to promise bringing sustainability for the vernacular urban spaces and the sociocultural values that are at play here.

The question remains, however, if these measures will truly contribute to creating a more sustainable situation for Amsterdam. A sustainability approach assumes that the world and its resources are finite. Furthermore, there is an interdependent connectivity between social, economic, and environmental elements in every system. For this reason, all three factors have to be taken into account and be in balance for any operation to be sustainable for the future and only by applying a strong sustainable position can this be accomplished (Baker 2006; Clark 2008). In this thesis, it has only been examined how top-down approaches have been formulated for obtaining sustainability through a discourse analysis. This, however, leaves out how these policies will apply to reality. This makes it difficult to accurately evaluate the success of these measures. On top of this, these policies are still being developed and, in large parts, have yet to be put into place. Nevertheless, the approach of Amsterdam holds more promise for sustainable outcomes than that of the one from the NBTC, but if it holds up to strong sustainable outcomes has yet to be observed.

## **5.4 THE PROMISE OF CREATIVE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS**

In contrast to Amsterdam's AHD and its approach to managing tourism, is the *Untourist Guide to Amsterdam* (Simons and Hamer 2019). The narrative that the movement presents, does not deviate a lot when linking it to Amsterdam's AHD. However, it is the manner in which this discourse is interpreted and put to work wherein the difference lies. The *Untourist Guide* uses this narrative in order to provide a set of alternative tourist practices which should contribute to sustainable outcomes, which draw inspiration from other creative tourism approaches (Rabzauskaitė 2015; Richards 2011; Richards 2019). Diving back into the definition of the AHD, an even more important, but very subtle, difference can be noted.

While the AHD is mostly focused on telling Amsterdam's history and leaving its heritage as something of the past, which is an integral part of AHD's in general as argued by Smith (2006). The Untourist Guide allows for the heritage to get back into the present by showcasing how those processes of the past still leave their mark in the present. This is best exemplified by the refugee boat tour, since, although refugees are a definite part of Amsterdam's AHD, in the present, refugees are often ignored. This tour shows how they are still part of present society and heritage making. They are part of the living heritage.

However, the main goal for the Untourist Guide is and remains to change traditional tourism behaviours, that are at the moment mostly based on consumption of Amsterdam's tolerant identity of sex and drugs, which leaves a lot of waste and produces nuisance and frustration. Through what the guide calls 'joyful contribution', the movement is attempting to shift acts of tourism from a passive consuming tradition towards an active contributing practice. This will allow tourists to not only to contribute to a destination in terms of economic value, but it will also grant tourist the opportunity to add to environmental or social sustainability. The Plastic Whale tour, for instance, shows how these practices act on environmental sustainability elements, while the grow a global tradition exemplifies how the guide can contribute towards social sustainability. Moreover, examining the mary and Amsterdammer for a day, it can be seen how the Untourist Guide still allows tourists to engage in the tourist gaze by spectating on the mundane everyday life, or unfamiliar practices and objects within the host environment (Urry 1990; 2002; Urry and Larsen 2011). It enforces on processes that mingle the tourist with the place of destination, blurring the lines between the local and global (Frisch *et al.* 2019; Urry and Sheller 2004), and, which shines through in all activities of the guide, it speaks directly to the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore 1999).

Unfortunately, with the current collected data, it remains indecisive how creative tourism practices, such as the Untourist Guide, affect heritage and its values precisely. Seen how the guide engages in discourses and practices of heritage, it is likely that it will influence heritage values in some way or form. However, it is impossible to state with certainty how this happens. It also remains to be seen how big the impact for sustainability creative tourism will actually have given how this mode of tourism mostly attracts visitors with a biospheric-altruistic attitude (Vinzenz *et al.* 2019). It is likely that both a top-down and more creative method have to be utilized.



## 5.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS

It is clear that there is still much work to be done for finding sustainable outcomes for tourism management, in particular for the city of Amsterdam, but also for tourism at large. For a while already there has been a need for more sustainable tourism (Edgell 2015, 25-26; Higham and Miller 2018, 1-3; Torkington *et al.* 2020), but many tools for sustainability still have to be operationalized and put into practice. Only once these become more established, will it be possible to examine the implications of these methods for reality. In addition, also for heritage and its values there remain many blind spots within the context of Amsterdam since they are often left out of tourism management policies.

Despite these uncertainties, there remain lessons to be learned, which can be distilled from the data. First, the thesis provides an exploration and overview for contemporary sustainable methods. These can be used as inspiration and foundation to develop further sustainable solutions. Second, the thesis serves to re-emphasise the importance of heritage, its discourse, and its implications for tourism, destinations, and the management of these. Heritage is gaining little to no attention in most tourism narratives that were examined for the collected data. Which is surprising, given how tourism is dependent on heritage on many different levels. Bringing heritage to the table will set the path for a more fruitful discussions regarding tourism and its management as it allows for greater understand of how these forces act. This should allow for a more nuanced tourism management that could be more sustainable at the same time. Of course, heritage is not the only factor that plays into this matrix. But as of now, it is one that is overlooked way too often. Following from this, the study shows the power of discourse, and heritage discourse mores specifically, in how it shapes people's acts and thoughts. So, too, does it influence tourism and its practices. Discourse is formulated by people. It is never a force of nature. It is in our hands to shape discourse, and through it, shape reality.

## 6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Sustainable tourism practices and management policies are on the rise. Many of the analysed approaches still find themselves in the early stages of development, meaning that only time will tell what degree these will prove to be successful. It is likely that a large arsenal of tools has to be deployed in order to solve the many issues tourists present. The laid-out principles put forward by Amsterdam's municipality, as well as those by the NBTC, are aimed to mitigate the overwhelming force of tourism. Much hope is put on a dispersal tactic, as it seems to stand at the core of many management approaches, but, the evidence to support this strategy seems ill-founded at best. Redistributing costs and benefits of the visitor economy, however, seems to have more merit. If this will be enough, remains to be seen. Furthermore, what the implications are for heritage and its values is also difficult to state. It is clear that the liveability of Amsterdam's city centre is under scrutiny and, since heritage plays a role in liveability as well, is equally affected. However, how heritage has to play a role in sustainable tourism approaches is mentioned far too little and its role needs to be recognized more firmly.

The Untourist Guide mostly targets to transform behaviour of tourists by presenting a guide that suggests alternative tourism practices that are aimed to contribute towards social and environmental sustainability. However, the question has to be asked how far their influence can reach. It has a potential for adding to sustainable goals by inspiring new tourist practices and behaviours, but more stakeholders have to get involved in sustainable approaches. Fortunately, this seems to be the case in Amsterdam (Fedorova *et al.* 2019). Nevertheless, top-down approaches are likely still needed for obtaining a strong sustainable position for the city. As for heritage values, again, it remains to be an inconclusive answer. Heritage discourses are being utilized and it is therefore likely that heritage values are exchanged in these practices as well. However, how they are affected and expressed remains difficult to answer.

In order to gain an accurate picture of how sustainable models contribute to a more balanced articulation of heritage values and tourism management, more in-depth research needs to be conducted. First and foremost, it will be necessary to gain a larger dataset of how these approaches manifest into practice. What are their effects? How are they experienced? How does this relate to traditional tourism? Furthermore, a firm baseline needs to

be created for sustainable approaches. A similar dataset should be created for traditional tourism. Creating such a taxonomy of tourism allows to accurately state what constitutes as a sustainable practice for heritage in tourism, and what does not. At present, it is still difficult to make a solid statement on how heritage values are affected and have implications for sustainability aspects for tourism. Therefore, a solid foundation has to be constructed for this. Also, other sustainability approaches should be added into the mix to be able to make more cross references. 'Responsible' tourism, for example, could be such an approach (Burrai *et al.* 2019). 'Volunteer' tourism is another method that could be further evaluated (Eckardt *et al.* 2020). In addition, a 'user-centred design' for tourist products is also suggested (Font *et al.* 2018). In particular, conceptualizations of 'degrowth' should be investigated (Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.* 2019; Milano *et al.* 2019). Only by evaluating multiple angles and adding heritage into the debate will it be possible to come to conclusive sustainable outcomes.

Then there is of course the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the virus, the whole tourist industry has been put on hold, meaning, that all predictions referenced in this thesis for the future have become next to meaningless. However, the situation prior to the corona virus provides a cautionary tale for both the industry and its destinations. The current situation could be seen as a reset for the sector to reinvent itself with strong sustainability aspects at the new foundation. Pictures are showing up of completely deserted streets, and people are reporting having more connections with their neighbours and feel as they have their streets back (Freriks 2020; Niemandsverdriet 2020a). Consequently, new calls for ensuring balance within Amsterdam have been put forward. Recently, local residents have already put out a petition to put a definite maximum on the amount overnight stays of tourists that they wish to come to Amsterdam. While also advocating for bringing a stop to AirBnB rentals and hotel development, taxing tourist more highly, and buying up properties in the city by the municipality. On the other side, entrepreneurs are begging the city to invest in tourism so that it can flourish again. They advocate that the tourism industry is vital for the sustaining of local entrepreneurs and local economy and wealth. They fear a massive bankruptcy and loss of jobs due to the corona virus which will hit the city hard (Niemandsverdriet 2020b). In an official letter by mayor Femke Halsema (2020), she addresses the future of tourism in light of the corona outbreak. She states that it is vital to preserve the inner city of Amsterdam and its heritage for its future generations. She explicitly mentions that bringing the number of tourists and tourist facilities should be part of

this. Buying real estate properties is a way of breaking this cycle. Moving the sex and drug centres to periphery areas is another (Halsema 2020, 5). How this will develop, remains to be seen. What is clear is that discussions regarding tourism has entered an interesting and crucial phase.

## ABSTRACT

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Nowadays, tourism has grown into one of the largest industries worldwide being one of the major sources for income and jobs. There is barely a place left untouched by its forces and with the prospects of increasing wealth, free time, and accessibility of travelling opportunities, predictions for the future tell us that the visitor economy will remain to grow in the coming years as well. Although it brings many opportunities for destinations, it also comes with its fair share of challenges. Discussions regarding tourism are on the rise, as negative effects from tourism are experienced more often. Heritage forms an integral part within this debate since it is a major pull effect for tourists to travel to a destination in the first place. Assuming that heritage does not possess any intrinsic qualities, but is constructed by the use and experience of heritage by people, this means that tourism has the force to transform heritage as well, as tourism is a specific way in which heritage is experienced and interacted with. At the root of these experiences and practices, stands a given heritage discourse and the value system that constructs it. It is, therefore, necessary to examine how the discourse of heritage is constructed, how this causes how people interact with heritage via tourism, and what this tells us how people value heritage in a given context.

Because of the discrepancies that tourism creates, I examine possible solutions for these issues by using a sustainability lens, and to evaluate if a sustainable approach can contribute to a healthier tourism management. In addition, I explore how heritage discourse plays into this process, and how it can contribute to sustainable outcomes, both in tourism and heritage management. With this premise in mind, I have taken Amsterdam as case study, as it is one of the major contemporary tourist destinations in the world in which discussions regarding tourism have taken a prominent position in the public discourse. I have looked at a top-down approach, put out by the municipality of Amsterdam named *Stad in Balans*, in which they have formulated their management strategy for tourism for the coming years. In addition, I have studied a bottom-up initiative called *The Untourist Guide to Amsterdam*, which is a recently founded movement inspired by practices of creative tourism. By looking at both models, an overview will be given on how sustainability can play a part in tourism and its interaction with heritage, and how the discourse of heritage can add to the sustainability in how it favors certain values and excludes others.

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## APPENDICES

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### APPENDIX I

*Transcript of the interview that was held with one of the co-founders, Elena Simons, of the Untourist Guide to Amsterdam. First, the original transcript will be provided, which is in Dutch as the interview was performed in Dutch. After, a translation will be provided*

Date of interview: 06-01-2020

Duration of interview: 59.37 minutes

Luuk: Ik wil altijd graag beginnen met een voorstelvraag, dus wat is precies jouw rol binnen de Untourist Guide, wie ben jij, wat is het dat jij doet binnen de organisatie?

Elena: ik initieer al mijn hele werkende leven graag ongewone, wonderbaarlijke dingen, die er op gericht zijn om de wereld te verbeteren. Dingen die in deze tijd nodig zijn, zoals duurzaamheid, verbinding tussen verschillende groepen. En ik ben eigenlijk gedreven door een combinatie van schoonheid en nut. Hoe schoonheid kan bijdragen aan het nut ergens van en hoe het groot wereldschokkend nut ergens van, schoonheid kan krijgen. Schoonheid, visueel is daar maar een onderdeelje van. Het is meer het concept wat het betreft. Dat er een soort kracht of breuk is in je wereldbeeld. Ik zou tig voorbeelden kunnen geven, maar... op een gegeven moment had ik allemaal ideetjes omtrent toerisme. Ik woon hier in Amsterdam Centrum en toerisme, ja, je ziet hier allemaal mensen uit andere landen komen, en een beetje hun eigen dingen doen. En ik had zelf het idee om daar wat gekker, leuker, verrassender mee te doen. En tegelijkertijd zinvol binnen het groter kader. En toen heb ik een keertje met Eelko [een van de andere oprichters van de Untourist Guide] samen, twee jaar geleden, een brainstorm georganiseerd hoe toerisme iets goeds kan betekenen. Dat leverde muren vol op met vooral ideeën voor activiteiten: plant a tree tour, marry an amsterdammer for a day, your job for the day market, ook wel zogenaamd een krooin? [niet helemaal hoorbaar] stond op de muur. En eigenlijk het totaal pakket vonden we interessant en dat kwam een beetje samen in een alternative tourist office. Zou je een plek kunnen

hebben die je heel bekend maakt die toeristen die wat zinnigs en leuks willen doen, weten dat ze daar terecht kunnen voor allerlei gave opties. En nog iets later, zagen we eigenlijk dat er een paradigma verschuiving in het denken over toerisme in zat. Dat het vanuit ons betreft ging van passieve consumptie, het automatisme dat genieten is consumeren. Ik ben op vakantie, dus ik ga consumeren. Nu is het consumeren van voedsel en drank een nutteloze consumptie, maar ook in de zin van dat je naar een museum gaat en dat alles daar voor je is klaargezet en uitgesteld om jou te inspireren. Op dat je op een tour gaat en dat iemand die verteld jou, en jij luistert. Dus dat komt er bij kijken, maar, joyful contributions. Dat je juist best meer plezier kunt beleven aan ergens een bijdragen aan leveren. En het is niet een hele makkelijke gedachten, omdat het gaat om een gedragsverandering in een setting waarin je juist meer geneigd bent op je gemak te laat vallen; want je bent in het buitenland en je weet niet eens hoe je aan een tramkaartje komt. Dus het is niet aan de setting om juist een nog veel avontuurlijkere keuze te maken. Alhoewel je dat wel meer in opkomst ziet met mensen die gaan couch surfen, die specifiek op zoek gaan naar *vegan* restaurants, naar *meet-ups* of naar *hidden gems*, *unique experiences*, blabla. Dus het haakt wel aan op een zeker trend, maar het is dus niet de context dat het makkelijk is. Maar we vinden het zo fascinerend, en samen [Waarschijnlijk zij en Elko] merken we dat het veel bijval krijgt. Heel veel organisaties en hele diversen vinden het een interessante gedachten om er werk van te maken. En ik ben iemand die van een dergelijk gedachten, daar krijg ik energie van in combinatie met wat anderen er mee willen en dat ik het voor me zie dat dan er een heel gek soort loketje zou staan. Bijvoorbeeld dat je vanaf weet, die trek heeft in een bepaalde parkeergarage, ondergronds en grijs enzo. En dat je dan daar een mannetje zit met een hand gebouwd huisje, zelfgemaakt met oude deuren en kozijnen die dan aan de deuren zijn geschilderd. Dat je daar binnenstapt, en dat je daar allemaal verschillende kaartjes aan verschillende haakjes, en daar dan opstaat: Lonely sock speed dating. En allemaal van die dingen waarvan je denkt: “wow! Wat is dat?!” En dat dat ook echt allemaal bestaat. Een bing bord in Amsterdam. Dat is mijn droombeeld. En hoe ik graag werk, is ik hou van aanjagen, dus organisaties benaderen: “wil je bij de aankomende bijeenkomst zijn?” Ik hou ervan dat die ideeën stromen een element is. Als er echt iets op poten moet worden gezet, dan word ik nogal zenuwachtig dat is minder waarin ik in floreer. Ik kan best goed schrijven. Het is meer dat ik het doe, omdat ik het kan, dan dat ik daar helemaal gelukkig van wordt. Maar ik ben sowieso wel iemand die van met taal iets van gevoel teweeg ben. Dus ik ben wel diegene die het sneller in die ‘catchy’ titels weet te vertalen van die activiteiten.



Luuk: Ja daar komt al gelijk heel veel voorbij. Om even terug te gaan naar over hoe jullie zijn begonnen. Wat was voor jullie nu eigenlijk de ‘kern’ om de Untourist Guide te beginnen. Je begon zelf al met dat je zelf in Amsterdam woont en dat je vanuit daar begon te denken hoe dat anders kan. Een positievere bijdragen kan geven. Is dat voor jou ook de hele kern om de Untourist op te richten?

Elena: tja, de kern. Wat is voor ons de kern? Dat hangt er vanaf hoe je het omschrijft. Als onze drijfveer? Of wat willen er precies mee neerzetten?

Luuk: Ik denk dat het allebei betreft. Dus zowel wat is jullie visie als idealen situatie.

Elena: ja dus er is nu... Sabine, Eelko en ik, wij zijn... Het begon dus bij Eelko en ik, maar na een paar maandjes daarna vonden we Sabine, die haakte aan en ik werkte al langer met haar. En zij en wij zijn de drie trekkers sinds 2 jaar. En we worden allemaal gedreven door grootsheid en creativiteit. Abstract, creatief stapje vooruit is wat het nu is. En wat betreft toerisme, denk ik dat het voor Eelko misschien meer toevallig is. Voor mij zit daar iets in van het wereldburgerschap. Juist het bij elkaar komen van mensen met verschillende achtergronden. Dat heel interessant kan zijn in relatie tot dat wij als mensheid iets met onze aarde en met ons als mensheid moeten. Dat we daar heel veel binnen moeten in de komende decennia. En... voila! Dit zijn van die mengmomenten waarbij iedereen ook even de tijd heeft. Bijvoorbeeld, om samen plezier te leven van het vormgeven van onze wereldtoekomst. En Sabine is ook werkzaam in de toeristenwereld. Die reist als begeleiding en heeft voor een agentschap in Mexico gewerkt. Dus zij heeft meer van binnenuit leren kennen. En ook bij een grote beurs in Londen geweest en daar merkte ze dat er wel een soort vraag is naar duurzaam toerisme. Iets nieuws, iets anders. Maar ook veel behoudendheid en dat er nog veel gebeuren moest om daar iets nieuws en bijzonders te laten ontstaan. Maar daar deinst ze ook niet voor terug.

Luuk: Dus eigenlijk jullie alle drie komen een soort samen in deze Untourist beweging, met ieder je eigen drive er achter?

Elena: Nou, ietsjes verschillend, maar ik denk dat we in vele delen overeenkomen. Dat we houden van de schoonheid er van. Dat we houden van het nieuwe en het belangrijk en dat het wat schoner er groots wordt. En iets belangrijks, wat er nu nog nauwelijks is. En dat het relevant is. En van alle mogelijke dingen die we mogelijk zouden kunnen doen, we houden ook wel van allerlei onderwerpen, denk ik dat we hier al jaren mee bezig zijn vanwege het momentum. Dat hier zowel push als pull, toerisme wordt steeds meer uitgekotst

door steden. Als iets negatiefs ervaren van belanghebbende, daarvoor is het ook wel een drijfveer om te willen investeren in nieuwe vormen. Als ook... er is sowieso enthousiasme voor duurzaamheid en sociaal en zo te werken. En ook in deze branch. Dus we hebben het tij mee.

Luuk: Hoe zou jij de Untourist Guide willen omschrijven, jij zelf.

Elena: Het boekje?

Luuk: Ja.

Elena: Ja het is drie dingen. Een, het is in twee woorden: een visionaire gids. En de drie dingen zijn [1] een gids naar wat je allemaal voor leuks kunt doen in Amsterdam met ook positief bijdragen aan de stad, de bewoners en de wereld. [2] het legt ook onze visie neer voor bijdrage, vrolijk bijdrage aan toerisme. [3] En het is een oproep om hier deel vanuit te maken. Het begon dus in april en het is zo klein dat het nagenoeg nog niet bestaat eigenlijk, maar als dit jou boeit dan: sluit je aan, voeg je ideeën toe, neem jou masterscriptie, wat het ook is. Als het maar bij jou past.

Luuk: En die oproep, naar wie richten jullie die?

Elena: De gids is in het Engels gemaakt om dan bij toeristen aan te sluiten. Maar eigenlijk is iedereen welkom. En ik denk dat eigenlijk in deze fase de meest interessante doelgroep belanghebbende zijn. Organisaties die dit soort toerisme groot kunnen maken met ons. En ik hoor ook dat de gids, die ligt dan bijvoorbeeld ook aan het Atheneum [boeken winkel] aan de balie. En dat die heel zelden wordt gekocht, maar af en toe dan komt er iemand vijf of zes exemplaren kopen. Dus dan denk ik: oh dat zijn blijkbaar geen toeristen die komen, want dan stel je voor dat er een constant stroompje is van mensen die er eentje kopen. Blijkbaar wordt het dan toch door professionals als interessant gezien en die dat aan hun collega's, netwerk ofzo mee te geven.

Luuk: En jullie weten ook niet aan wie die worden verkocht. Er is niemand die met jullie contact hebben gezocht en gezegd: "hey, ik heb een paar exemplaren van jullie gekocht."

Elena: Nee. Nou ja, af en toe hebben we dan zelf wel dat we op een hoge school evenement zijn en dan een paar van die boekjes mogen verkopen, maar althans bij de boekhandels niet.

Luuk: Ja goed. Jij had... ik denk dat het op het moment wel als algemeen bekend is dat toerisme niet als iets heel positiefs wordt gezien. Jij had het zelf al over 'uitgekotst'.

Elena: Ja je hebt überhaupt in het publieke discourse heeft een hele slechte naam gekregen. Mensen hebben het er over met elkaar over hoe verschrikkelijk die toeristen zijn. Als je vraagt of mensen er last van hebben, dan denk ik dat in het hart van de binnenstad dat absoluut aan de hand is, maar heel grote delen van de stad niet. Dat daar misschien het idee is van: oh nee! Toeristen! Nou het is volgens mij 5-10 procent van onze economie. Er wordt ook volop van geprofiteerd, maar dat is niet wat je op feestjes tegen elkaar zegt.

Luuk: Dus jij zou zeggen dat het vooral in het idee zit dat toerisme negatief is, maar dat het in de werkelijkheid wel mee valt?

Elena: Nou, ik denk dat er reden is voor negativiteit, en reden is voor positiviteit, en dat er eigenlijk nog de meeste reden is voor daar neutraal in te staan. Maar wel dat die dingen voor negativiteit zorgen, dat die dingen ook het meest waarschijnlijk zijn dat je die tegen elkaar zegt. Dat je bij elkaar er over moppert. En vooral, en dat hoor ik dan vooral in het toerisme circuit, dat het parool en het AT5 [Nederlandse en lokaal news/media bladen] het allemaal heel erg hebben aangezet. Heel veel over negatieve dingen hebben geuit. En nu was er al een tevredensheidonderzoek van onder de bewoners van Amsterdam, en het was voor het eerst in lange tijd dat de tevredenheid van bewoners was gedaald ten gevolgen van toerisme. Dus ik denk wel dat er iets van een negatieve effect is. Wat merk ik zelf. Ik vind het lastig met fietsen als er toeristen voor je wiel lopen. Of een slingerende toerist die voor je zit en zelf niet kan fietsen. Ik heb ook wel onze vorige bovenburen de deden aan AirBnB waar je opeens in je halletje 4 glazend kijkende Spanjaarden hebt. Wat zijn de sociale normen voor deze situatie? Je weet het eigenlijk geen van allen. Op de Spuistraat wilde ik even een snackje halen en dan kosten daar 2 muffins 9 euro. Kennelijk hebben ze vaak genoeg toeristen die dat willen betalen of dat het witwasserijen zijn. Ik weet het niet. Ja en de sfeer in de binnenstad heeft ook. Ik woon in een nieuwbouwuurt. En dat is om de hoek bij allerlei nutellazaken en zo. Nou dat vind ik te doen, want mijn echt favoriete speciale winkeltjes die zitten er nog wel. Maar als die ook zouden moeten vertrekken, dan is dat doodzonde. Maar ik vind het allemaal geen wereldproblemen. Ik stop zelf liever in wereldproblemen en in kansen om toerisme ook te richten op het oplossen van wereldproblemen.

Luuk: Dus voor jou zijn de effecten van toeristen dus niet dusdanig slecht?

Elena: Het is voor mij geen enkel drijfveer, in niets wat ik doe. Ik ben al jaren bezig met positieve toerisme en nu is het voor mij totaal niet te wijten door de last die ik van toeristen heb.

Luuk: Zou je dan zeggen dat de Untourist ook vooral bestaat voor het beeld van toerisme? Om dat om te slaan?

Elena: Dat boeit ons in wezen ook eigenlijk niet. We willen praktijken veranderen. We merken wel dat het animo om hier aan mee te werken, komt door een deel dat organisaties die toerisme bezig zijn, snakken naar een betere beeldvorming.

Luuk: Dus je hebt het over andere praktijken. En dat zijn dan de activiteiten die jullie aanbieden?

Elena: wij bieden ze niet zelf aan, maar we willen dat ze aangeboden worden. Plastic Whale doet het al sinds 2008, dat bestond al voordat wij er mee bezig gingen. Als bij wijze van rondvaart de plastic uit de grachten vissen nog een grotere fenomeen wordt, dan is dat een uitstekend voorbeeld. Maar wat wij dus zien is dat je dus eigenlijk duizenden grotere en kleinere opties zou moeten hebben. En dat je weet dat als je naar Amsterdam komt, dat je dat soort dingen kunt doen. En als je liever naar het Anne Frank huis wil gaan, de standaard dingen, dan prima. Maar dat er dan voor, we hadden al snel gedacht, we willen ongeveer 1 miljoen mensen die voor dit soort opties kiezen, en de prognose is dat er 25 miljoen mensen komen. Dus je hebt het over 4%. Daar komen dan op de eerste plaatste de trendsetters en de voorlopers. Meer avontuurlijke, betrokken mensen. Laat die dat dan doen, en dan zien we daarna wel weer verder hoe toerisme zich verder ontwikkeld.

Luuk: En heb je al een idee hoe je die ontwikkeling zou willen zien? Of hoe zou jij het liefst willen dat het zich ontwikkeld? Als die activiteiten van jullie, die jullie opperen, ook echt worden opgenomen en uitgevoerd, hoe zou het er voor jou dan uitzien? Heb je daar een idee bij?

Elena: fysiek zie ik dan voor me de folders, de apps, en de sites, en de informatiepunten en dat je ook in je hostel, dus hoe de activiteit wordt gepromoot. Het type activiteit: sociaal creatief, avontuurlijk, allemaal belevingen die de mooiste verhalen zijn bij thuiskomst. Sommigen zijn zo charmant in hun kleinschaligheid, dat je absoluut niet wilt dat er dusdanig veel mensen naar heen komen. Anderen worden juist mooier naarmate er meer mensen zijn die het doen. Stel je eens voor dat we hier een massale menskracht aan toeristen de circulaire economie, al die materiële stromingen helpen rondstromen. Ik noem maar iets. Hoe mensen het ook willen doen. En ik vind het ook wel heel erg leuk als ik verrast kan worden om daar producten voor Chinezen bijvoorbeeld komen, wat ik nooit had kunnen verzinnen, dat ze zo iets zouden willen en dat iemand dat zou zijn gaan aanbieden.

Luuk: En dat zeggen jullie ook in dat boekje van jullie, daar geven jullie ook sterk aan dat dit nog iets is wat eigenlijk nog niet bestaat, in opkoming is. En daarbij kreeg ik ook heel erg het idee dat jullie dus vragen aan, letterlijk aan iedereen, die oproep dus, geef of bedenk zelf whatever je wilt. En ik vind het wel interessant in hoeverre heb jij het idee dat mensen hier toe bereid zijn. Of in ieder geval toeristen toe bereid zijn om dit op te pikken op deze manier?

Elena: Nou, wij weten zelf nog nauwelijks toeristen te bereiken. En onze manieren waarop we wel bij toeristen onder ogen zijn gekomen, dat is de gids die ik denk niet heel super goed verkoopt. De website die is tijdelijk heel goed bezocht tijdens de publicitaire hoos. Dus eigenlijk het voornaamste wat we hebben gehad, is publiciteit internationaal, aantal grote buitenlandse kranten. En dat het concept Marry-an-Amsterdammer-For-A-Day viral ging op blogs. Dat trok de meeste mensen naar de site vaak. En dan vervolgens de volgende stap om ook echt iets te boeken, op te zoeken, die is te groot. En ik denk dat er een aantal dingen voor nodig zijn om dat te verkleinen. Meer aanbod. Sabine die zat 10 dagen in I Amsterdam brainstorm met ons eigen Untourist boek. En de mensen die het echt graag wilde, die bestelde gelijke het boekje en zeiden: "Ja, dat wil ik." Maar dat was op vrijdagmiddag en die vertrokken op dinsdag. Dus er moet meer zijn dat het ook aansluit bij het moment en de plek dat zo iemand er is iets wilt doen. Het moet veel meer constante zichtbaarheid krijgen in de bekende kanalen waar je als toerist kijkt en je programma bepaalt. En ik denk dat er ook meer laagdrempelige concepten bij moeten. Want laughing with a local, een lach workshop boeken gewoon bij iemand thuis in Amsterdam-Noord samen met buurtbewoners. En je betaald 60 euro voor een deelnamen voor je gezin. Daar zitten een aantal hele hoge drempels in. Dat ga je echt niet zo snel doen. Maar misschien wanneer je een kaart hebt van 'pay with a good deed' locaties en dan: "hey, er zit er een om de hoek bij ons hotel en als ik dan door een zak vuil te verzamelen hier door de straat een gratis drankje krijg," dat dat wat makkelijk is. Dus ook met drijf uit de branch een groter laagdrempelig aanbod gaan ontwikkelen.

Luuk: En jullie proberen dan op veel van die activiteiten, die dus of nog niet bestaan, of zoiets als Plastic Whale wel al bestaat, dus jullie proberen dan samen met die partners, potentiële partners, naar te zoeken.

Elena: Ja, want we nodigen die uit waarvan we denken dat die inhoudelijk past, dat die het interessant zou kunnen vinden. En een redelijk gedeelte daarvan vindt het ook interessant. Dan organiseren we sessies, co-creaties, om ideeën voor producten te ontwikkelen.

Luuk: Met die organisaties?

Elena: Ja. En toen we met die gids bezig waren, hebben we vooral organisaties benaderd die al bij zo'n sessie waren geweest nog eens gevraagd om toe te spitsen. Zo ongeveer gaat het nu ook op het festival en hopelijk komen daar dan ook dingen uit. Maar we hebben nu ook voorlopersgroep gevormd, die kwamen in februari voor het eerst bijeen. Daar zitten in: Amsterdam&Partners, Amsterdam Visitor Marketing, die hebben promotie, mini-karts is van hen. En die hebben ook kaartjes en plattegrondjes, dus communicatie in musea ook. Nee sorry, in hotellobbies. Dus in honderden hotellobbies in Amsterdam. Dus die willen mee bouwen. Hoge School InHolland, en Hotelschool in Wee [niet helemaal hoorbaar] zijn ook allebei op het pad van vernieuwen in de hoek van toerisme. Onderzoekers zijn we mee bezig, en ze vragen dus ook aan studenten om daar stages en opdrachten in te doen. Droog, culturele instelling, gaan ook dit jaar allerlei avontuurlijke dingen doen in toerisme. Eigen, humoristische, baanbrekende stijl. StayOkay, die hebben hun eigen "goed bezig" programma met een aantal pijlers. Dat sluit ook heel mooi aan. [silence] euhm. Bij de gemeente weten we het nog niet zeker. Daar hebben we wel vrij uitgebreid contact met Klaartje van Stad in Balans en een paar anderen. Charlotte Wijzer, ook een ambtenaar. Maar ik weet nog niet of ik daar bij ga aansluiten. Nou, volgens mij ben ik er nog eentje vergeten, maar het idee is dat we willen nu samen bedenken hoe we nu samen gaan werken om dit completer en groter te maken in 2020.

Luuk: Als je het zo verteld, dan lijkt het wel dat er heel veel interesse voor te zijn. Wat merk je zelf... [onderbroken]

Elena: In het buitenland ook. Ik ben ook al als spreker geweest in Kopenhagen bij Tomorrow's Urban Travel, een jaarlijks inspiratiecongress, van Wonderful Copenhagen. Hun City Marketing organisatie. En zij hebben ook de vraag bij de ECM, European Cities Marketing, dus dat is de vereniging van city marketing organisaties, van tachtig steden in Europa, die komen daar onder andere untourist inspiratie opdoen in de derde week van maart.

Luuk: [stilte] En wat merk je dan... Heb je dan ook echt idee dat het meer is dan alleen interesse? Mensen ook het geloof hebben en er actief mee aan de slag willen? Of is het meer van: het is een leuk praatje waar ze zich mee bezig houden?

Elena: Nou. Er is in ieder geval in theorie veel animo om in actie te komen. Maar, ja. Ergens ook best wel wat mee willen en er iets mee doen, dat is vaak een tweede. Dus wat dat betreft, hebben we een netwerk van 250 inmiddels opgebouwd. En dan een beetje afhankelijk van wat het is, zijn er misschien gemiddeld 10 die er naar vragen die het dan ook echt gaan doen. En gericht vraag vanuit dat netwerk, zijn er een heleboel potentieel belangstellende die op een dag nog wel ja zullen zeggen.

Luuk: Maar dat is dus nog iets onzekerder dus?

Elena: [stilte] euhm... nou het is meer dat ik weet wel dat er vanuit die honderden er zijn die wat gaan doen. Maar ik weet niet precies welke. Maar ook het echt opgang... wat het meest bekritiseerd gaat worden, is van die markt. Dat er aanbod komt, en vraag komt en dat het daar op elkaar aansluit. En omdat te gaan bouwen, uitproberen, vallen en opstaan, nog meer bouwen. Daarvan geloof ik wel dat in die voorlopers groep er in bezig zal gaan, en de een wat meer en de ander wat minder. En dat we dan, al doende, nog andere daarop kunnen laten aanhaken.

Luuk: Ja, en dan draait het vooral weer om, wat je eerder zei, aanbod, zichtbaarheid, om dat uit te breiden?

Elena: Ja.

Luuk: [zoekende naar volgende vraag]. Even kijken. Want ik was ook heel erg benieuw, omdat jullie zijn met zo veel verschillende dingen tegelijkertijd bezig. En hebben zo veel verschillende activiteiten geopperd, en mee samen gewerkt. Is er voor jullie een specifiek verhaal wat de Untourist Guide een soort van samen hangt? Een bepaalde boodschap die jullie daar in mee willen dragen?

Elena: Zoals een manifest of zo? [praten een beetje door elkaar heen]

Luuk: Nou, niet een manifest, maar ik zat zelf meer te denken aan wat jullie mensen willen meegeven van Amsterdam. Dus als iemand... [onderbroken]

Elena: Dus je bedoelt meer reputatie opzicht?

Luuk: Ja, reputatie zou je het kunnen noemen.

Elena: Ja... Nou... niet echt. Want dat het Amsterdam is, is eigenlijk meer toevallig. Eelko en ik komen uit Amsterdam, en het is een hele geschikte plek hiervoor. Maar het is niet zozeer dat wij zo graag iets in of voor Amsterdam willen doen. We vinden het juist heel

mooi als dit wereldwijd kan worden opgepakt. Maar, dat gezegd hebbend, vind ik dus in Amsterdam in reputatie opzicht een hele interessante context, omdat het is bekend als een hele vrije stad, heel creatief, ondernemend. En daar stappen ook het verleden en de toekomst in. Veel met de VOC, bouw van de grachten, de liberale karakter ervan heeft er voor gezorgd dat de stad een bepaalde vorm heeft [korte pauze] die mensen trekt. Een bepaalde klassieke vorm. Vervolgens heb je het gedrag in de stad, waarbij het idee van liberaal zich gek genoeg heel erg voor toeristen focust op hoeren en drugs. En lekker de beest uithangen tijdens een dance party. Maar juist het vrije en het creatieve, kan ook worden gezien als voedingsbodem voor hier kunnen de nieuwe werkwijzen van de mensheid ontstaan. Amsterdam Approach is een term, die doelt er op verschillende typen organisaties elkaar heel makkelijk en laagdrempelig weten te vinden, waardoor hier makkelijke geïnnoveerd kan worden. En dat zit dan meer in de werkgroep, maar ik denk dat daar ook meer belangstelling hiervoor is wereldwijd. En die Amsterdamse instelling wat dat voor waarde kan hebben, wat er wereldwijd gebeuren moet, te komen ervaren. En dat is als je hebt over reputatie als stad om te bezoeken als toerist, zie je dat heel weinig terug. Het is meer cultuuriconen uit het verleden. Rembrandt, grachtenpand, Anne Frank, in combinatie met wereldverdrag in het heden. [pauze]

Luuk: Dus jij ziet ook wel met de Untourist Guide die andere kant van creativiteit en vrijheid te belichten voor Amsterdam?

Elena: Ja. Dat er gebouwd wordt aan het fundament van de reputatie van Amsterdam heeft, maar dan een stapje abstracter dat het nieuwe invulling kan geven.

Luuk: En zien jullie partners, om het zo maar even te zeggen, ook op die manier? Dat zij een andere kans krijgen om zichzelf op te stellen? Of hun stad te laten zien? Is dat voor hen aan de orde?

Elena: Ik heb niet heel veel gemerkt dat... ze snappen het wel. Ze lijken toch niet zo erg gevoeld te hebben: Wij gaan eens even die reputatie van die stad bouwen. Bij Amsterdam&Partners hoor je dat natuurlijk wel terug. Van ja, Amsterdam dat is natuurlijk ook... euh... koopmansheid. En een paar van die termen, zoals ondernemersheid, ik weet niet precies welke zij gebruiken. Maar de meeste die kijken toch meer naar: "ja, het is massatoerisme is slecht voor de stad en..." tja. Wat ze daar dan nog mee willen. Er wordt niet heel veel over reputatie gesproken. Oh maar, ik had een keertje, dat is wel grappig, je mag ook een keer in de maand inspreken in de gemeenteraad, en in de raadscommissie waar



toerisme dus onder valt. Financiën en Nederlandse zaken. En daar komt dan soms toerisme aan bod. Maar ze zijn daar helemaal gekaapt door het negatieve door de feiten over het toerisme op de Wallen. En ze hebben dan discussies over details over hoe dat zou moeten worden aangepakt. Dus het komt nauwelijks in ze op dat er ook positief naar toerisme gekeken zou kunnen worden en met een bredere horizon. Maar er was wel laatst iemand van de ChristenUnie, die vroeg aan de wethouder... [dwaalt af] De burgemeester had laatst een interview: “Amsterdam heeft een veel ordinairder imago dan de stad verdient [veel achtergrond geluid]. Dat is blijkbaar het imago is. Zouden we niet eens wat doen om een ander imago in het buitenland neer te zetten. Nee, absoluut niet zei de wethouder. Wij gaan niet meer over Amsterdam communiceren in het buitenland. Geen reclame van “kom naar ons”, ook niet als dat in een positiever imago is.

Luuk: Okay, dat is wel interessant. Zou je dan zeggen dat het voor jullie belangrijk is om die reputatie aan te passen?

Elena: Ik denk wel dat dat past bij onze inspanning. Als je Amsterdam, als je weet neer te zetten van ‘dit is de plek waar je iets geweldigs en goeds kunt doen’, dat is Amsterdam. Ja dat helpt om dit in praktische zin te laten lopen. En dat voor Amsterdam&Partners en toeristische partijen wel interessant is. En de gemeente wordt misschien later enthousiast. We gaan daar heen, en het is heel grappig, eigenlijk vinden we het lollig om die clash op te zoeken.

Luuk: Dus jullie zijn daar een beetje aan het uitdagen?

Elena: Ja! Maar wel heel positief. En ook aanbieden van... de vorige keer had Eelko een keuze met had hij vier blaadjes op en daar mochten de gemeenteraadsleden op stemmen wat ze nou wilden als wij een sessie zouden organiseren waarin zij zouden nadenken voor welk ... [kan dit woord niet goed verstaan] speelt de gemeente bij het positief invullen van het toerisme. Een kussengevecht tegen toerisme. Een dagje uit met ervaar de Untourist activiteiten. Nou bracht Eelko het niet zo goed, dus ze snapte er niks van. Niemand stak zijn hand op. Dat komt niet alleen door Eelko, maar ook omdat het zo buiten hun framework zit. Ook al had hij het heel duidelijk uitgelegd dan hadden ze het nog niet gesnapt.

Luuk: Dus jij denkt niet dat dit soort verandering past bij de gemeente, of vanuit de gemeente kan komen?

Elena: Ja, ik denk dat er absoluut dat de gemeente een rol kan spelen. En dat we ook merken, is dat er heel verschillende clubjes binnen de gemeente weten die er mee bezig zijn. En als je bij een clubje iets hoort, of iets wilt zeggen, betekent dat niet dat je bij een andere iets heel anders zou kunnen doen. Maar je komt ook niet makkelijk van de een naar de ander. Vaak moet je dan weer van buitenaf een andere ingang krijgen. Het is echt grote moeite om met sommige delen van de gemeente aan tafel te komen. Maar dat kan wel echt vruchtbaar zijn. Want dat zijn natuurlijk veel belangen die in een stad. En wat die wethouder zei, heel nadrukkelijk met bewoners zo meer georganiseerd wil hebben, zodat bewoners meer mee kunnen creëren, mee bouwen, kunnen werken aan hoe wijken met toerisme om gaan. En dat vind ik wel een goede insteek van ze.

Luuk: Wat ik zelf in ieder geval interessant vond, bij jullie boekje, bij die openingspagina's, hebben jullie een paar harde statements van: je bent geen toerist, dit is geen vakantie, jij bent onderdeel van de verandering. En wat denk jij dat, en we hebben het hier al een beetje over gehad, wat denk jij precies dat toeristen een stad, in zijn algemeenheid, maar misschien Amsterdam specifiek, kan brengen juist? Naast naar wat ze nu al brengen, wat voornamelijk geld is.

Elena: Het is niet specifiek een ding. Het is meer een lijst. Van allerlei duurzaamheidsontwikkelingen kan worden bijgedragen als het gaat om tegengaan van voedselverspilling, dingen die te maken hebben met zwerfvuil, met euh [lange pauze] alles wat te maken heeft met het verduurzamen van de economie. Dus bedrijfjes doen enzo. Dat zit ook meer in de technische-groene hoek. Er is nu ook een toeristenbos. Lijkt me wel leuk als toeristen helpen om een bos helpen aanleggen. Bijvoorbeeld met olifijn, green sand, dat er een green Amsterdam beach wordt gemaakt, die dan weer alle CO2 weer uit de lucht trekt. Dat een beetje in de categorie groen. In de categorie sociaal, kan alles zijn met ontmoetingen waarin je breed op verteld. [pauze] Bij tijle kerstbos gaat het gesprek over tradities en wat zijn, vertel eens iets moois over jouw feesten, vertel eens over jullie feestje die jullie vieren in jouw land. Wat wij zouden kunnen kopiëren. Dus inspireer elkaar.

Luuk: Ja dus het lijkt voor mij ook [onderbroken]

Elena: Ik vind het zelf heel boeiend als Russen, die uit een anti-homocultuur komen, zij mij weten te begrijpen hoe dat is, een beeld van negatief beeld van homo is, hoe zie je dat dan? Geen mede mensen zijn of zo. Als ik dat kan verenigen in mijn eigen gedachten. Diversiteit aan perspectieven, maar ook 'practices', praktijken, wat doen ze ergens anders

al, wat heel leuk zou zijn om over te nemen. Als Amsterdammers [inaudible]. En dan heb je het stadsbeeld. Nou daar heb je dan al bijvoorbeeld 'make street art in a great part of town'. En zou je meer stadsbeeld willen aanpassen, kunnen voorstellen. Euhm... ik zit te denken aan die lovelocks.

Luuk: sorry de...?

Elena: De lovelocks. Nou dat wordt niet gewaardeerd. Het is veel te zwaar voor die bruggen en die worden er dan af en toe afgezaagd. Kun je dat een nieuwe vertaling geven? Bijvoorbeeld een love wall, een Amsterdam love wall waar je dan als stelletje een mozaïekje in maakt met je naam. Ten eerste idee, een openvraag in een brainstorm te kunnen doen, dat zou een andere uitzicht kunnen zijn, aan dat lovelock gedoe, die iets moois zou kunnen opleveren aan de stad. [pauze]. Zijn dat genoeg precieze manieren waarop mensen kunnen bijdragen?

Luuk: Ja, ik denk het wel. Ja voor mij zijn het ook nog heel veel nieuwe ideeën die naar boven komen. Het klinkt, ook wat je al zei, dat wereldburgerschap er al sterk in zit.

Elena: Ja dat is wel mijn enthousiasme, omdat ik het ook op wereldschaal ervaar. De geschiedenis van de mensheid, en wat is mijn relatie tot de geschiedenis van de mensheid. Maar dat verschilt heel erg, want er zijn ook partners die zitten gewoon in hun wijk, met een hostel, een wijk die niet zo op de kaart staat, en die zijn dan voor dat de toffe, leuke cafétjes en winkeltjes meer zichtbaarheid krijgen.

Luuk: Ja. Vind je het heel nodig, dat dat wereldburgerschap sterker wordt in deze tijd?

Elena: [pauze] hmm nodig? Het lijkt me in ieder geval heel erg behulpzaam bij het tackelen van uitdagingen. Milieu-uitdagingen, geopolitieke dingen, voorkomen dat we oorlog krijgen, vreedzaam omgang met elkaar omgaan, ondanks verschillen. Het is wel zo fijn als je andere mensen ook op de eerste plaats als mens respecteert. En met dat uitgangspunt, met een nieuwsgierig, open blik, kunt gaan uitwisselen. Flexibel zijn in de omgang. Ook wel iets uit de heritage van Amsterdam waarbij ruimdenkendheid naar andere religies en culturen helpt om hier handel te drijven, een stad ook van immigranten. En ook de economische ontwikkeling daarmee te bespoedigen in plaats van in je eigen kringetje te zitten en iets anders proberen. Maar dat je ook mensen vergeeft dat die andere normen en waarde hebben.

Luuk: Ik denk dat nu het meeste wat ik wilde weten wel aardig beantwoord is. [lange pauze]. Het laatste waar ik nog heel erg benieuwd naar ben, is dat in begin juni jullie al wat aandacht hadden gehad, en ook al de eerste activiteiten hadden gehad met die ‘mary-an-Amsterdammer-for-a-day’.

Elena: Ja nou ik denk dat er iets van 10 huwelijken zijn vertrokken. En veel meer verzoeken. Daarbinnen heeft zich dan weer een lijst met vragen over: wat is je motivatie, onderschrijf dat je snapt dat het geen romantische intentie heeft. Daarvan kwamen er dan 20 die het dan serieus hadden ingevuld. Toen gingen we, een beetje geschrokken door de opgaven, op zoek naar Amsterdammers die dan precies pasten bij randvoorwaarden. En ik denk dat van die 10 die overbleven, ruim de helft journalisten waren. Waar wij natuurlijk ook meer ons best voor hebben gedaan. Ik heb een paar van die huwelijken bezocht. En het is wel een heel speciaal moment.

Luuk: Ja? Wat maakte het zo speciaal?

Elena: Het zenuwachtig zijn en omkleden tot bruid en bruidegom. In een magazijn en dan staan wildvreemde uit verschillende landen tegenover elkaar. En dan een verhaal te houden over dat het een heel vreemd moment is dat wildvreemde daar met elkaar gaan trouwen. De verbinding durven aan te gaan, wat zij in het klein doen, maar wat van wereldbelang is. Dat die gene, de buitenlander dan zich als untourist realiseert dat de stad, de echte highlights van de stad de mensen zijn. Sabine had een heel mooi verhaal, haar eigen, iets korter. Je kunt zoveel kwijt in zo’n ceremonie’tje. Mensen die dan vragen om iets te zeggen allebei.

Luuk: En daarna gingen ze op een tocht toch?

Elena: Ja en dat moesten ze dan ook samen invullen. Dus ja, het is een huwelijk, dus je moet er samen uit zien te komen op een manier die voor allebei fijn is.

Luuk: Ja dat is wel mooi. En wat was de reactie daarbij precies? Wat vonden zowel de lokale Amsterdammer als toerist van de interactie van die dag?

Elena: Nou de meerderheid vond het geweldig. Die waren heel erg blij met hoe de ander hem had behandeld en hoe ze hadden gezocht en dingen hadden mee gemaakt. Een minderheid merkte dan toch dat er, er was een stel, dat er toch verschillende verwachtingen waren. Die Amsterdamse man die zag het toch iets meer als een date. En die had een paar dingetjes gezegd die die vrouw zich niet zo op haar gemak liet voelen. Hoewel ze het verder best

leuk vond. De waren er ook twee, die vonden het volgens mij een beetje te echt. Een beetje een vreemd gevoel: “okey we zijn nu dus getrouwd, en jij bent dus mijn man, maar wie ben je nu eigenlijk? En moet ik me nu als jouw vrouw gedragen?” Die vonden aan de ene kant speciaal, maar die gingen dus romantische dingen doen, terwijl die ook zoiets hadden van: “oe dit is me toch eigenlijk iets te romantisch.”

Luuk: Maar over het algemeen dus wel positief. Weet je ook wat ze over het algemeen hebben gedaan op zo’n dag? [praten door elkaar heen]

Elena: Ja, er zijn er twee die zijn in het park gaan zitten en muziek maken en liedjes schrijven over Amsterdam. Wat er best wel veel gebeurd is dat de Amsterdammer een beetje een rondleiding geeft in hun eigen buurt. Dus het laten zien van hun eigen leven. Er zijn er twee die zijn gaan plastic vissen, dus met plastic whale mee. Een hele grappige. Eline die heeft haar Zweedse man haar gazon laten maaien.

Luuk: Okay.

Elena: in Oost.

Luuk: En wat vonden ze daar van? Want het klinkt als... [onderbroken]

Elena: Nou, hij was dus al van middelbare leeftijd dus hij was al aan het mopperen: “huh ik heb het aan mijn rug,” enzo. Maar zij hield voet bij stuk. Zoals een echte vrouw des huizes het betaamt. Dus zij heeft het gedaan en ze heeft daar foto’s van opgeleverd. En ik denk dat die ook wel blij is dat het op die manier. Maar ik vind het zo’n mooi voorbeeld omdat het wij zeggen, bijdragen aan de Amsterdammer. En het lijkt mij iets dat van... ja. Als je daar mee thuiskomt. “wat heb je gedaan?” “Ja ik heb het gazon van een Amsterdammer gemaaid.” Dat is een totaal ander voorbeeld van ‘leisure’ gedrag en wat eigenlijk. Ja, waarom zou dat minder leuk zijn dan door de stad sjokken. Het heeft wel wat. Het is totaal een unieke ervaring.

Luuk: En dat werd ook wel door hem bevestigd?

Elena: Nou dat kwam dus in een Zweedse krant. Ik kan geen Zweeds.

Luuk: Maar jullie hebben niet nog daarna nog even een praatje gehad met de mensen die het hadden gedaan?

Elena: Nou ik had wel met die vrouw... ik weet niet meer wat die precies zei of wat die er van vond, maar ik geloof dat die er uiteindelijk wel goed over gestemd was. En daarna zijn we nog uit eten geweest.

Luuk: Het klinkt in ieder geval als een andere ervaring van de stad. Dat je echt een Amsterdammer zo leert kennen.

Elena: We kijken ook met het Green tourism festival of je een soort uitzendbureau kunt hebben voor huishoudelijke klusjes bij Amsterdammers. Waarbij je thuis gaat stofzuigen. Of misschien samen net iets fleurigers tuintje aanleggen.

Luuk: Dan ga ik naar mijn laatste vraag toe. Wat zie jij als volgende stap voor jullie? Wat is op dit moment jullie toekomst?

Elena: We hebben voor dit jaar 3 hoofdzaken op het moment. We hebben een green tourism festival. We hebben de voorlopersgroep. En we doen een maandelijks unspiration explosion. Zodat je met inspiratie met elkaar bijeen komt. Allemaal bedoelt om het netwerk meer in actie te brengen voor het aandringen van de markt. Aanbod, vraag, en dat die twee op elkaar aansluiten.

## *Translation of the Transcript*

Luuk: I always like to begin with an introductory question. So, what exactly is your role within the Untourist Guide? Who are you? What is it that you do within the organization?

Elena: My entire life I like to initiate unfamiliar, wonderful things. That are aimed to improve the world. Things that are necessary in these times, such as sustainability, making connections between different groups. And I am driven by a combination of aesthetic and usefulness. How aesthetics can contribute to the use of something and how the grand world shacking usefulness of something can receive beauty. Beauty, visuals are just a part of it. It is more about the concept. That there is a certain force or breach in your worldview. I could give many examples, but... [silence]. At one moment, I had all kinds of ideas surrounding tourism. I live here in the center of Amsterdam and tourism. Well. You see all kinds of people from different countries and all doing their own thing more or less. And I myself had the idea to do something more crazy, more fun, more surprising. And at the same time something meaningful within the larger framework. And then I organized a brainstorm together with Eelko [one of the other co-founders of the Untourist Guide], two years ago, on how tourism can mean something good. That delivered a wall full with ideas for activities. Plant a tree tour, marry and Amsterdammer for a day, your job for the day market, also known as [inaudible] was put on the wall. And that total package we thought was interesting, and that came together in an alternative tourist office. Could you have a place that you can make popular where tourists, who want to do something meaningful and fun, know that they can go to there for all kinds of cool options. Sometime later, we observed actually that there was a shift in paradigm in how to think about tourism. That, from our perspective, was about moving from passive consumption, the automatic that to leisure is to consume. I am on holiday, therefore, I will go consume. Now is consuming of food and drinks a useless consumption, but also in the sense that you go to a museum and that everything has been prepared and exhibited for you, to inspire you. So that you can go on a tour and that someone tells you, and you listen. So, that is another part of it. Joyful contributions. That you actually can experience more fun by contributing to something. And it is not a very easy thought, because, it is about a change in behavior in a setting in which you are more inclined to fall back on your comfort. Because, you are abroad and you don't even know how to buy a tram ticket. So, it is not a setting wherein to make even more

adventurous choices. Although, you do see it rising with people who go couch surfing, who specifically search for vegan restaurants, who go to meet-ups, or to hidden gems, unique experiences, blablabla. So, it does tie in on a certain trend, but, it is not so that the context is making it easy. But we find it so fascinating. And together we notice that it is receiving a lot of support. Many organizations, very diverse ones, think it is an interesting thought to make work out of it. And I am someone who is about those kind of thoughts, that is what gives me energy in combination with what others want to do with it. And that I see it before me that there will be a certain parking lot, underground and gray and such. And that there then is a man sitting with a handcrafted booth, self-made from old doors and window frames that have been painted to the doors. That you step inside, and that you see all kinds of cards and hooks. And that those will say: 'Lonely Sock speed dating'. And all kinds of things of which you think: "wow. What is this? And that this all exists." A sign in Amsterdam. That is my dream vision. And how I like to work. I like to motivate other people, so, reaching out to organizations: "do you want to be at the next meeting?" I love that those ideas are streaming is an element. If there really is something that needs to be build from the ground up, then I become very nervous. That is something I flourish less in. I can write pretty well. It is more that I am doing it, because I can do it, more than that I fully become happy by it. But, I am someone who definitely can move emotions using language. So, I am the one who can translate it into catchy titles of the activities.

Luuk: That is already a lot that is passing by. To go back to how you started. What was for you really the 'core' to start the Untourist Guide? You already named that you yourself are living in Amsterdam and that from there you began to think how things could be different. Provide a more positive contribution. Is that for you also the whole 'core' of the Untourist Guide?

Elena: Well, the core. What is for us the core? That depends on how you describe it. Like our drive? Or what we like to achieve with it?

Luuk: I think that both are included in it. So, both what your vision as your ideal situation.

Elena: well, now there is... [silence]. Sabine, Eelke and I are... It started thus with Eelke and me, but after a few months we found Sabine. She jumped on as well and I already worked with her for a longer time. And she and us are the three tractors since two years. And we all are driven by greatness and creativity. Abstract, creative steps forwards is what it is now. And regarding tourism, I think that for Eelke, maybe, it is more about chance.



For me, there is something of global citizenship in it. Exactly the coming together of people with different backgrounds. Which can be very interesting in relation to that we as humanity have to do something with the Earth and with our humanity. That we have to do a lot within this in the coming decades. And... voila! This is one of those mixing moments in which everyone also has the time. For example, to have fun together with the designing of our world's future. And Sabine is also working in the tourist world. She travels as guide and has worked for an agency in Mexico. So, she more knowledge from the inside. And she has also been at a large conference in London. And she noticed there that there is a certain demand for sustainable tourism. Something new, something different. But also much conservatism and that there still needs to happen a lot to make something new and incredible happen over there. But she does not back out of that.

Luuk: So, actually, you all three are coming together in the Untourist Guide movement with each having your own drive?

Elena: well. A bit different, but I think that we come together in many parts. That we love of the aesthetic of it. That we love the new and the important, and that it becomes cleaner and grander. And something important, what is barely there yet at the moment. And that it is relevant. And out of all possible thing that we could have done. We also love a large variety of subjects. I think that we have worked on this for years because of the momentum. That here there is both push and pull. Tourism is being more and more vomited on by cities. Experiencing it as something negative by stakeholders. For those it is also a drive to invest in new form. Also as... [silence]. There is anyway enthusiasm for sustainability and social and to work like that. And also in this branch. So, we have the tide with us.

Luuk: How would you describe the Untourist Guide, you yourself?

Elena: Het boekje?

Luuk: yes.

Elena: Well it is three things. One, it is in two words: a visionary guide. And the three things are: [1] a guide with all kinds of fun things to do in Amsterdam that also contribute positive to the city, the residents and the world. [2] It also founds our vision for contributing, joyful contributing to tourism. [3] And it is a open call to be part of this. It all started in April and it is so small that it does not exists really. But if this interests you: join yourself,

contribute ideas, take your master thesis. Whatever it is. As long as it is something that fits you.

Luuk: And that call, to whom is that aimed?

Elena: The guide has been written in English to fit with tourists. But in actuality is everyone welcome. And I think that actually in this phase that the most interesting target group is stakeholders. Organizations that can make this type of tourism big with us. And I also hear that our guide, that can, for example, be found at the Atheneum [book store] at the counter. And that it seldomly is being bought, but once in a while someone comes along to buy five or six copies at once. So, that makes me think: Oh that are apparently not tourists that come, because then you would imagine that there would be a constant stream of people that would buy one. Apparently it are professionals that see it as interesting and that they then give it to their colleague's or network.

Luuk: And you also do not know to whom those are being sold to? There is no one that contacts you and says: "hey, I have bought a couple of copies."

Elena: No. Or, well. Sometimes when we are at an event at a school for higher education, then we sell a couple of those booklets, but not at the book stores.

Luuk: Yes, alright. You had... [silence]. I think that at this moment it is generally known that tourism is not something perceived as being very positive. You already spoke about being vomited on.

Elena: Yes. In public discourse especially it has received a very bad name for itself. People are talking about it with each other how terrible the tourists are. If you ask if people are bothered by it, then I think that is absolutely the case in the heart of the city center. But not in large parts of the other areas of the city. That there is maybe the thought of: "oh no! Tourists!" I believe it is between 5 a 10 percentage of our economy. There is also fully being profited from, but that is not something you say at parties to each other.

Luuk: So, you would say that it is mainly a thought that tourism is negative, but that in reality it is not that bad?

Elena: Well. I think there is reason for negativity, and there is reason for positivity. And that there actually are more reasons to be neutral in it. But that those things that cause for negativity, those are the things that also have the most probability that you will tell those

to each other. That you will grumble with each other about it. And especially, and that is something I especially hear in the tourism circuit, that the Parool and AT5 [Dutch, local media and news outlets] have really underscored it. A lot about negative things. And now, there already was a study done on the satisfaction among residents of Amsterdam. And for the first time in a long time the satisfaction decreased due to tourism. So, I do think that there is something of a negative effect. What do I notice myself. I think it is tricky cycling when tourists jump in front of my wheel. Or when a zigzagging tourist is in front of you who cannot cycle himself. Also with our previous neighbors, they had an AirBnB. Where you would stand all of a sudden in the hallway with 4 eyeing Spaniards. What are the social norms during those situations? Actually no one knows it. At the Spuistraat, I wanted to get a little snack. And that costed for 2 muffins 9 euros. Apparently they have enough tourists that are willing to pay that, or it is a laundering operation. I don't know. Yes and the atmosphere in the city center also has... I live in a new construction area. And that is around the corner with all kinds of Nutella stores you know. Well, I think it is doable, because my own favorite special stores are still there. But if those would have to disappear as well, that would be a waste. But I don't think these are world issues. I rather put energy in global issues and in opportunities to redirect tourism to solving of those global issues.

Luuk: So, for you personally the effects of tourists are not that bad?

Elena: For me, it is not a drive in any way. In nothing what I do. I am already engaged with positive tourism for years, and it is for me completely not related by the nuisance that I have from tourists.

Luuk: Would you then say that the Untourist Guide exists primarily for the image of tourism? To transform that?

Elena: That does not interest us as well. We want to change practices. We do notice that interest to work along with this comes for a part that organizations that are involved with tourism are longing for a better image.

Luuk: So, you are talking about other practices. And those then are the activities you provide?

Elena: We do not supply them ourselves, but we want them to be provided. Plastic Whale is doing it already sine 2008. That already existed before we were doing this. If by means of a tour on the canals fishing plastic from the canals becomes an ever bigger phenomenon,

then that would be an excellent example. But what thus see, is that there should actually be thousands of large and small options like this. And that you know, when you are traveling to Amsterdam, that you can partake in these kind of things. And if you rather go to the Anne Frank House, the standard things, that is fine. But that there then, we already quickly thought... We want about 1 million people that are choosing this kind of options. And that the prognose is that there will be 25 million people coming. So, you are talking about 4%. In the first place, you will have the trend setters. More adventurous, engaged people. Let those then do these things. And from there we will see how tourism will develop further.

Luuk: And do you already have an idea of how you would like to see that development? Or how would you like to see it develop? When those activities of yours, that you propose, also really will be picked up and executed. How would it then be for you? Do you have an idea about that?

Elena: Physically I see folders, apps, and sites, and the information hotspots. And that you can also in your own hotel, so, how the activity is being promoted. The type of activity: social, creative, adventurous. All kinds of experiences that give the most beautiful stories when coming home. Some are so charming in all their small scale. You absolutely don't want that so many people will visit those. Others will only become more beautiful the more people will sign up for them. Just imagine that there is a massive human force of tourists doing the circular economy, all help those material streams go round. I am just giving an example. However people want to do it. And I also like it when I am being surprised when there come products for Chinese for example. Something I would have never thought off. That they would want something like that, and someone is providing them.

Luuk: And you also say that in your booklet. In it you also strongly suggest that this is something that actually does not exist yet, is in development. And when reading that I strongly got the idea that you thus ask literally everyone to think up anything, whatever you want. And I think it is interesting in how far you think people will be willing in this. Or at least if tourists are willing to pick it up in this way?

Elena: Well, we ourselves barely know how to reach tourists. And our ways that did get the attention of tourists, that is the guide that is not selling that well. The website has been visited well for a little while during the publication stunt. So, actually, the primary that we had, is international publicity, a couple of international newspaper. And that the concept 'Marry and Amsterdammer for a day' went viral on blogs. That attracted many people

towards the site. And then consequently, the next step to really book something, to search for it, that one is a large step. And I think that there are a couple things necessary to make that step smaller. More supply. Sabine, who was in 'I Amsterdam Brainstorm' with our own book for 10 days. And that people who really want it, they ordered the book instantly, and they said: "Yes, that is what I want." But that was on Friday afternoon and those people left on Tuesday. So, there has to be more so that it is also possible and fits the moment and the place that someone like that wants to do it. It needs more consistent visibility in the well-known channels where you as a tourists and decide your program. And I think that there also have to be more low effort concepts. Because 'laughing with a local', to book a laughing workshop just at someone's home in Amsterdam-Noord together with residents. And you have to pay 60 euros for participating for your family. That has a lot of hurdles to overcome. That is not something you would do very quickly. But may when you have a map with 'pay with a good deed' locations and then: "hey, right around the corner of our hotel there is one, and if I then clean up some garbage bags to get a free drink," that could be more easy. So, also with the drive from the branch, to develop a larger, more accessible supply.

Luuk: And you try at many activities, those who do not exist yet, or something like Plastic Whale what already exists, you then try together with those partners, potential partners, to search for that.

Elena: Yes, because we need those of whom we think that they fit with the contents, that they could be interested. And a reasonable part of those do think it is interesting. So then we organize sessions, co-creations, to develop ideas for products.

Luuk: Together with those organizations?

Elena: Yes, and when we were working on the guide, we mostly contacted organization who have already been present at one of those sessions to ask again to take part. Something similar is happening now for the festival and hopefully things will flow from that. But we have at the moment also a trendsetters group, they came together for the first time in February. Those include: Amsterdam&Partners, Amsterdam Visitor Marketing, they have promotion, mini-carts is also owned by them. And they have also maps, so communication in museums as well. No, sorry, in hotel lobbies. So, in hundreds of hotel lobbies in Amsterdam. So, they want to build with us. Hoge School InHolland, and Hotel School in Wee [inaudible] are also both on the path of innovation of tourism. Researchers are part of it,

and they are also asking students to do internships and assignments with it. 'Droog', a cultural institution, are also doing all kinds of adventurous thing in tourism. Their own, humorous, groundbreaking style. StayOkay, they have their own 'goed bezig' program with a couple of pillars. That connects well. [silence]. Euhm. At the municipality we are not sure yet. We do have quite elaborate contact with Klaarte from Stad in Balans and a couple of others. Charlotte Wijzer, also a civil servant. But I do not know if we will participate with that. Well, I think that I forgot one, but the idea is that we together come up how we now want to work to make this more complete and bigger in 2020.

Luuk: When you are telling me about this all, it sounds like there is a lot of interest for it. What do you notice... [interrupted]

Elena: Also abroad. I have also been a speaker at Copenhagen at Tomorrow's Urban Travel, an annual inspiration congress by Wonderful Copenhagen. Their city marketing organization. And they also have the question at the ECM, European Cities Marketing, so that is the organization for city marketing organizations of 80 cities in Europe. They will among other gain untourist inspiration in the third week of March.

Luuk: [silence] And wat do you... Do you have the idea that it is more than just interest? Do people also actually have the willingness to make work out of it? Or is it more of: it is a fun talk that they like to engage in?

Elena: Well. In theory there is a lot of attention to come into action. But, well. Somewhere they would want to do something with it. But actually doing something, that is often the second step. Thus regarding that, we have a network of about 250. And then depending on what it is, on average there are 10 that ask about it and will really do it. Goal oriented questions from the network, there are a lot of potential interested people that at one day will say yes.

Luuk: But that is still a bit more uncertain?

Elena: [silence] euhm... well, it is more that I know that from those hundreds there are a couple that will do something. But I do not know exactly which ones. But also really getting it rolling... What gets mostly criticized, is the market. That there has to come a supply, and demand. And that it will comply with each other. And to build on that, trying things, falling and getting back up, more building. Of that I do believe there are some of those in the trend

setters group who are working on it. One a bit more than the other. And then, by doing, can let others join it as well.

Luuk: Yes, and then it is again about, of what you told me before, supply, visibility, to expand on that?

Elena: Yes

Luuk: [silence]. Let's see. Because I was also very curious. Because you are doing so many different things at once. And you have brought forward so many different activities, and cooperated with so many people. Is there a specific narrative that you holds the Untourist Guide together? A certain message that you want to provide in it?

Elena: As a manifest?

Luuk: Well, not a manifest, but I was thinking about what you want to tell people about Amsterdam. So when someone... [interrupted]

Elena: So you mean like reputation wise?

Luuk: Yes, I think you could call it as reputation.

Elena: Yes... Well... not really. Because that it is in Amsterdam is more of a coincidence. Eelko and I are both from Amsterdam, and it is a very suitable place for this. But it is not as if we want to do something in or with Amsterdam. We would really think it amazing if this would be picked-up worldwide. But, saying that, I do think that, reputation wise, Amsterdam is a very interesting context, because it is so well-known as a liberal, creative, entrepreneurial city. And in that both step the past and the future. Much with the VOC, constructing of the canals, the liberal character of it has caused that the city has gained a certain form. [silence]. Which attracts people. A certain classical form. Consequently, you have the behavior in the city, in which the idea of liberal is weirdly enough is focused mainly on hookers and drugs by tourists. And to release the best during dance parties. But that liberal and creative, that can also be perceived as being a soil to be able to develop new ways of working for humanity. Amsterdam approach is a term that is aimed at that varying types of organizations can find each other, which makes it easy to innovate here. And that can be found more in the work group, but I think that there is also more interest for it worldwide. And that approach of Amsterdam, what kind of value it can bring. By looking at what is necessary worldwide, to experience. And that is when you talk about reputation

as city to visit as tourist, you see very little of this. It is more aimed at cultural icons from the past. Rembrandt, canal architecture, Anne Frank, in combination with the world treaty in the present [silence].

Luuk: So, you see the Untourist Guide shining light on that different aspect of creativity and liberalism of Amsterdam?

Elena: Yes. That there is development towards the foundation of the reputation of Amsterdam, but then a bit more abstract so that it can give a new perspective.

Luuk: And do your partners, to say it like that, it like this as well?

Elena: I have not noticed a lot that... They do get it. They do not have felt it as much as: "we will build on that reputation of the city." At Amsterdam&Partners you do hear that. About yeah, Amsterdam, that is of course also.. euh... merchant attitude. And a couple of those terms, such as entrepreneurship. I do not know exactly which they use. But most people have more a outlook of: "that kind of mass tourism is bad for the city and..." well. What they want to do with that further. There is not a lot of conversation about reputation. Oh, but, once I had, that is kind of funny. It is allowed to once a month have a say in the city council, and in the advice committee of which tourism falls under. Finances and Dutch affairs. And sometimes tourism comes up there as well. But there are completely corrupted by negativity by facts of tourism of the Wallen. And they then have discussions regarding details about how that should be dealt with. So, it barely comes to mind for them that there could be looked towards tourism in a positive way with a wider horizon. But there was someone of the ChristenUnie who asked the councilor [inaudible]. The major had an interview lately: "Amsterdam has a way too much vulgar image than the city deserves" [inaudible]. That is apparently the image. Should we not do something about presenting a different image for abroad. No, absolutely not said the councilor. "We are not going to communicate about Amsterdam abroad anymore." No marketing with 'come to us', also not if that would be in a positive image.

Luuk: Alright. That is interesting. Would you then say that it is important to adapt that reputation for you?

Elena: I do think it is part of our effort. If you take Amsterdam, if you know how to set-up this is a place where you can do something amazing and something good, that is Amsterdam. Yes that would help to bring this into practice. And that would be interesting for



Amsterdam&Partners and tourism stakeholders. And the municipality might get enthusiastic later on. We are going there, and the funny thing is, we think it is funny to confront clashes.

Luuk: So, you are also being provocative?

Elena: YES! But in a positive way. And also supplying for... last time, Eelko had made a choice game with four pieces of paper. And on it, the council members could vote what they would want if we would organize a session in which they would think about... [inaudible] plays the municipality a role in positive addition to tourism. A pillow fight against tourism. A day out to experience the Untourist activities. Now, I think Eelke did not pitch it well, so they did not understand it at all. No one raised their hand. That is not only the fault of Eelko, but also because it is so far out of their framework. Even if they had gotten a clear explanation.

LuuK: so, you think that this kind of change does not fit with the municipality or can come from the municipality?

Elena: Yes, I think absolutely that the municipality can play a role. And what we also notice, is that there are many different groups within the municipality that are working with it. And when you belong to a group, or want to say something, that means that not you cannot do something completely different with another. But je also do not easily get from one to another. Often you have to gain another entrance from the outside. It is very difficult to get in touch with some parts of the municipality. But that really can be fruitful. Because there are of course many stakes within the city. And what that councilor said, very explicitly want to organize more with residents so that residents can co-create more, can develop along, can work on their neighborhoods how to deal with tourism. And I think that is a good vantage point of them.

Luuk: What I myself at least thought was interesting, in your booklet, with the introduction pages. You are making some hard statements with: You are not a tourist, this is not a holiday, you are part of the change. And what do you think, we already talked a bit about this, what do you think exactly how tourists a city, in its generality, but also maybe Amsterdam specific, has to offer? Besides what they are already bringing, which is mostly money.

Elena: It is not specifically one thing. It is more of a list. Of all kinds of sustainability developments at which can be contributed. If it is about food waste, things that have to do

with trash, with uh [pause]. Everything that has to do with making the economy sustainable. So doing entrepreneurs etc. that is also more in the technical green spectrum. There is also a tourist forest. It seems like fun if tourists would help create a forest. For example with olivine, green sand, that there is a green Amsterdam beach developed. That then also pulls CO2 from the air. That is a bit in the green category. In the category of social, that can be anything in which meetings in which you on a large scale [pause]. At the Christmas forest the conversation is about traditions and what does are. Tell us something beautiful of your holiday. Tell us about your celebrations that you celebrate in your country. What we could copy. So, inspire each other.

Luuk: Yes, so it appears to me that [interrupted]

Elena: I also think it is very interesting when Russians, that come from an anti-gay culture, that they get to know me how that is like, an negative image of gay people. How do you see that? They are no fellow humans or something. If I can unite that with my own believes. Diversity and perspective, but also practices, what are they doing differently somewhere else, what could be nice to emulate. As Amsterdammers [inaudible]. And then you have the city's outlook. Well there you already have 'make street art in a great part of town'. And could you adapt more city's image. Uhm. I am think about the lovelocks.

Luuk: Sorry, the...?

Elena: The Lovelocks. Well, those are not being appreciated. It is too heavy for the bridges and those have to be cut-off sometimes. Can you give that a new translation? For example with a love wall, an Amsterdam love wall where you as a couple can create a mosaic with your name. First, providing an idea, an open question in a brainstorm. That could be a different outlook for the lovelocks that could contribute something beautiful to the city [pause] Are those enough examples of how people can contribute?

Luuk: Yes, I would think so. Yes for me it are a lot of new ideas as well that are coming up. It sounds, also what you said, that global citizenship is strongly represented.

Elena: Yes, that is my enthusiasm, because I also experience it on a global scale. The history of humanity, and what is my relationship to that history of humanity. But that differs a lot, because there are also partners who are just sitting in their neighborhood, with a hostel, a neighborhood that does not have a place on the map. And they want that the nice and cool cafes and shops receive more attention.

Luuk: Yes. Do you think it is necessary that global citizenship should be stronger represented in this time?

Elena: [pause] hmmm. Necessary? I would at least say that it would be helpful with tackling of challenges. Environmental challenges, geopolitical things, prevention of war, peaceful interacting with each other, despite our differences. It would be nice if other people also would respect people as people in the first place. And with that vantage point, with curiosity, and open mind, you can exchange. Flexible in dealing with each other. That is also something from the heritage of Amsterdam in which open mindedness to other religions and cultures helps to do business here, a city also of immigrants. And also the economic development that can be benefited by it instead of remaining in your own circle. To try something different. But that you also forgive people that hold other norms and values.

Luuk: I think that we have discussed most of what I wanted to know [pause]. The final thing that I was curious about, is that at the start of the launch in June you received a lot of attention with the many an Amsterdammers for a day activity.

Elena: Yes, I think we had something about 10 weddings that day. And even more requests. Within that we had a whole list of questions such as: what is your motivation, underscore that you know it is not a romantic intention. Of those people, there were about 20 that filled it in seriously. Then after, shocked, we took the assignment to search Amsterdammers that fitted the conditions. And I think that of those there were 10 left. And of those, more than half were journalists. To which we of course put in extra effort. I visited a couple of those marriages. And it is really a special moment.

Luuk: Yes? What makes it so special?

Elena: The nervousness of it. And the dressing to be bride and groom. In a storage place and that there are complete strangers from different countries standing in front of each other. And then to hold a story about how it is such a weird moment that two complete strangers are getting married there. To dare to make the connection. What they are doing on a small scale, but what is of world importance. That they, the foreigner as untourist realizes that the city, the real highlights of the city, those are the people. Sabine had a really beautiful story, her own, something short. You can give so much in such a small ceremony. People that are asking to say something.

Luuk: And after they went on a trip right?

Elena: Yes and they had to figure that out for themselves together. So yes, it is a marriage, so you have to see to figure it out together in a way that is pleasant for both.

Luuk: Yes that sounds nice. And what were the reactions exactly? What did both the local Amsterdammer and the tourist think of the interaction of that day?

Elena: Well, the majority thought it was amazing. They were very happy with how the other treated them and how they went out and experienced things together. A minority noticed that. There was a couple that had different expectations. The Amsterdam man thought it was more of a date. And he had said a couple of things that made the woman feel uncomfortable. Although they enjoyed themselves further just fine. There were also two people that thought it was all a bit too real. A little bit strange: “alright, so we are married now and you are apparently my husband, but who are you actually? And now I have to act as your wife?” they thought it was special on the one hand, but they went out and did romantic things, while they also had the feeling of: “oh this is becoming a bit too much romantic.”

LuuK: But in general it was positive. Do you also know in general what they went out to do that day?

Elena: There were two who went into a park and sat down to play some music and writing songs about Amsterdam. What happened a lot is that the Amsterdammer gave a tour in their own neighborhoods. Two went plastic fishing, so they went along with Plastic Whale. A very funny one. One woman let her Swedish husband mow the lawn.

Luuk: Okay

Elena: In oost

Luuk: And what did they think of that? Because it sounds like [interrupted]

Elena: well, he was already about middle aged, so he was already grumbling: “hu I have back issues” etc. but she put her foot down. As a real woman of the house wishes it. So, she did it and she made pictures of it. And I think he was glad it happened as such as well. But I think it is such a good example, because we say, contribute to Amsterdam. And it is something like... yea. If you come home with this story. “what did you do?” “Well, I mowed the grass of an Amsterdammer.” That is a completely different example of leisure

behavior and what actual. Yea, why would that be less fun than drag around town. It has something. It is completely unique.

Luuk: And that was recognized by him?

Elena: Well, that could be found in a Swedish newspaper. I do not know Swedish.

Luuk: But you also did not afterwards have a conversation with the people that participated?

Elena: Well, I did with the woman... I do not know exactly what she told me or what she thought of it. But I believe that in the end she was positive about it. Afterwards we went even out for diner.

Luuk: It sounds at least as a different experience of the city. That you get to learn an Amsterdammer like that.

Elena: We are also inquiring with the Green tourism festival if you can have some sort of employment agency for all kinds of household chores at Amsterdammers. Where you have to vacuum clean a house. Or maybe work a garden.

Luuk: For my last question. What do you see as next step for you? What is at this moment your future?

Elena: For this year, we have 3 main goals. We have a green tourism festival. We have the trend setters group. And we are doing a monthly unspiration explosion. So that you can exchange inspiration with each other. These are all meant to expend the network and to bring it more into action from the market. Supply, demand, and that those complement each other.

## APPENDIX II

*Notes of the participant observation made during the tour of Plastic Whale, 11 January 2020*

The day started at 11.00am near the Homomonument (Gay monument), at the Westermarkt (which is around the corner of the Anne Franke House). Me and the participants gathered at this place for the Plastic Whale tour. In total, we were with 10 people, which includes me and the skipper. Furthermore, there was an Australian family of four (a father, mother and their two daughters), an American family of three women, and a single Australian woman who was participating in the tour as part of her own research interests on tourism and why people take part in these alternative tours. All participants (not counting the children), seemed at least 35 and older. Right at the beginning, everyone was exchanging pleasantries: introducing each other's names, where everyone travelled from, what they are doing for a living, etc. Soon after, our skipper started his introductory talk. He went in the origin history of Plastic Whale, what the organisation wishes to accomplish, how they want to accomplish this, and for whom they do this. After the introduction, we received instructions for how the day would be organized, how we would be fishing plastic from the canals, and how to separate the different types of trash. We all received a net to get to work with, and then it became time to climb aboard.

The skipper told us that about 75% of the tours they host are booked by companies who wish to have an employee trip. 20% is booked by schools, and the final 5% is booked by tourists. I am not sure if these are official numbers. Probably more an estimation. But it at least gives a perspective on how big tourism is part of their business model. Which is small. The tour is booked at least once a week by tourist (which means 8 tourists a week), but during the summer season, this could go up to 2 to 3 hours a week. As corporate events, Plastic Whale is at least rather popular. The skipper gave us the example of that the day before our own tour, they had an event that hosted 15 boats on the water. The Australian mother was interested in the school trips, as she herself is a teacher, and she was wondering how these are received by the students. The skipper told us that it is a bit in between. Usually younger school children really enjoy the tours, while teenagers are a bit more reluctant to participate actively.

Furthermore, it was apparent that all participants were highly active with sustainability, preservation, or nature in their daily lives. Or they were at the very least interested and committed to the topic. So, doing a tour such as Plastic Whale, was nothing new for them. For example, the Australian man works as a conservator of natural areas in Australia (if my memory is not failing me. It was at least something along those lines). Another example is that of the three American women. As they participated more often at plastic clean-ups at home. In addition, a good indicator for this as well was the fact that much of the conversations had sustainability, recycling, or plastic pollution as topic. During these dialogues, often comparisons were made between their home countries and European countries. An indicator for this as well was how one of the American women started to talk how they could organize something similar back home. This made me wonder though how many people would actually be interested or willing to do a tour like that of Plastic Whale? It comes across as if it is very niche. I cannot find an answer to this question in my thesis. But it is interesting to think about. It would be a good indicator for how successful this type of sustainable tourism can be.

Something that I soon realised as well, was the fact that the atmosphere and interactions between people participating was very pleasant. There was a positive energy going around the boat. The respondents were constantly chatting, asking questions, inquiring about each other's personal lives, and jokes were made constantly. Also, some deep conversations were cut, and you get the feeling that you are truly getting to know these people. A good example of this, is that one of the respondents at the end of the tour with: "You are the coolest people I have met here so far." The participants were encouraging each other to get the plastic, and it was almost as if they were making a game out of it, as people were shouting when they saw more plastic and were trying to get to it first to see who could gather the most.

I also noticed that I was drawn into this game and pleasant atmosphere as well. I really felt part of this group during the tour. Something I have never experienced before during any other tour. The trip reminded me of many other tours because the format is mostly the same as other canal tours as well. However, it felt like it was so much more fulfilling by the active engagement. In addition, the participants seemed to be very at ease with my presence as well. They even seemed to enjoy answering my questions and they were interested in my research. So, we also exchanged e-mails so that we could stay in touch and so that I could give them my end results once it is finished.

When I asked one of the American women what the reason was for her to take this tour, she replied with that she enjoyed doing different things when visiting a city. Not just to do the typical tourist activities. Moreover, she mentioned that it was also important for her to contribute something towards the city. The reason for her was, because she is going out for dinner, consuming, and generally leaving trash behind. So, it is important for her to leave something positive as well. When I asked the Australian mother why they joined the tour, she replied with that she thought it important for her children to see the ‘negative’ sides of the world as well. Especially as they are growing up in a bubble in which everything is clean and beautiful. Almost all participants also told me that they did participate in the typical tourist activities as well. And they heard about this tour through the AirBnB experience site.

When reflecting on myself, I personally thought it was a nice way of seeing and experiencing the city. At the start, I was curious what the balance between ‘work’ and ‘leisure’ would be during the tour. In the end, it was a very relaxing experience, so, it came across to me as striking a nice balance. Apparently, it takes truly little effort to fish out plastic from the canals, so there is plenty of room to enjoy your time as well. And at the end, we still collected a couple of garbage bags full of waste, which was a nice materialization of our efforts. It at least made me feel good about what we did that day. Other participants also underscored this aspect. They also noticed that they were getting to know the city on a different level. But this also mostly related to being on the water.

During the trip, the skipper told us about where we positioned us in Amsterdam. He would also tell us some anecdotes about the city or would provide additional background information about Plastic Whale. He told us for example about the living boats that are found on the canals and how living in one of those is like. Or he would talk about the biking culture in the Netherlands. He also talked about how trash usually gets cleaned from the canals by the municipality. This is done by special boats with a crane. He asked us to guess how many bikes get fished out of the water each year. It was 15.000. But the focus of the trip was in general pointed at plastic, waste, sustainability, and how the municipality deals with these issues at the scale of Amsterdam. So, there was not a lot of attention given to history or traditional heritage that one expects at regular tours. What you do get, is a different narrative of the city, life in it, and the effects of tourism (and our contemporary lifestyles). It is about the heritage of what we leave behind in terms of waste for our future generations and the heritage that tourism leaves behind.



During the tour, the topic of tourism itself also came up. The respondents were wondering how busy the city gets exactly. To illustrate this, the skipper gave the example of a conversation he had a while back at a party. It was about how most visitors only visit Amsterdam for 'the list' and crossing it off. To be able to say that you have been to Amsterdam. But that while they visit, have no clue of what they are actually looking at. He mentioned a German family who did not even know who Anne Frank was while visiting the museum. The participants reacted shocked to this example. This also indicated to me, that the respondents did not perceive themselves as being typical tourists.

A short note about the children. At the start they seemed to really be into the activity. They were engaging actively during the tour and seemed to enjoy themselves. However, after a while, they got tired and cold. It then also was a cold day for doing the tour.

## APPENDIX III

*Preparation sheet used during the interview with Elena Simons*

### Approach

- Semi-structured
- Anthropological: unobtrusive, listening
- Open-ended questions
- Make the questions understandable for the interviewee
- Take note of metaphors or other colorful language
- Pay attention to body language
- Make notes that are useful for the research

### Interview questions

1. Wat is your exact role within the Untourist Guide?
  - a. What kind of activities and responsibilities does that include?
2. How would you describe the Untourist Guide?
  - a. Why?
  - b. How is the movement organized?
3. What was the reason for founding the Untourist Guide?
  - a. Why do you think it is necessary for such an organization to exist?
  - b. What does the Untourist Guide provide that other organizations are not providing?
4. According to you, what is the current situation regarding tourism in Amsterdam?
  - a. What are the causes for this?

- b. How does this effect Amsterdam as city?
  - c. In what way does the Untourist Guide play into this?
5. What story of Amsterdam do you want to tell with the Untourist Guide?
- a. What is the importance of telling this story?
  - b. What is necessary to build this story?
6. In your booklet, you talk how the reader is not a tourist, but a *bringer of change*. What you as a tourist have to offer the city, and that you as a visitor has everything in you to bring change. What do you exactly think that tourists have to offer Amsterdam?
- a. In what way can they give this?
  - b. In how far do you think that tourists will be willing to do this?
- c. You also mention that the current tourism is not positively received by local residents of Amsterdam. What makes you think this form of tourism will be different?
- d. What are the reaction of participants of these activities this far? Both from your partners as from tourists?
7. You are working together with many different organizations and partners. What is their role exactly within the Untourist Guide?
- a. What is their opinion regarding the Untourist Guide?
  - b. How are you working together?
  - c. How are they perceiving tourism in Amsterdam?
8. How do you envision the future for the Untourist Guide?
- a. How would the ideal future look like according to the Untourist guide?
  - b. Within this vision, how will the role of tourists and tourism look like?
  - c. What doe you think that is necessary to accomplish this?
  - d. What are the biggest challenges to achieve this goal?

## **APPENDIX IV**

*Consent form provided for Elena Simons prior to the interview*

### **Goal and intention research**

The current research is being executed for a master thesis for the program of Heritage Management and Museum Studies at the University of Leiden. The goal of the research is to study alternative modes of tourism, and to evaluate in how far these tourist initiatives contribute to a sustainable form of tourism. This especially relates to how tourism uses values that are provided by cultural heritage. In particular, the study will focus how economic values are being used in opposition to sociocultural values in the contemporary context of Amsterdam.

### **Data analysis, storage, and access**

For the interest of the research, an audio recording will be made of the interview. In case there is objection to this in any way, it is possible to let this be known before the interview starts. If that might be the case, this will be taken into account. In case no objection is made, the interview will be transcribed afterwards and included in the end rapport. Based on answers provided by you during the interview, quotes will be used for the research and end rapport.

Furthermore, the results of the interview will be stored on a personal computer and hard disk drive. The data will not be stored on any public server. The end results and rapport of the research will be shared with members of the Faculty of Archaeology of the University of Leiden. They will have access to the data when necessary. In addition, it will be possible for all stakeholders of the research (in other words, the respondents) to receive a copy of the master thesis and to gain access into the collected data.

### **Privacy**

For the interest of the research, it might be possible that your name or any other personal information will be used in the final rapport. In case you have any objections to this, it is possible to let this be known to me at all times, before, during or after the interview. If this is the case, all personal data will be anonymized.

In case that during the interviews topics are discussed that makes you or your associated partners feel uncomfortable with, for any reason, you have the right to let this be known. If that is the case, the given topic will not be included into the research. This is also possible after the interview is done.

## APPENDIX V

*Preparation sheet used during the participant observation of the Plastic Whale tour.*

### **Disclosure and Privacy Statement**

Before the tour starts, I wish to provide a disclaimer to all participants of the tour regarding my research. By doing so, the respondents will know what to expect of my presence, what I will be doing during the trip, and that they have the opportunity to abstain from being part of the research at any moment.

I want to be as open as I can about the intention of my research. Therefore, I will provide the participants with as much information about my research as I can. I want to make clear to the participants that my research involves tourism in Amsterdam and how alternative practices of tourism can contribute to a more sustainable situation for the city. I do not think it will harm my research in any way by letting the respondents know this information. It might have some repercussions for the answers they will provide for me or how they behave during the tour, but I think the influence of giving transparency for my research will be minimal.

I will likewise state the goal of my participation for the day, which is, I wish to experience and observe how these type of tourist practices play out and how people act during these. I will tell the respondents that I will be making pictures or some notes during the trip. In addition, I told them that I will sometimes be asking them questions regarding the tour. Part of stating this is also to give the participants the opportunity to abstain from being photographed or questioned during the tour. I also want to make sure that, at any time, they can switch their mind on this. So if they did not say anything before the tour, but changed their mind during. I want to make sure that they feel comfortable to tell me this.

As for further privacy and disclosure, I will tell them that all private data will be anonymized and I will not be using any names. Finally, I want to give them the opportunity for further involvement in my research as well. Thus, I will provide my e-mail address for anyone who is interested in the results of my thesis. Or, for whomever has any related questions for me.

## **The preparation**

To prepare myself for the participant observation, I have created a guiding questionnaire. This allows me to gain some structure during the tour, as well as providing me with focus points of what I wish to pursue during the observations. Beneath, I have listed the questions I formulated for the participation. Not every questions has to be asked. Some will evolve during the tour, or they will be expended on, while other might prove irrelevant. It is simply to provide me with a starting point.

## **Questions to be asked to the Skipper**

1. How often do tourists book the Plastic Whale Tour?
  - a. How many people sign up for these tours?
2. According to you, what is the motivation for tourists to book the tour?
  - a. Why do you think that is?
3. What type of people are attracted to Plastic Whale?
  - a. Are these individual travelers? Families? Groups of friends? Couples?
  - b. Are they usually long-term travelers? Or on a weekend trip?
  - c. Are they young or old?
  - d. Are they male or female?
  - e. Where do they usually travel from?
4. What are the reactions from tourists after the tour?
5. What was the reason for Plastic Whale to organize these tours?
  - a. How did Plastic Whale originate
6. What is Plastic Whale's opinion regarding the tourist tours they provide?
  - a. Do you think it is an appropriate activity for tourists?
  - b. How does the Plastic Whale tour relate to other tours?

- c. What is the precise goal of the activities?
  - d. Do you think there is a larger need for this type of tour?
7. What do you want to show of Amsterdam during these tours?
- a. How does this relate to other activities done by tourists?
  - b. Is the way in which you show Amsterdam an important part of what the tour does?

**Questions to be asked to the participants**

1. What is the reason for you that you are taking the Plastic Whale tour?
2. How did you discover of Plastic Whale's existence?
3. Do you do these type of activities and tours more often when you are traveling?
4. Are you interested to do these kind of activities more often while you are traveling?
5. Do you think there should be more activities organized like Plastic Whale?
6. What are your thoughts after today?
7. How would you relate Plastic Whale to other activities in Amsterdam that you already did?

**Points of Attention for observations**

Observe how participants are reacting to and interacting with each other

Observe to what degree participants are spectating the city or are participating in the activity

Listen to what the respondents are talking about during the tour

Listen to what is being told by the skipper

Observe how the atmosphere is during the tour