

Seeking out poverty in places of affluence.

Existential authentication in poverty tourism and its sociopolitical-ethical implications in European welfare state cities.

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15/06/2025

Abstract in English

Historically, humans have always searched for existential authenticity as the pursuit of personal meaning through travel experiences. Given the continued quest therefor in contemporary tourism activities, poverty tourism as a way of meeting ‘the other half’ of modern urbanized societies has become an important engine for local industries in favelas, barrios and townships of the Global South. Recently, poverty tourism has ‘returned home’, starting to appear in European welfare state cities, in the format of guided walking tours led by experiential experts. This incites different sights and images of local urban precarity and engagements therewith, which is expected to influence the emergence of ‘authenticity’ through poverty tourism experiences. At the same time, the dream of authenticity has resulted in sociopolitically-ethically ambiguous outcomes, at times contributing to the voyeurization, exoticization and exploitation of precarious local residents, then offering grounds for mutual social recognition, empathy and solidarity. To allow for a more meaningful engagement with the latter, the concept of existential authentication has been advanced with insights on experiential and ‘place’-based learning, as well as Paulo Freire’s sociopolitical theory on humanization and Axel Honneth’s socio-ethical Theory of Recognition.

This master’s thesis is a mixed methods phenomenological study of existential authentication in poverty tourism of European welfare state cities and reflection on its potential sociopolitical-ethical implications, applied to five poverty tour initiatives in cities of Vienna (AT), The Hague (NL) and Copenhagen (DK). A social constructivist discourse analysis of online reviews and interviews with tour guides and participants, participatory observations and autoethnographies, and a reflexive analysis of my personal research diary offer insights into the various participant profiles and motivations for partaking in poverty tours, the goals of poverty tours – both in theory and practice –, the experiences of poverty tours vis-à-vis the construction of ‘authentic’ images and sights of local urban precarity, and, lastly, the emergence and consequences of ‘authentic’ encounters with local urban precarity in poverty tours (as experienced in relation to sights and images of local urban precarity, and the figure of the guide).

Results showcase that existential authentication is a highly ambiguous dialectic process that, sometimes, incites empathy for an equally unique human being, then, evokes fear of a radically different ‘Other/ed’ – nevertheless, always being involved in processes of mutual person formation. When poverty tours enable both sociopolitical and hopeful learning, more socially sustainable and ethically-responsible encounters with difference in both local tourism sectors and the cities being toured become possible – as showcased by the creation of a first typology on poverty tours in European welfare state cities.

Abstract in German

Historisch haben die Menschen schon immer nach existenzieller Authentizität – als das Streben nach persönlicher Bedeutung – gesucht durch Reiseerfahrungen. In Anbetracht der anhaltenden Suche danach im zeitgenössischen Tourismus ist der Armutstourismus als eine Möglichkeit, die ‚andere Hälfte‘ der modernen urbanisierten Gesellschaften kennenzulernen, zu einem wichtigen Motor für die lokale Wirtschaft in Favelas, Barrios und Townships des globalen Südens geworden. In jüngster Zeit ist der Armutstourismus ‚nach Hause zurückgekehrt‘ und beginnt, in den Städten der europäischen Wohlfahrtsstaaten in Form von geführten Wandertouren unter der Leitung von Experten aufzutreten. Dies führt zu unterschiedlichen Sichtweisen und Bildern der lokalen städtischen Prekarität und der Auseinandersetzung damit, was die Entstehung von ‚Authentizität‘ durch Armutstourismus-Erfahrungen beeinflussen dürfte. Gleichzeitig hat der Traum von Authentizität zu soziopolitisch-ethisch undeutlichen Ergebnissen geführt, die zuweilen zur Voyeurisierung, Exotisierung und Ausbeutung von Menschen in prekären Verhältnissen vor Ort beitragen, dann wieder Gründe für gegenseitige soziale Anerkennung, Empathie und Solidarität bieten. Um eine sinnvollere Auseinandersetzung mit Letzterem zu ermöglichen, wurde das Konzept der existentiellen Authentifizierung mit Erkenntnissen über erfahrungs- und ortsbezogenes Lernen sowie Paulo Freires gesellschaftspolitische Theorie der Humanisierung und Axel Honneths sozialetische Theorie der Anerkennung erweitert.

Diese Masterarbeit ist eine phänomenologische Studie mit gemischten Methoden zur existenziellen Authentifizierung im Armutstourismus europäischer Wohlfahrtsstaaten und eine Reflexion über dessen mögliche sozialpolitisch-ethische Implikationen, angewandt auf fünf Armutstour-Initiativen in den Städten Wien (AT), Den Haag (NL) und Kopenhagen (DK). Eine sozialkonstruktivistische Diskursanalyse von Online-Rezensionen und Interviews mit Tourguides und Teilnehmern, teilnehmende Beobachtungen und Autoethnographien sowie eine reflexive Analyse meines persönlichen Forschungstagebuchs bieten Einblicke in die verschiedenen Teilnehmerprofile und Motivationen für die Teilnahme an Armutstouren, die Ziele von Armutstouren – sowohl in Theorie als auch Praxis –, die Erfahrungen von Armutstouren im Hinblick auf die Konstruktion ‚authentischer‘ Bilder und Sehenswürdigkeiten der lokalen städtischen Prekarität und schließlich die Entstehung und die Folgen ‚authentischer‘ Begegnungen mit der lokalen städtischen Prekarität bei Armutstouren (wie sie in Bezug auf Sehenswürdigkeiten und Bilder der lokalen städtischen Prekarität und die Figur des Führers erlebt werden).

Die Resultate zeigen, dass existenzielle Authentifizierung ein höchst vieldeutiger dialektischer Prozess ist, der manchmal Empathie für einen ebenso einzigartigen Menschen hervorruft, dann wieder Angst vor einem radikal anderen ‚Other/ed‘ hervorruft – was dennoch immer in Prozesse der gegenseitigen Persönlichkeitsbildung eingebunden ist. Wenn Armutstouren sowohl gesellschaftspolitisches als auch hoffnungsvolles Lernen ermöglichen, werden sozial nachhaltigere und ethisch verantwortungsvollere Begegnungen mit Differenz sowohl im lokalen Tourismussektor als auch in den bereisten Städten möglich - wie die Erstellung einer ersten Typologie zu Armutstouren in europäischen Wohlfahrtsstaatstädten zeigt.

Acknowledgements

Over the last two years, I was both privileged and challenged to travel all over Europe in the company of classmates, teachers and practitioners from various cultural, disciplinary and institutional backgrounds. In this fluid state of being, walking and redrawing my traces in unfamiliar 'places' every few months¹, a little 'communitas'² of people emerged. Together, we influenced and nurtured each other; helping each other grow into our own person. I express my sincerest gratitude to my family, my friends from my home town and my old university city, and the *companions de route* that I encountered along the way – staff, 4citizens and all friendly faces (Marina!) who truly made Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen and Madrid worthy of a place called 'home'. From organising shared meals – 'shared cooking' is up for debate (making a salad doesn't count) –, to hurrying to the best bakeries, engaging in deep political and psychoanalytical talks, or simply joking around: these memories will always stay close to my heart. When reflecting back on the past four semesters while putting the final touches on my master's thesis, I come to realize that my intellectual-empirical engagements with existential authentication in poverty tourism also hold a grain of truth for the experience of 4CITIES – especially as a young adult who is carefully renegotiating herself in relation to the world.

A special mentioning for prof. dr. Henrik Reeh is at its place: your insightful comments – obtained through long talks and similar email threads; time was never an issue – propelled this research forward. Instead of directing me, you enabled me to grow at my own pace with subtle hints and reflective notes, turning initial doubts into – I may hope – nuanced views and findings. Fellow student Daniel Viana was also an indispensable partner for shared thinking, or simply enjoying the research stages of 'being lost and found' together. Lastly, let's not forget the guides, the administrative-organizational pillars 'behind-the-scenes' and the participants of all these tours, who embarked with me on this journey: you were all willing to make time for me, and share your insights and your thoughts, which is much appreciated. Without question, Martin and Nadine (*Wiener Nimmerland*), Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak (*Ronja's straatwandeling*), the guides at Ghetto Tours and Julie (*Gadens Stemmer*) all attempt to make room for difference in their own, unique way. Simply subscribing to this and offering me a welcoming, safe environment to learn both as a person, and as a sociologist and urban scholar, meant everything to me. I wish you lots of luck with the continuation of your tours, and I hope that my research may contribute to more ethical encounters in your initiatives and far beyond.

All the best,

Elien

¹ Alluding to Michel de Certeau in '*L'invention du quotidien. Vol. 1, Arts de faire*' (first published in 1980; reference to English version in 2012).

² Introduced in Victor Turner's '*The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*' (first published in 1969; reference to the 9th edition of 1991).

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Foreword: An urban history of meeting the Other – understanding today's quest for existential authenticity

While I'm sitting on a terrace in Alicante – listening in on a conversation in English about nearby places to visit and Spain being 'locked in time' –, an "I'm sorry, excuse me" reaches my ears. I look up, meeting the eyes of a young man my age. He is carrying a reusable shopping bag around his right shoulder and holds out his hand. I lower my gaze to look at the content of his palm. "Do you have-"; "No, I'm sorry", I interrupt him, and I shift my attention back to my plate. After repeated unsuccessful attempts with 'my fellow diners' at opposite tables, he closes his fingers around some eurocents and takes his leave. While I'm annoyed at his 'rudeness' – disturbing me at an 'inappropriate' place and time – I can't help but feel a pinch of guilt when seeing him disappear into the urban streets.

Source: adapted excerpt from autoethnographic fieldnotes – May 2, 2025

Although I am writing a master's thesis on poverty tourism in particular, experiences with urban precarity in everyday life are inherently part of this exploration. After all, as argued by sociologist John Urry in his influential work 'The Tourist Gaze' (1990), tourism is a reflection of broader social operations, identities and cultures that are characteristic of present-day societies (Urry, 1990). In my desire to meet 'the other half' of European welfare state cities through tourism activities, and likewise, my occasional ineptitude to truly engage therewith in everyday life, I believe that inherent dialects in processes of existential authentication are exposed. Attracted by these ambiguities – felt within myself but also observed in the relationalities enacted in poverty tourism and beyond –, I argue that an in-depth examination of tour participants' experiences of existential authenticity and reflection on their potential sociopolitical-ethical implications can tell us more about human encounters between various sociocultural groups in general. Poverty tourism is 'merely' a magnifying glass for studying an inherently human quest towards existential authenticity in and through our engagements with the difference of the world.

This quest has historically been tied to stages of modern urbanization, as exemplified by literary reports on those living at the margins of recently (post)industrialized urbanized societies. A famous example thereof is German industrialist and philosopher Friedrich Engels' "Conditions of the Working Class in England" (1848), on the labour and housing conditions of a newly emergent class of urbanites in recently industrialized cities of Salford, Manchester and Liverpool. A few decades later, Danish journalist and photographer Jacob A. Riis documented the 1880s' tenement housing conditions of New York City in his publication "How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York" (Riis, 1970). Jacob Holdt, likewise a Danish photographer and writer, provides a more contemporary account in "American Pictures: A Personal Journey Through the American Underclass", wherein he captured mundane sights of racialized socio-economic inequalities in the United States of America during the 1970s on photographic film (Holdt, 1985).

Through in-depth ethnographies and participatory observations with those impacted by urban precarity, authors deliberately pursued encounters with the Other/ed; sometimes establishing empathetic relationships that no longer allow for seeing them as such, then resulting in voyeurism and romanticization. The same ambiguities can be perceived in the reception of these works, either contributing to the instalment of poverty-

reductive and -preventive social policies and urban infrastructures, or resulting in sensationalizing and exoticizing accounts for the readers' own entertainment and curiosity. Although the exact sociopolitical-ethical impact of such quests for existential authenticity perhaps cannot be univocally measured, it is clear that 'something' is happening herein that is worthwhile pursuing.

On the following pages, I invite you to walk with me,

Have an enjoyable read,

Elie Stouten

1. Introduction: poverty tourism's quest for existential authenticity and its sociopolitical-ethical implications in European welfare state cities

Authenticity has become a leading concept in tourism and society as a whole (Aupers, Houtman & Roeland, 2010; Bispari, 2024; MacCannell, 1999). When going on vacation, tourists desire to have a 'genuine' or 'real' experience of the localities being visited. This refers both to the truth value of 'objects' such as cultural-historical culinary traditions, monuments, and customs and practices, as well as the *sense* of authenticity that is intrinsically experienced in connection to others – whether or not incited by authentic objects. In postmodern times of 'hyperreality'³, however, distinctions between 'real' and 'fake' objects have become unattainable – as exemplified by the popularity of highly staged tourism activities (e.g., Disneyland). At the same time, this has not hindered tourists' continued quests for authenticity, thus implying a greater emphasis on the *experience* of authenticity: tourists are not simply in search for authenticity, but authentic experiences – felt in a deeply embodied sense and in communion to others – serve as a mediator for finding broader meaning about the own existence in the world; a process that is termed '*existential authentication*'⁴ (Wang, 1999).

Poverty tourism as the touring of urban precarity (e.g., homelessness, housing insecurity and inadequacy, addiction, squalor and street violence, and forced displacement) is particularly concerned with existential authenticity, being both tourists' motivation for and outcome of engaging with 'the other half' of affluent European welfare state societies (Fenzel, 2012; Sheldon, 2010). However, these encounters foster ambiguous sociopolitical-ethical outcomes, sometimes enabling mutual social recognition, empathy and solidarity to occur between tour guides and participants, then idolizing or pitying guides as 'precarious' individuals only (Burroughs, 2014; Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2019). Considering the continued popularity of 'authenticity-seeking' alternative tourism – including the increase in poverty tourism initiatives worldwide – the concept of existential authenticity remains to be a highly relevant field of inquiry towards the development of more socially sustainable and ethically-responsible engagements in tourism places and cities as a whole (Freire-Medeiros, 2013; Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2018).

Since the early 2010s, poverty tourism has started to appear in cities of European welfare states in the form of guided walking tours by experiential experts (i.e., guides who are experiencing or have experienced urban precarity themselves) (Dolezal & Gudka, 2007). This differs from earlier operationalizations of poverty tourism, often occurring in areas of highly visible/ized and clustered urban precarity (i.e., so-called 'slums') in the Global South: here, guides often do *not* belong to the local communities themselves, and tourists can experience urban precarity in a sensorily-detached way, being seated behind a car window (Selinger &

³ Alluding to 'Travels in Hyperreality' (1986) by semiotician and literary writer, Umberto Eco. The example of Disneyland is also derived herefrom.

⁴ Whereas *authentication* refers to the process of becoming authentic, *authenticity* refers to the outcome of such processes of authentication; similar to the difference in meaning between 'identity' and 'identification' (Schwarz & Williams, 2020).

Outterson, 2010). Both the difference in setting (i.e., European welfare state cities) and format (i.e., guided walking tours led by experiential experts) imply other 'authentic' experiences of the object encountered (i.e., more 'hidden' sights and images of urban precarity) and the touring itself (i.e., more 'intensely experienced' embodied, relational and spatial engagements with urban precarity). In response, alternative processes of existential authentication to "traditional" poverty tourism in the Global South are expected to emerge, potentially inciting alternative sociopolitical-ethical outcomes as well. The concept of existential authentication is advanced by unraveling insights on experiential learning occurring in 'places' of bodies, spaces and mental frameworks, and delving into Paulo Freire's sociopolitical process of humanization (Freire, 2017) and Axel Honneth's intersubjective Recognition Theory (Honneth, 1995). This allows for an exploration of existential authentication that is oriented towards personal and local social transformation within the framework of poverty tourism.

In this master's thesis, I will investigate processes of tour participants' existential authentication as they are taking place in five poverty tours, set in Vienna (AT), the Hague (NL) and Copenhagen (DK), and reflect on their potential sociopolitical-ethical implications. To allow for meaningful empirical engagements, I will first outline the current state of the art regarding existential authentication in tourism studies and practice – including an in-depth description of poverty tourism – (section 2), before embedding the concept of existential authentication into experiential learning in 'place', Paulo Freire's process of humanization and Axel Honneth's Recognition Theory (section 3). An existential and hermeneutic phenomenological mixed methods approach – more precisely, a social constructivist discourse analysis of online content (i.e., reviews of poverty tours), as well as interviews and a focus group discussion with guides and tour participants, combined with participatory observations and autoethnographies conducted during touring, and a reflexive analysis of my personal research diary (section 5) – will eventually enable a breakdown (section 6) and discussion (section 7) of research findings.

2. State of the art

2.1 Authenticity in tourism research: from object-related authenticity to existential authentication

The concept of authenticity was first introduced as a potential field of inquiry in tourism studies by anthropologist and sociologist Dean MacCannell, in works based on his doctoral research⁵ (MacCannell, 1973, 1999). Although MacCannell intended his writings for fellow social scientists who were likewise critically concerned with upcoming transformations in tourism, it was primarily received by architects and humanities scholars at that time. However, under subsequent cultural, performative and mobilities turns in tourism studies – highlighting the sociocultural, relational and embodied dimensions of tourism –, it did gain traction

⁵ 'Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings' (1973) and 'The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class' (first published in 1976; reference to edition in 1999).

among tourism researchers from the social sciences in the 1990s (Bapiri, 2024; Christou, 2023; Russo & Richards, 2016; Wang, 1999). Authenticity has remained to be a ‘hot topic’ in tourism research and practice ever since, resulting in various definitions and paradigms for understanding processes of ‘authentication’, or becoming ‘authentic’ (Bapiri, 2024). At the same time, this multiplicity in conceptualizations render authenticity a slippery notion for study. In response, tourism scholar Ning Wang brought order to existent categorizations of authenticity in tourism research, distinguishing four types: 1) **objective authenticity**, 2) **constructivist authenticity**, 3) **postmodern authenticity**, and 4) **existential authenticity** (1999).

1) Objective authenticity refers to the extent to which an object’s inherent truth value can be measured on the basis of absolute and objective criteria (e.g., a museum item). However, an object’s truth value does not necessarily reflect how it is *experienced* to be authentic, as highlighted by MacCannell’s concept of ‘staged authenticity’⁶ (Wang, 1999). Inspired by sociologist Erving Goffman’s symbolic interactionist theory on front- and backstages, ‘staged authenticity’ implies a partial performativity of an object’s ‘authenticity’, thus rendering the object an *aura* of authenticity that is independent from its inherent truth value. Whereas tourists try to experience the back regions of tourist places and activities – engaging in private spheres to bypass highly staged versions of ‘authenticity’, as typically encountered on touristified front stages – tourists are rather captured in ‘staged back regions’; being neither pure front-, nor backstage. Examples hereof are fish nets and driftwoods as decorations in ‘authentic’ seafood restaurants – giving an allure of being ‘behind-the-scenes’; a staged “presence” of fishing activities. In doing so, MacCannell believes that locals can preserve objectively authentic versions of their, e.g., culinary traditions, monuments, and customs and practices from potential intrusion and influence by tourists (MacCannell, 1999). In critique, social historian and educator Daniel J. Boorstin voiced a concern for the disappearance of object-related authenticity under tendencies of commodification. In his work on ‘pseudo-events’⁷ – i.e., events that are artificially manufactured and reproduced for purposes of media coverage only – , he argues that objects’ truth values become hollowed out, when catering to tourists’ expectations of ‘authenticity’ (Boorstin, 1962).

2) In response, constructivist authenticity emerged. Here, the meaning of authenticity does no longer refer to a fixed truth value that is inherent to certain objects, places or people. Rather, it becomes continuously renegotiable in light of changing sociocultural norms, views, paradigms, and contexts that render the notion of ‘authenticity’ meaningful. These sociocultural constructions of ‘authenticity’ are infused with power dynamics, originating from social structures embedded in local tourism industries and societies as a whole (Wang, 1999). Tourism scholar Erik Cohen’s concept of ‘emergent authenticity’⁸ emphasizes how meanings of ‘authenticity’ arise and, likewise, disappear under processes of commodification. Using the example of Bedouin culture – i.e., a nomadic culture found in Arabic countries and Israel – Cohen illustrates

⁶ Introduced in ‘Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings’ (1973) and ‘The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class’ (first published in 1976; reference to edition of 1999).

⁷ ‘The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America’ (1962).

⁸ Introduced in ‘Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism’ (1988).

how Bedouins perform seemingly ‘traditional’ or ‘authentic’ dances, culinary dishes, and dress and costume, while these stylized versions may neither be historically-culturally accurate, nor reflect contemporary Bedouin everyday life. Instead, the ‘authenticity’ of objects emerges in accordance with tourist expectations of what ‘the “real” Bedouin culture’ should look like. The latter, in turn, is dependent on images and imaginaries installed by tourism industries and other societal frameworks of significance. Thus, ‘authenticity’, as perceived by tourists, is the provisional outcome of an ongoing process of cultural adaptation and renegotiation between local communities and demands from tourism markets. Cultural practices are not fixed in time, nor isolated from any ‘outside’ influence – represented by the figure of the tourist –, but fluidly shaped over time, embedded in multiple intersecting and ever-changing contexts (Cohen, 1988).

3) With the disappearance of definite, external references to an object’s truth value, **a postmodern notion of authenticity** arises. Inspired by the concept of ‘hyperreality’⁹ – as introduced by semiotician and literary writer Umberto Eco (1986) –, sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard observed a quest for ‘genuine fakes’ in postmodern societies. In the 1950s and 1960s, consumer cultures reached full maturity, employing effective techniques and technologies of imitation that, at times, rendered copies indistinguishable from the ‘real’ or ‘original’ version of an object. When the copy replaces its original – or is perceived as ‘original’ when it has no historical referent –, ‘simulacra’¹⁰ emerge that come to replace and thereby distort prior understandings of reality. With the dissolution of boundaries between ‘fake’ and ‘real’, the meaning of ‘authenticity’ has collapsed in on itself, becoming a mere matter of consumption of symbols and signs wherein a quest for ‘genuine fakes’ is legitimized when this enables intense experiences of ‘authentic’ emotions such as pleasure, nostalgia and awe (Baudrillard, 1981). A contemporary example thereof is the desire for vintage and retro items and experiences among young adult consumers, who were not yet born during the eras that these objects make reference to. ‘Authenticity’ thus no longer refers to an object’s inherent truth value, but becomes a matter of experience only (Wang, 1999).

Instead of attempting to *define* (in)authenticity – as pursued in early tourism research concerned with objective authenticity –, tourism studies have gradually become involved in questions of how authenticity is *used*, by whom, and for what purposes; and what authenticity *does* (Rickly, 2023). Since the moral turn of the early 2010s in tourism research, tourist practices, activities and places are acknowledged as being shaped by *moral*-sociocultural norms and values that, in turn, are embedded in power dynamics. This contributed to recent engagements with existentialism and other moral philosophical traditions, ushering in **an existentialist conception of authenticity and processes of authentication** (Rickly, 2022; Rickly, Vidon, & Knudsen, 2021).

4) Existential authenticity and authentication refer to the outcome, respectively process of intra- and interpersonal experiences of ‘authenticity’. ‘Authenticity’ is felt through intense affective and sensory engagements with the world, and the other met herein. Our positionality in certain ‘places’ – being our

⁹ Introduced in ‘Travels in Hyperreality’ (1986).

¹⁰ Introduced in ‘*Simulacres et Simulations*’ (1981).

bodies, everyday spaces, or mental frameworks for perception, interpretation and evaluation –, as well as ‘the fleeting moments’ that occur at the crossroads of physical and sociocultural intersubjective encounters, offer grounds for self-identification and the formation of a sense of belonging (Rickly-Boyd, 2013). Existential authentication is deeply intertwined with travel and tourism, since the latter function as ‘liminal spaces’ in which current norms and values are suspended for renegotiation of the Self in relation to the world (infra). However, in current tourism research, all instances of experiential authentication are uncritically equalled to existential authentication, which is not necessarily the case, calling forward a deeper theoretical engagement with the concept of existential authentication (Rickly, 2022).

Existential authentication is indebted to the moral philosophical tradition of **existentialism**, which explores themes of human existence in a reality that is inherently devoid of any meaning (e.g., freedom, alienation, suffering, anxiety and death). According to German philosopher Martin Heidegger¹¹, an existentially authentic life is obtained when acting in accordance to a personally meaningful life project. In realizing that there is no absolute or ‘higher’ meaning to human existence – including those posited by arbitrary social norms and goals –, and confronting the life-threatening angst that this realization evokes head-on, one becomes fully liberated to shape and pursue a uniquely meaningful life plan. This requires an individual’s actions to be consistently oriented towards their personal life goals, irrespective of the knowledge that they are always in a state of being-toward-death. Although conformist behaviour – e.g., to tourist expectations of ‘authenticity’ – would allow for a denial of the latter, it simultaneously evokes a self-alienation that prohibits the emergence of truly authentic ways of living (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006).

2.1.1 A history of existential authentication in travel and tourism: creating meaning in and through liminal space

A tourist is a person who chooses to dwell in an **unfamiliar** place from ‘home’ – either referring to an unfamiliar physical or mental ‘place’ (Jafari, 1977).¹² In encountering the extraordinary in people, places and activities, tourists aspire to find **a more ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ reality beyond their own** (MacCannell, 1999). This existentialist conceptualization of authenticity has its **roots in the emergence of modern societies**. Since the late 17th century, sociotechnical transformations under modern industrialization and urbanization, and associated intellectual movements of Enlightenment and, later on, existentialism, ushering in new understandings of the Self vis-à-vis a radically-altered world. Whereas, priorly, notions of authenticity had mostly been reserved to a transcendental entity only (i.e., God), it became an intrinsically human and personal feature with the decline of belief in all-encompassing mythical, magical and spiritual sociocultural-

¹¹ Although Heidegger (1889-1976) never defined himself as ‘existentialist’, his thinking corresponds to the basic principles thereof. Other prominent figures in existentialist philosophy and literature are Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) and Albert Camus (1913-1960) (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006).

¹² This definition of tourists allows for local tourism, i.e., locals as tourists (re)discover their ‘home’ by engaging differently therewith, as such attaching new meanings to their locality.

moral accounts of the world. Consequently, human beings were confronted with highly fragmented and alienating elements of modern social orders; being placed in societies that were now stripped from any inherent meaning¹³. In response, existentialism called for the pursuit of a personally meaningful life project beyond contemporary boundaries of existent ways of being, knowing and doing (Aupers, Houtman & Roeland, 2010). Travel and tourism as 'liminal spaces'¹⁴, wherein radical difference can be met, have historically served purposes of existential authentication; finding and carving out a place for the Self in and through encounters with the world (MacCannell, 1999; Turner, 1991)

The first accounts of authenticity-seeking travel can be traced back to the ritual of **religious pilgrimage**. According to anthropologist Victor Turner, a pilgrimage to another 'place' from home opens up engagements with a '**liminal space**'. Here, travellers are not only suspended between two *physical* spaces, but they also find themselves in a sacred space-time for introspection and reflection, in which norms of everyday life become transgressable. On this 'limen' or threshold for self-identification vis-à-vis 'usual' ways of being, knowing and doing, travellers can either choose to transform themselves into another state of mind, or reaffirm their pre-existing identities. In relating themselves to other potential ways of being-in-the-world, travellers give expression to their existential authenticity, evoking personal meaning in the process. Moreover, they do so in 'communitas' with other travellers, inciting intense feelings of solidarity, intimacy and togetherness on the basis of a shared human existence (Ting & Kahl, 2016; Turner, 1991).

The same experience of liminality has been observed among participants in the **Grand Tours** of Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. In visiting cities such as Paris and Rome, and traversing the peaks of the Alps in-between destinations, aristocratic and wealthy young men engaged in a rite of passage towards adulthood, discovering and redefining their own authentic person vis-à-vis displays of high culture and presumably 'untainted' (by societal norms) natural landscapes. The arrival of tourism industries since the beginning of the 20th century merely commodified this intrinsically human desire for existential authenticity, turning 'travellers' into 'tourists' (MacCannell, 1999); although many attempt to break away from the label of 'tourist', relating it to explicitly commodified places and activities – deeming the latter 'inauthentically' generic and fake (Cohen, 1979). Since the 1960s, **backpacker travel** and other kinds of '**alternative**' tourism¹⁵ (e.g., 'ecotourism', 'voluntourism', 'responsible tourism', 'ethical tourism', 'sustainable tourism', 'slow tourism' and 'off-the-beaten-path tourism') demand unique and individually-tailored forms of travel that are 'in touch' with the visited locality and its inhabitants (Matoga & Pawlowska, 2018; Triarchi & Karamanis, 2017).

¹³ See Max Weber's concept of '*Die Entzauberung der Welt*', introduced in '*Wissenschaft als Beruf*' (first published in 1917; reference to edition in 1989); see Peter L. Berger's work '*The Sacred Canopy. Elements of a sociological theory of religion*' (1967) for a more recent account thereof in the field of sociology of religion.

¹⁴ Introduced by Victor Turner in '*The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*' (originally published in 1968; reference to edition of 1999).

¹⁵ 'Alternative' tourism is defined in opposition to the 'mainstream' mass tourism of 'sun, see, beach'-packages that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century. However, since the 1960s, alternative tourism niches have increased in tourist numbers and tourism types, becoming the new mainstream themselves (Eadington & Smith, 1992). Worldwide, tourism has currently become one of the fastest growing industries, with a particular focus on 'authenticity-seeking' travel observed among young persons (Ting & Kahl, 2016).

The desire for creating personal meaning through existentially authentic travel experiences has, however, resulted in morally ambiguous tourism encounters and detrimental sociopolitical outcomes – at times, exoticizing, commodifying or erasing local cultures, instigating intercultural conflicts, and imposing ethnocentric neocolonial and class-based norms on local populations (Butler, 2016; Salazar, 2017). In these kinds of tourism, existential authenticity serves both as a motivation for, and consequence of participating therein (Fenzel, 2012; Sheldon, 2010). In explaining the sociopolitically-ethically ambiguous outcomes of existentially authentic travel and tourism, the concept of ‘the gaze’ as the ‘place’ of encounter with an unfamiliar reality from our own proves to be indispensable.

2.1.2 Existential authentication and ‘the gaze’ in travel and tourism: Charles Taylor’s reconciliation of ‘the tourist gaze’ and ‘le regard’

The concept of ‘the gaze’ has been an important mechanism for understanding ‘authenticity’ early on in tourism research (Wasslera & Kirillova, 2019). The most explicit usage thereof can be found in sociologist John Urry’s notion of ‘**the tourist gaze**’. Although Urry never mentioned ‘authenticity’ in his work¹⁶, ‘the tourist gaze’ – which describes how tourists’ perceptions, interpretations and evaluations of different activities and places are structured by certain tourism images and imaginaries – fits well within the definition of constructivist authentication (supra). Drawing on Michel Foucault’s concept of ‘the medical gaze’¹⁷, Urry employs the notion of ‘the gaze’ in tourism contexts to explain for the dominant presence of ocular cultures – and other sensorily engagements¹⁸ – in structuring dominant ways of ‘seeing’ and desiring certain tourism aesthetics, activities and places over others. Social media posts, starchitectures, liveable city indexes and other city marketing tools create and circulate certain images and imaginaries of tourist places and activities. Especially images and imaginaries of ‘the extraordinary’ or ‘unusual’ vis-à-vis tourists’ own life worlds appeal to an intrinsically human quest for existential authenticity (supra). The construction of ‘unique’ experiences – or impressions thereof – drives and simultaneously is driven by demands for commodification in tourism industries. In doing so, tourists are socialized into particular and often class-based ways of perceiving, interpreting and valuing certain ‘authentic’ images and imaginaries over others. Tourist expectations of, e.g., ‘authentic’ Vienna, The Hague or Copenhagen, are thus being installed in personal and collective memories, which, in turn, contribute to the becoming of a ‘symbolic authenticity’ – i.e., an object is affectively and culturally experienced as ‘authentic’, when this corresponds to priorly installed signs and symbols of

¹⁶ ‘The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies’ (1990).

¹⁷ i.e., a biopolitical disciplinary tool for social control and surveillance, reshaping understandings of the human body in its gaze. In diagnosing and pathologizing certain physical and mental features over others, medical institutions install and impose a particular normative system of knowledge onto the human body, engaging in a biopolitics that dehumanizes the experience of disease and allows for some kinds of living to become less valued than others. Introduced in ‘*Naissance de la clinique*’ (1963).

¹⁸ Clarification made in response to initial critique of ‘the tourist gaze’ as emphasizing sight over the influence of other sense. Introduced in reworked, later edition of ‘The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies’ (Larsen & Urry, 2011).

‘authentic’ objects. Although the tourist gaze is embedded in power dynamics of tourism industries and broader societies, various images and imaginaries of ‘authentic’ touristic objects co-exist, challenging or reinforcing current understandings of ‘authenticity’ towards newly-emergent ‘authenticities’ (Urry, 1990).

In contrast, an existentialist notion of the gaze (i.e., *le regard*) has been developed by philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre¹⁹. According to Sartre, *le regard* is an intrinsic element of the human experience; it mediates the sociopolitical-ethical relationships between the Self and the world, as encountered in and through another subject’s gaze. However, in meeting ourselves through the other, we humans simultaneously become to recognize ourselves as both subject and object. This implies a tension in existential authentication, rendering such processes inevitably incomplete. In imaging ourselves through the eyes of another conscious human mind (i.e., a subject), we discover elements of ourselves that we would not have encountered on our own. In doing so, a more meaningful life project and ‘truthful’ self-image emerge; encouraging subjectification under existentially authentic processes of self-identification. At the same time, we feel judged and exposed in the gaze of another thinking entity, acknowledging ourselves to be ‘mere’ objects in their worlds of perception and experience. This incites a sense of self-consciousness and shame that presses for conformist behaviour in compliance with socially dominant norms and values of ‘desirable’ life goals and trajectories, presumably ‘worthwhile’ pursuing. Instead of becoming a ‘being for-itself’ or *être pour-soi* – i.e., existing purposively in and through those actions that render our lives personally meaningful – we humans are a ‘being in-itself’ or *être en-soi*, when caught up in another one’s gaze – i.e., living without any awareness of consciousness and possibility to impose our own will onto ourselves. Thus, *le regard* restricts our human freedom to shape and act in accordance with a personally meaningful life project, and influences our self-conceptualization, rendering truly authentic encounters impossible in travel and tourism, and beyond (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006).

In contrast to both Urry’s and Sartre’s conceptualizations of ‘the gaze’ – which imply that ‘authentic’ encounters in travel and tourism only serve tour participants’ self-identification –, Wasslera and Kirillova identify the gaze as a potentially transformative pathway for visitors *and* local communities involved in tourism activities, provided that a **shared life project** is pursued (2019). Simone de Beauvoir – likewise an existentialist philosopher who collaborated with Sartre on multiple occasions –, advanced Sartre’s notion of *le regard*, in response to the observation that one’s quest for existentially authentic living can always be obstructed by another’s pursuit thereof. Existential authentication supposes an unrestricted individual liberty to pursue a personal life project, potentially limiting the freedom of another in the process. Instead, she suggests that, when exercising one’s own personal liberty in enactment of an authentic life, the limits thereof are placed where the recognition of and respect for another person’s freedom is jeopardized. In other words, existential authenticity is only experienced when acting in accordance with a *shared* life project in relation to others, calling for more socially sustainable and ethically-responsible encounters in tourist places and society

¹⁹ Introduced in ‘*L’Être et le néant : Essai d’ontologie phénoménologique*’ (originally published in 1943; reference to edition of 1976).

as a whole. This, in turn, requires the development of a sense of empathy based on the acknowledgement and adherence to a shared human existence under similar social conditions (Rickly, Vidon, & Knudsen, 2021). This version of existential authentication, i.e., offering grounds for personal and local social transformation through *mutual* subjectification, will be operationalized infra (see conceptual framework).

It must be noted that – although this thesis investigates existential authentication – constructivist processes of authentication are inherently implied as well. After all, as stated by political philosopher **Charles Taylor's notion of 'authenticity'** in relation to modern understandings of the Self²⁰, a 'true' being does not emerge in isolation – i.e., in the independent pursuit of a personally meaningful life project. Instead, authentication entails a **dialogical process occurring within certain societal frameworks for significance and morals**. Sociocultural and ethical internalized horizons of meaning – which themselves are reflective of broader values, beliefs and practices, present in certain groups or societies – enable the emergence of an 'authentic' experience, and render some experiences more 'authentic' than others. Consecutively, meanings of 'authenticity' become renegotiable in different experiences thereof (Taylor, 1989).

When applied to the concept of 'the gaze' in tourism research, Urry's tourist gaze allows for a 'making sense' of existentially authentic encounters, while the latter disrupts earlier notions of 'authenticity' for newly emergent perceptive, interpretive and moral frameworks thereof. Both **'the tourist gaze' and *le regard*** are thus involved in a continuous process of **mutual reconstitution**. However, the tourist gaze's embedment in power dynamics of tourism industries and other societal spheres – more precisely, the continuous fabrication of 'authentic' tourist experiences that is implied under processes of commodification –, undermines the intrinsically human quest for truly meaningful or existentially authentic encounters. In catering to tourists' expectations, engagements with locals and local cultures often contribute to the emergence of essentialized and objectified versions thereof, and tourists find themselves in a self-referential loop of internalized normative ways of perceiving, interpreting and evaluating reality and their own placement therein. As a result, processes of personal and mutual existential authentication are hampered. At the same time, the intrinsically human quest for encounters with 'the unfamiliar' challenges the familiar normative frameworks that are posited by tourism sectors from within these industries, offering opportunities for reimagining the Self in relation to the other nevertheless.

The dialectics in processes of existential authentication and their sociopolitically-ethically ambiguous outcomes – as established by different notions of 'the gaze' in authenticity-related research – support notions of travel and tourism as 'liminal spaces' that can either enable tourists' self-affirmation, or transform the Self in relation to the 'objects' (including people and places) encountered on their journey (supra). I argue that this becomes most clear in instances of poverty tourism as a peculiar type of 'authenticity'-seeking tourism that is undergoing recent changes. In the gaze of 'the other half' of – in this case – affluent European welfare

²⁰ Developed in his work 'Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity' (1989).

state societies, poverty tourist are reflected back upon themselves. Tourists encounter the world – and their own place therein – in and through the figure of a ‘radically different Other/ed’²¹ – implying the presence of structures of oppression that render processes of (mutual) existential authentication highly morally ambiguous.

2.2 Existential authentication in poverty tourism: ‘meeting the Other/ed’ between voyeurism and transformation

Poverty tourism is a kind of alternative tourism that focuses on themes of material-discursive precarity or long-term uncertainty – such as homelessness, addiction, forced displacement, housing insecurity or inadequacy, squalor and street violence –, often framed as ‘poverty’ in non-academic contexts. Its meanings and operationalizations differ depending on the ‘places’ wherein and purposes for which it is employed; in general, the term carries a stigmatizing connotation in both tourism studies literature and practice²². Poverty tourism is often used synonymously to ‘slum tourism’ and ‘ghetto tourism’, albeit the former does not necessarily engage in or with designated areas of highly visible/ized precarity such as slums and ghettos (Steinbrink, 2012). It is closely related to ‘ethnic tourism’ in racialized neighbourhoods (Drew, 2011), ‘creative tourism’ in gentrifying areas (Drew, 2011), and ‘dark tourism’ that displays and sometimes idealizes sites of human death and suffering (Burroughs, 2014).

Poverty tourism originated in **Victorian England**. At the second half of the 19th century, socio-economically affluent aristocrats, bourgeois industrialists, and urban magistrates went ‘**slumming**’ in the impoverished working class neighbourhoods of London’s East End. In encountering their societal ‘other half’, they engaged in norm-transgressive activities, moving beyond one’s own socio-spatial familiarity and venturing among those of lower social class (Dürr, 2012). While some visited the slums to indulge in adventure and excitement, others used this as an educational opportunity, instigating advancements in social policy and urban infrastructure in the wake of their visits. The organized practice of ‘slumming’ soon crossed the Atlantic Ocean, taking mostly affluent and white North Americans on a walk through the socio-economically deprived areas of cities such as New York and Chicago. Often, these neighbourhoods housed a disproportionate

²¹ When writing ‘Other/ed’ instead of ‘other’, reference is being made to postcolonial psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon’s reconceptualization of Sartre’s *le regard*. Whereas Sartre viewed *le regard* as an existential encounter between two equal subjects-objects, Fanon employed ‘the colonial gaze’ to explain unequal colonizer-colonized relationships, focusing on the incomplete subjectification of (formerly) colonized persons in and through processes of objectification and dehumanization that are encompassed in the colonial gaze. In doing so, Fanon explicitly brought in dimensions of power for explaining the psychological and existential state of a ‘radically different Other/ed’ in the face of societal structures of oppression. Similarly, poverty tourism does not suppose tourist encounters with an equal human being, but engages with an underprivileged or Other/ed group in contemporary welfare state societies. The notion of ‘the colonial gaze’ was introduced in Fanon’s *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952).

²² Although I recognize that the concept of ‘poverty tourism’ can stigmatize research participants (i.e., guides, operators and tour participants), this is not my intention. I employ the term in accordance with scientific discourse that acknowledges ‘poverty tourism’ as tourism focused on themes of urban precarity, while trying to engage with the ambiguous ethics thereof that render the term so normatively charged in the first place.

amount of African-Americans, adding a racialized dimension to the class-based practice of slumming (Fenzel, 2022; Steinbrink, 2012).

In the 1970s, poverty tourism became globalized, attracting affluent citizens from the Global North to tour socio-economically vulnerable/ized urban areas of the Global South. In the 1990s, poverty tourism established itself as a substantial driver for urban tourism industries in some parts of South Africa, Latin America and India under the guise of **‘township tours’**, respectively **‘favela tours’** and **‘barrio tours’**, and **‘slum tours’**, making up for at least one fifth of all local tourism activities. From then onwards, tourism researchers started to engage substantially with poverty tourism, including visitors’ and residents’ personal motivations to engage with poverty tourism and the impact of these encounters on both tourists and the visited localities; more critical accounts thereof are emergent since a recent moral turn in tourism research (Fenzel, 2022; Steinbrink, 2012).

Poverty tourism has **either been deemed voyeuristic, then personally and socially transformative**, depending on its format and underlying norms and values under specific urban tourism regimes (Selinger & Outtersen, 2010). Especially its embedment within commercialized tourism sectors is heavily contested, according to some inevitable resulting in exoticizing, spectacularizing, romanticizing, and depoliticizing accounts of ‘authentic’ images and imaginaries of local urban precarity – as exemplified by notions of ‘poverty porn’, ‘human zoos’ and ‘human safari tours’. Here, ‘authenticity’ may only be reflective of pre-existing tourist expectations, irrespective of the actual lived realities of local urban precarity. As a consequence, local communities are not recognized, neither in the extent of their suffering, nor as fully-fledged and multidimensional human beings beyond their stigma; any further advancements in poverty reduction and prevention are hampered in the process (Dolezal & Gudka, 2007; Fenzel, 2012; Freire-Medeiros, 2013; Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2019; Nisbett, 2017). With, at times, a lion’s share of tour revenues going to (inter)national travel agencies and tour operators, local populations are often finding little benefit in return for hosting and enabling tourists’ journeys towards existentially ‘authentic’ self-identification (Fenzel, 2012; Halilem, Diop, & Pasquier-Fay, 2024).

In contrast, some scholars reimagine poverty tourism as ‘pro-poor tourism’, wherein profits gained are reinvested in local communities, as such aiding in local poverty reduction and prevention. Tourists do not only bring financial resources, but also foster intercultural dialogue for sociopolitical learning, reconfiguring images and imaginaries of ‘authentic’ local urban precarity that may combat territorial stigmatizations and stereotypes, and denounce lacking or failing social provisions and urban infrastructures to evoke positive local social change (Burgold, 2014; Dolezal & Gudka, 2007; Fenzel, 2012; Freire-Medeiros, 2013; Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2019; Selinger & Outtersen, 2010). As exemplified by a recent case study in Johannesburg (South Africa), co-creative experiments wherein tourists and residents engage on *an equal footing* are especially promising in offering grounds for both personal and mutual transformation (Booyens & Rogerson, 2019).

Recently, poverty tourism has ‘returned home’ to the European continent. Since the early 2010s, ‘homeless tours’²³ have been making their appearance in European cities such as Amsterdam (NL), Barcelona (ES), Berlin (DE), Hamburg (DE), Copenhagen (DK), Vienna (AT), London (GB), The Hague (NL), Prague (CZ) and Utrecht (NL), exploring themes of homelessness and housing insecurity, addiction and/or refuge. Being a relatively recent phenomenon in these contexts, only little research has been conducted yet on poverty tourism in particular²⁴ – excluding associated tourism types such as ethnic tourism, creative tourism and dark tourism (Dolezal & Gudka, 2007).

In contrast to the initial ‘poverty tours’ in Victorian London, contemporary European poverty tourism occurs under the coverage of **urban welfare regimes**. Such systems of coordinated social services and infrastructures – designed to prevent and reduce urban precarity – contribute to the emergence of less explicit expressions thereof. In doing so, poverty tourism in European welfare state cities distinguishes itself from “traditional” poverty tourism contexts (i.e., favelas, barrios and townships of the Global South)²⁵, where highly visible/ized portrayals in areas of designated and clustered precarity – so-called ‘slums’ – are dominant. Likewise, the *touring* of images and sights of local urban precarity in these contexts is expected to take on different shape as well.

Additionally, the formats of poverty tourism differ: whereas touring in the Global South can also take place from behind the window of a car for presumed safety reasons (Selinger & Outtersen, 2010) – only the format of **guided walking tours** has so far consistently been observed in poverty tourism initiatives on the European continent. The latter implies a more sensorily-engaged and direct encounter with urban precarity. Moreover, these are without exception led by **guides who experience or have experienced urban precarity themselves**; which has not always been the case in “traditional” poverty tourism contexts (Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2019).²⁶

²³ Although a literature review by Dolezal and Gudka shows disagreement over the conceptualization of ‘homeless tours’ within the umbrella of ‘poverty tourism’ (2007), I argue that its shared focus on themes of urban precarity renders it as such.

²⁴ Noteworthy are two case studies, including ‘Unseen Tours’, a social enterprise that organizes guided walking tour on and by homeless people in London (UK) (Dolezal & Gudka, 2007), and ‘Route 99’, a collective of migrant women that organises walking tours based on their precarious integration experiences in Berlin-Neukölln (Burgold, 2014). Related, Butler, Curran and O’Gorman conducted an evaluation study of a pro-poor tourism initiative in Govan, a rundown neighbourhood of Glasgow (UK). After an extensive literature review with search terms ‘homeless tours’, ‘poverty tourism’, ‘slum tourism’ and ‘ghetto tourism’ via search engines of Limo (KU Leuven), the Royal Danish Library (University of Copenhagen) and u:search (University of Vienna), similar research in continental Europe has not been identified.

²⁵ This is not to say that there are no welfare states or other forms of social coverage in the Global South. However, most poverty tourism initiatives in the Global South that have been studied priorly and exist nowadays do not occur in matured welfare states.

²⁶ Besides from these *observed* differences, initiatives in European welfare state cities deliberately posit themselves against the label of ‘poverty tourism’ and the derogatory meanings and sociopolitical-ethical concerns that are attached thereto by subscribing to labels of ‘social tourism’, ‘reality tourism’, ‘responsible tourism’ and/or ‘ethical tourism’ instead (Dolezal & Gudka, 2007; Rolfes, 2010). Such symbolic marketing seems to respond to the presence of alternative conceptualizations of ‘authentic experience’ in the touring of urban precarity.

3. Conceptual framework: advancing existential authentication

Tourists' quest for existential authenticity does not necessarily result in mutual social recognition of and benefits for both tourists and local communities. This is especially the case in poverty tourism, where unequal positionalities under – in this case – existent welfare state regimes render 'the gaze' as an existential and intersubjective meeting point highly morally ambiguous, enabling the emergence of detrimental sociopolitical outcomes (Rickly(-Boyd), 2013; Rickly, 2023; Selinger & Outtersson, 2010). In response, I believe that **the concept of existential authentication must be advanced** to allow for the exploration of more socially sustainable and ethically-responsible encounters in tourist places and cities as a whole. This requires an in-depth engagement with **1) the experiential** (i.e., affective, sensorial and relational) **and 'place'-based features of guided walking tours** as sites for existential authentication, and processes of existential authentication seen through the lenses of **2) Paulo Freire's theory on 'humanization'** (Freire, 2017) and **3) Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition** (Honneth, 1995).

3.1 Guided walking tours: an experiential and 'place'-based account of existential authentication²⁷

Recently emergent poverty tourism initiatives in European welfare state cities are often formatted as guided walking tours, which implies a more affective, sensorial and relational – i.e., experiential – encounter with urban precarity in particular 'places' than those provided by "traditional" learning methods such as documentaries, lectures, and books. According to a revised version of pedagogue David A. Kolb's experiential learning cycle, experiential education departs from embedded and concrete experiences in particular places and times, followed by critically reflexive observations, context-specific abstractions, and applications to other settings towards the creation of a systemic body of knowledge or lived understanding of "the" world (Morris, 2020). Experiences are shaped in relation to our socially-inscribed bodies, the socio-material spaces in which our bodies are situated, and the internalized sociocultural normative frameworks or discourses for perception, interpretation and evaluation in which we have been brought up and socialized (Palmer, 2018).

Under earlier conceptualizations of guided walking tours in tourism studies, tour participants have mistakenly been dismissed as active agents in experiential learning; instead, they have been perceived as **'passive audiences'** that uncritically accept the narratives that are being presented on these tours. In combining insights from recent tourism studies, pedagogy, as well as mobile and sensory research, more and more scholars are starting to redefine guided walking tours as collaborative and creative experiential activities for personal and sociopolitical transformation (Hallin & Dobers, 2012; Nilsson & Zillinger, 2020; O'Neill et al., 2021; Zillinger, Jonasson, Adolfsson, 2012).

Understandings and expectations of 'authentic' places and local urban precarity according to 'the tourist gaze' are constantly being questioned and (re)constituted with and through all bodily senses (Larsen and Urry,

²⁷ This section is based on an essay that I developed within the framework of prof. dr. Henrik Reeh's course 'Urban Culture and Cultural Theory' at the University of Copenhagen in December 2024.

2011). The sensorial and mobile experience of walking opens up a different reading of the bodies, spaces and narratives that are temporarily inhabited (O'Neill et al., 2021). Herein, negative emotions (e.g., guilt, anger) can be both appalling and productive, fostering grounds for non-participation in poverty tours or subverting social dominant understandings of local urban precarity for purposes of politicization (Everingham & Motta, 2022). **Guides allow for structuring these fleeting impressions and associated affects into comprehensible frameworks** for perception, interpretation and evaluation potentially reimagining the meanings and sights of 'authentic' local urban precarity in its wake. Through the performance of narrative motives (e.g., suspension, climax, dramatization, and mystery) guides craft a coherent urban imaginary for its audiences to 'make sense' of the city that is being toured, and the urban precarity taking place therein. Although this representation cannot possibly hold all elements of local urban precarity into account – i.e., the conveyance of all personal lived accounts thereof is impossible –, it offers a simplification that allows for **an understanding of the complexities of local urban precarity**, emerging across different places and times (Hallin & Dobers, 2012).

In contrast to some poverty tourism initiatives in the Global South, led by local community outsiders, guiding in European welfare state cities entails the telling of personal stories by experiential experts. Such 'autotopographies' – i.e., walking performances that narrate and create identities of, in this case, formerly homeless, addicted, ... persons and reflexivity thereon – provide alternative and grounded discourses to touristified images and imaginaries of the places being toured; questioning the credibility or authenticity of, for instance, 'liveable' welfare state cities (Huss, 2022; *infra*). Through the collective act of 'sensuous dwelling' (Palmer, 2018), **tour participants renegotiate the guide's story, co-creating new frameworks for understanding and acting upon local urban precarity together** (Küpers & Wee, 2018). Herein, affective responses, place-based spontaneous occurrences (e.g., the sound of breaking glass; greetings from passerby) and particular horizons of meaning for perception, interpretation and evaluation – that are themselves the outcome of earlier experiences, affects and reflections thereon – run along (Hallin & Dobers, 2012).

In sum, although tourists' understandings of 'authenticity' are partly dependent on the tourist gaze, which is infused with global and local power dynamics of representation (Hallin & Dobers, 2012), guided walking tours as experiential modes of learning occurring in specific 'places' of bodies, spaces and internalized discourses ground processes of existential authentication, opening up opportunities for challenging pre-existent notions of local urban precarity towards personal *and* local social transformation (O'Neill et al., 2021; Rickly-Boyd, 2013). However, experiential and 'place'-based learning in itself does not necessarily provoke such transformations, when this is not consistently embedded in broader sociopolitical frameworks for learning. *Infra*, Paulo Freire's critical dialectic and dialogical pedagogy, and the establishment of 'humanization' in its wake, will allow for the emergence of a kind of existential authentication that serves alternative self-identification and mutual subjectification for local social change.

3.2 Paulo Freire's humanization: a sociopolitical account of existential authentication

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian educator and policymaker. In his most famous work, 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', Freire employs Hegelian, Marxist and anti-colonial theory to counter "traditional" modes of learning for revolutionary personal and societal transformation. Rather than having a teacher-instructor deposit absolute "truths" or "facts" into ignorant pupils as absorbent 'sponges' – i.e., 'the banking model of education' –, Freire proposed a new kind of learning that departs from and is steered by the experiential knowledge of students themselves under continuous encouragement of a teacher-facilitator. This '**problem-posing pedagogy**' engages with students' lived realities of oppression, relating them to broader systemic features (e.g., of modern capitalism, racism) that enabled these experiences to occur in the first place. Through a dialectic and dialogical process of **praxis** – i.e., simultaneously engaging with theory and action, practice and reflection – a critical consciousness or '**conscientização**' emerges. Current ways of being, knowing and doing are being questioned as 'admirable', challenging the underlying norms and values that render it as such (Freire, 2017).

Students do not only start to perceive the mechanisms and effects of oppressive social structures in everyday life, but they also reflect on their own entanglement therein: they come to understand their beliefs and knowledge of the world, as well as their self-conception and future aspirations to be socially shaped, installing certain ways of thinking and acting over others that hinder 'authentic' living and produce persistent inequalities. In that sense, privileged pupils are both oppressor and oppressed, being encapsulated in certain frameworks of significance and morals that run counter to their intrinsic human being. This realization incites negative feelings of guilt, unease and indignation. At the same time, a sense of empathy and solidarity emerges from the learned perception of a shared human existence under particular social operations (Freire, 2017).

Both positive and negative emotions are productive in evoking a self-recognition that emphasizes a person's agentic power in either maintaining *or* renegotiating social systems of inequality and oppression. When a sense of '**hope**' is installed for personal and local social change, insights obtained through the development of *conscientização* can be translated into concrete actions for alternative enactments of the social relationships that constitute our lived realities (Freire, 2014). In recognizing, acting upon and freeing oneself from systems of oppression, new understandings of the Self in relation to the – once – 'radically different Other/ed' are opened up, serving processes of '**humanization**': both formerly privileged and underprivileged actors acknowledge themselves to be equal human beings as the basis for truly 'authentic' (co-)living (Freire, 2017; McLaren & Jaramillo, 2011).

This is especially relevant for existential authentication in and through encounters in poverty tourism. Guides as precarious individuals have been rendered a 'radically different Other/ed' under oppressive social structures in, e.g., national education and labour systems, often having been dealt less favourable social and intergenerational chances for personal development and social mobility than others. In addition, socially

dominant individualized narratives of ‘success’ contribute to stigmatizing images and imaginaries of urban precarity, while concealing urban precarity as the inevitable ‘other side’ of affluence in modern capitalist urbanized societies (Laermans, De Cauter, & Vanhaesebrouck, 2018; Rosati, 2012). As a consequence, guides’ knowledge and experiences are often lacking from or socially delegitimized in socially dominant discourses on local urban precarity.

In the dialogical act of touring poverty, guides and more privileged tour participants (in terms of education, social and/or economic capital) bring in their own unique perspectives and trace systemic linkages between them to co-create a new body of knowledge on local urban precarity. In touring sights and images of local urban precarity and collaborative reflecting thereon, once supposedly ‘familiar’ and ‘clear’ understandings of local urban precarity are rendered ambiguous and questionable, opening up different relationalities to the Self and the local precarious populations implied in these tours. A shared human existence is uncovered, contributing to the establishment of a sense of empathy and solidarity between tour participants, guides, and those populations that the latter represent (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2011).

Notwithstanding the profound contributions of Freire’s work, it has been critiqued for being **too idealistic**, lacking clarity on the concrete forms and directions that humanization must take: the ‘authentically human existence’ towards which the process of humanization should be oriented remains undefined. Thereby, Freire allows for unethical interpretations thereof, such as those posited by ultraleft radicalism (e.g., totalitarianism and authoritarianism) or opportunism (e.g., legitimization of arbitrary violence and deception) (Schugurensky, 1998). To offer an **empirically grounded basis for humanization**, I hereby turn to critical theorist and sociologist Axel Honneth, and his Theory of Recognition.

3.3 Axel Honneth’s Recognition Theory: a social-ethical account of existential authentication

Axel Honneth (1949) is a German philosopher and sociologist, and third-generation Critical Theorist connected to the renowned *Frankfurter Schule*. Inspired by Marxism, Critical Theorists attempt to unveil the operations of social life through the study of human experience, relying on dialectic thinking and the concept of ‘false consciousness’ – i.e., the mental oblivion to social operations of exploitation, oppression and inequality and their psychological-existential effects, originating from the ideological, material and institutional concealment thereof. In contrast to so-called ‘armchair intellectuals’ at the turn of the 20th century, thinkers of the *Frankfurter Schule* pursue a more action-oriented sociology, in which they move beyond a ‘mere’ description of social reality but actively aid in diagnosing – and, sometimes, acting upon – the sociocultural processes that contribute to the emergence of observed social pathologies (Honneth, 1995).

According to Honneth, his precursors in the *Frankfurter Schule* – e.g., Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), and Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) – neglected to define **the ethical criteria of ‘the good life’**. Whereas Honneth’s mentor, Jürgen Habermas (1929), was able to do so through his theory of communicative rationality – stating that communication is the

basic tenant of social life, and those with the most 'rational' arguments are able to set the ethical conditions thereof – Habermas did not substantially engage with questions of power in defining what is to be deemed 'rational'. Building on German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Jena Writings (1805-1806), while grounding his theory in the empirical research of sociologist, philosopher and psychologist George Herbert Mead (as well as other sociopsychological, sociological and historical insights) – Honneth argues that the normative presupposition for communication is **social recognition**: the mutual expectation among hypothetical conversational partners to be deemed a moral and unique person that is worthy and deserving of love, rights and solidarity in each other's eyes (Honneth, 1995).

While drawing from Hegel's take on Hobbes' and Machiavelli's initial struggle for *self*-preservation as a **struggle for intersubjective recognition** instead, and including Mead's theory of 'me' versus 'I', Honneth states that we as humans are caught up in an endless dialectic and dialogical process of universalization and particularization, objectification and subjectification in the formation of the Self and our relation to the world. Whereas we can only know ourselves to be a unique individual as the object in another one's gaze – which compels us to conform to the norms and values of an internalized 'generalized other' (i.e., Mead's concept of 'me') –, we struggle for expressing our particularity, for going beyond and expanding existent norms and values as installed by this 'generalized other' (i.e., Mead's concept of 'I'). This is the continuous struggle for social recognition, propelling human history forward²⁸ (Honneth, 1995).

Social recognition is developed through relations of 1) **love**, 2) **rights** and 3) **solidarity**, that, in turn, allow for the emergence of a psychologically-existentially stable self-identity grounded in 1) **self-confidence**, 2) **self-respect** and 3) **self-esteem**. When one of these conditions – i.e., the intersubjective formation of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem – is not met, a person is left feeling **disrespected**. **1) Love** is created through the initial separation of an infant from their mother. Herein, an infant becomes to recognize themselves as a separate entity from their mother. When the mother showcases unconditional love for the child irrespective of their initial separation, this installs a sense of **self-confidence or -trust** in the child's own ability to effectively identify and act upon their personal needs and desires in the near and far future. **2) Universal rights** entail the provision and effective appeal on civil, political and social rights for each person. In exercising one's rights successfully, we humans can come to identify and **respect** ourselves as a being that is capable of autonomous, ethically-responsible decision-making. **3)** When a person's unique traits and abilities – including their personally meaningful life project – are valued as being derived from and simultaneously contributing to a shared human fate, a sense of **self-esteem** is installed. This is intersubjectively formed through acceptance within a particular sociocultural group, inciting feelings of

²⁸ e.g., the extension of civil rights to more layers of society from the 18th century onwards, and the simultaneous expansion and deepening of the concept of 'rights' when complementing 'civil' rights with 'political' and 'social' rights during the 19th and 20th century. The latter acknowledges that the provision of civil rights in itself is insufficient, when its uptake is prohibited under – e.g., precarious – conditions of indecent human living.

empathy and **solidarity** – i.e., an intense sense of ‘communitas’ (see supra Victor Turner’s ‘liminal space’) – in its wake.

Guides on poverty tours have often been denied social and other rights under precarious living conditions, and have been ignored in their suffering (e.g., walking past homeless persons). Nevertheless, they can overcome and mobilize feelings of shame and lack of self-respect and -esteem tied to earlier experiences of disrespect by engaging in the struggle for recognition in communion with tour participants. In their quest for existential authenticity, tour participants can publicly reaffirm the guide as a multifaceted and unique person that is worthy of respect, with whom they share a human essence or fate in the world. In doing so, *‘Sittlichkeit’*, or, a system of intersubjective relations based on love, respect and solidarity emerges as the basis for ethical life (Honneth, 1995). Tourists’ existential authentication in encountering ‘the other half’ of welfare state societies does not necessarily serve personal self-identification only – as implied by notions of ‘the gaze’ in authenticity-related research (supra) –, but can foster mutual humanization when recognizing both tour participants *and* guides as moral and unique persons that are worthy and deserving of love, rights and solidarity.

4. Problem statement and research questions

With the **search for more existentially authentic experiences**, poverty tourism as a way of meeting ‘the other half’ of modern urbanized societies **ceases to be a “niche” market** in the alternative tourism sector. In recent years, poverty tourism initiatives have increased in number worldwide, expanding its activities to new settings and formats (Freire-Medeiros, 2013; Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2018). At the same time, this quest for existential authenticity results in **sociopolitically-ethically ambiguous encounters** between tour participants, guides and the local communities that the latter represent, sometimes evoking voyeurism, exoticization and exploitation, then offering grounds for mutual social recognition, empathy and solidarity (Burroughs, 2014; Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2019). Given that poverty tourism is expected to be here to stay, it is all the more important to study experiences of existential authentication herein, and reflect on its potential sociopolitical-ethical implications.

Poverty tourism has recently reappeared in Europe, evoking different sights and images of urban precarity under particular **welfare regimes**, and implying alternative engagements therewith through the format of **guided walking tours led by experiential experts**. I believe that these changes in poverty tourism can influence how existential authenticity emerges, thereby potentially renegotiating a different ethical balance between voyeurism and humanization through mutual social recognition as demonstrated by the notion of ‘the gaze’ (supra). This is especially relevant when looking at the **detrimental sociopolitical effects of ‘authenticity’-seeking tourism** in general – i.e., exoticizing, commodifying or erasing local cultures, instigating intercultural conflicts, and imposing ethnocentric neocolonial and class-based norms on local populations (Butler, 2016; Salazar, 2017) –, which shape urban spaces and conjure more and more anti-tourism sentiments

in its wake. Poverty tourism as a recently-emergent, understudied phenomenon in Europe that implies highly morally ambiguous encounters under tourists' continued desire for 'authenticity', offers **sites for reimagining alternative tourism practices and relationalities** towards the becoming of more socially sustainable and ethically-responsible local tourism sectors and cities (Sheldon, 2020).

In this master's thesis, I will answer the following research questions related to existential authentication and its potential sociopolitical-ethical implications in European poverty tours (see infra table 1). Since European poverty tourism is a relatively new and understudied phenomenon in its current settings and formats, a general exploration of tour participant profiles, communicated goals, and tour experiences is at its place to allow for meaningful engagements with processes of existential (and implied constructivist) authentication occurring therein. A phenomenological study of existential authentication in poverty tourism in European welfare state capitals, conducted within the framework of five identified poverty tour initiatives in cities of Vienna (AT), The Hague (NL) and Copenhagen (DK) between March 2024 and June 2025, will answer these research questions.

Conceptual research questions	Empirical research questions
<i>Who</i> participates in poverty tourism in European welfare state cities, and <i>why</i> ?	1) What are the most frequently observed sociodemographic and sociopsychological profiles of participants in poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen? 1.1) What are the primary motivations expressed by different participant profile groups to partake in poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen?
What are the <i>intended goals</i> of poverty tourism in European welfare state cities, and how do they 'play out' <i>in practice</i> ?	2) What are the communicated ²⁹ goals of poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen? 2.1) How do communicated goals of poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen relate to broader social, educational and political functions of poverty tourism, as observed in the literature thereon ³⁰
What are <i>tour participants' experiences of poverty tourism</i> in European welfare state cities <i>in relation to 'the</i>	3) What are tour participants' affective responses to poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen, and how do they narrate these? 3.1) How do tour participants' experiences of poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen reinforce or question pre-

²⁹ i.e., both communicated in-person by guides and via spoken/written public output on, for instance, official websites and social media by poverty tours' organizations.

³⁰ See supra section 2.2: redistributing (financial) resources (i.e., 'pro-poor tourism'), combatting territorial stigmatization and stereotypes, and politicizing sights and images of local urban precarity for local social change.

<i>tourist gaze</i> on local urban precarity? (focus on constructivist authentication) ³¹	existent notions of 'authentic' sights and images of local urban precarity under socially dominant city imaginaries?
Which <i>experiential elements</i> contribute to the <i>intra- and interpersonal emergence of 'authentic' encounters</i> with local urban precarity within poverty tourism in European welfare state cities, and <i>how</i> are these encounters <i>negotiated for purposes of existential authentication</i> ? (focus on existential authentication)	4) On which intra- and interpersonal grounds do tour participants experience encounters with local urban precarity³² to be 'authentic' or 'staged' in poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen? 4.1) Which strategies do tour participants employ to psychologically-existentially cope with the disruptive force of feelings of ethical discomfort and internal turbulence that may arise from 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity in poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen?
What do 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity in poverty tourism in European welfare state cities <i>produce</i> ³³ , especially with regard to <i>mutual existential authentication for local social change</i> ?	5) What are the consequences of 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity in poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen for tour participants, guides and the local precarious communities that the latter represent? 5.1) How do 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity in poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen serve existentially authentic self-identification, reinforcing or questioning pre-existent views and beliefs about the Self? 5.2) How do tour participants relate their 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity in poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen to broader sociopolitical-ethical questions about inequality, urban precarity, and their own role in oppressive social orders?

³¹ Whereas this conceptual question mostly focuses on constructivist authentication – more precisely, the meanings that are attributed to local urban precarity and the cities being toured –, this will run along in experiences of 'authenticity' that serve existential authentication, and vice versa (see fourth conceptual question).

³² Local urban precarity is encountered in the sights and images being toured, as well as in the figure of the guide as a representative of local precarious populations.

³³ In processes of authentication, precursors (fourth research question; supra) and outcomes (fifth research question) are mutually constitutive. The distinction made between both is thus partly artificial for reasons of clarity. Some findings will be repeated with regard to both precursors and outcomes in a slightly different framing (infra).

	5.3) How do emotional responses evoked by ‘authentic’ encounters with local urban precarity in poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen (e.g., pity and compassion, admiration, sense of intimacy and togetherness) promote or impair potential transformative learning processes for personal development and local social change?
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Table 1. Conceptual and empirical research questions

Below, the phenomenological methodology and its mixed methods operationalization will be explained – including an outline of research quality indicators of Lincoln and Guba (2007), and entangled ethics (Stouten et al., 2025) –, before delving into findings for each conceptual research question separately. A final discussion and conclusion will frame these findings into theories and concepts of (existential) authentication – i.e. ‘liminal space’, ‘communitas’, ‘the gaze’, ‘humanization’ and ‘social recognition’ –, as established supra. With this research, I aim to contribute to a wider debate in tourism research on the direction of the concept of ‘existential authentication’ for more socially sustainable and ethically-responsible tourism developments and encounters with ‘difference’ in general – potentially reimagining urban and public space in its wake (Rickly, 2022).

5. Methodology and methods

5.1 Existential and hermeneutic phenomenology

A phenomenological research approach will enable insights into the phenomenon of existential authentication, as experienced in poverty tourism in European welfare state cities. Both an existential, and hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology will be adhere to, in order to explore the lived experience of existential authenticity (existential phenomenology) and the meanings that are given thereto (hermeneutic phenomenology). This requires an in-depth engagement with tour participants’ subjective reality during and after poverty tours, as well as knowledge of the wider cultural-historical frameworks in which they are embedded to make sense thereof.

Phenomenology is the study of phenomena (i.e., objects or processes) through the dissection of human experience. The term has been introduced by Hegel in his work on ‘*Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*’ (1807), but has been further developed by German-Austrian philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). In line with Cartesian thinking, phenomena occur in an outside world that only presents itself to human beings in their experiences thereof; thus, phenomena can only be knowable in and through human experience. Since human minds have ‘intentionality’ or ‘directiveness’ towards the world – i.e., the human mind possesses mental categories that reflect and allow for perceiving, interpreting and evaluating reality – valid knowledge on reality can be obtained; given that a process of ‘bracketing’ (i.e., becoming aware of and distancing oneself

from internalized sociocultural-moral assumptions) has occurred in advance. In doing so, a universal human essence or consciousness can be distinguished across various human experiences (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006).

Whereas Husserlian phenomenology is oriented towards the epistemological question of knowing (i.e., what is *knowledge*?), his student Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) took an ontological turn (i.e., what is the *world*?). In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger argued that the world is not predetermined and unambiguously knowable but continuously renegotiated in a relational and lived experience of 'being-in/of-the-world'. In other words, there is no 'outside' world, reflected in a presumed 'human essence' or 'consciousness', to be discovered. Sociocultural backgrounds cannot be controlled for or 'bracketed', but inevitably run along in our perceptions and interpretations of experience, and thus in our social creation of knowledge. Heidegger reinterpreted the understanding and operations of phenomenology; it is his theory and approach that will be adhered to in this master's thesis, more particularly drawing from his work '*Sein und Zeit*' (1923-1928) (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006).

For Heidegger, humans are '*Dasein*' ('Be-there'): we are always taking part *in* the world as beings *of* the world. This implies 'moods' or dispositions that are derived from the horizons of meaning in which we are embedded and socialized, allowing us to perceive, interpret and evaluate future experiences towards an understanding of "the" world. Instead of pursuing a 'human essence', multiple *experiences*, thus multiple mental and social *worlds*, can simultaneously co-exist. Herein, echoes from **hermeneutic phenomenology** can be heard, later developed by Heidegger's student, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), in his work '*Wahrheit und Methode*' (1960). Hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology draws heavily from hermeneutics, i.e., the initial interpretative study of bible texts (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006). In trying to understand the phenomenon of existential authentication in poverty tourism, a researcher interprets tour participants' narrations thereof against the backdrop of wider cultural-historical 'texts' or discourses on authenticity that enable an individual to *make sense* of their own experience as 'authentic' or 'inauthentic' (Hesters, 2022). In doing so, it is acknowledged that the concept of authenticity is malleable, and its different societal conceptualizations disclose or obstruct certain experiences thereof from actualizing, giving rise to distinct social processes and outcomes; summarized by the notion of 'the tourist gaze' (supra).

At the same time, Heidegger's *Dasein* is future-oriented, always reflecting and acting upon a future life trajectory or plan in the present. With the arrival of modern societies, all-encompassing mystical, magical and spiritual sociocultural-moral frameworks of 'the good life' or 'the ethical life' lost their meaning, rendering human beings *free* to shape their own meaningful life project (e.g., Friedrich Nietzsche's expression "*Gott ist tot*" in '*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*', 1882) (supra). However, this also implies an *obligation* to craft a meaningful life project ourselves within a world that is inherently devoid of any meaning and always in a state of being-toward-death. This realization evokes life-threatening angst or anxiety (expressed through hysteria, suicide, etc.). Some tend to avoid this by fleeing into the anonymous mass of 'Das Man' or 'They'; shaping their life trajectories in accordance with socially dominant norms and values. However, in doing so, a self-alienation has occurred that makes a truly authentic life impossible (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006). An exploration

of authentic human experience or Dasein thus also deals with existentialist themes of freedom, alienation, suffering, anxiety and death, calling for an **existential phenomenology** that engages with tour participants' lived and subjective experiences of 'authenticity' in poverty tourism, and how this impacts the formation of a sense of Self and questions of being-in/of-the-world for all actors involved.

5.2 Research setting and sampling

Primary fieldwork took place between April 2024 and October 2024, when five guided walking tour initiatives in Vienna (AT), The Hague (NL) and Copenhagen (DK) were visited and engaged with, either as a participant, participatory observer or interviewer. **Settings of Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen** were chosen, since these 'capital' cities – including The Hague as the unofficial political 'capital' of the Netherlands – are all embedded within **distinct national³⁴ and urban welfare regimes** that reduce instances of local urban precarity and render its expressions more implicit. Whereas in Vienna, poverty-reductive and -preventive services are mostly focused on increasing individual's employability and integration into the local labour market (Heitzmann & Matzinger, 2020), the current political right-wing environment in the Netherlands is expected to support further tendencies towards welfare chauvinism and populism as the limitation of welfare benefits and services to autochthonous citizens and 'common people' (de Koster, Achterberg, & van der Waal, 2021). Copenhagen's welfare regime is rather universal and extensive; as such, local urban precarity is less tied to socio-economic status than an indication of complex support needs (e.g., comorbidity of mental illnesses; addictions) (Benjaminsen, 2016).

Since the turn of this century, particular **imaginaries of 'liveable cities'** were formed in urban welfare regimes, playing a decisive role in tourist expectations of 'authentic' sights and images of local urban precarity. Vienna, Copenhagen and The Hague are – either internationally and/or nationally – renowned for being 'liveable cities'. Examples thereof are Vienna reportedly having 50% of its surface being green space, The Hague's international labour market, and Copenhagen's extensive bicycle infrastructure and waste-reduction programmes. The notion of 'liveability' is rather slippery, varying across different places and times³⁵ (Sharifi, 2016). Under the influence of Economic Intelligence Unit's (EIU, 2025) yearly Global Liveability Ranking³⁶ and associated city marketing, a depoliticized discourse of '(urban) liveability' as 'quality of (urban) life' has been created, circulated and installed; disconnecting the cultural-historical concept of 'liveability' from its prior

- ³⁴ Vienna: conservative welfare regime;

- The Hague: conservative-liberal welfare regime;

- Copenhagen: social democratic welfare regime (Cantillon, Seeleib-Kaiser, & van der Veen, 2021; Esping-Andersen, 1989).

³⁵ e.g., in Vienna, 'liveability' carries various culturally-historically meanings, related to garden movements of the early 20th century, informal settlements after both World Wars, the 'Red Vienna'-era during the interbellum, Friedrich Hundertwasser's environmentalist conception of 'liveability', EIU's framing of 'liveability', and so on. These frameworks of significance differ from 'liveability', as culturally-historically understood in The Hague and Copenhagen.

³⁶ Cities are ranked according to themes of stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure (EIU, 2025). This echoes traditional pillars of welfare states, as firstly identified by social economist William Beveridge in his report in 1952, such as social security and pensions, healthcare, education, and housing.

guarantee of a decent standard of human living *for all* under existent welfare regimes. By portraying *every* urban inhabitant as having a high quality of life under universal urban infrastructures and services (e.g., quality schooling, efficient public transport), these imaginaries uncritically suggest that instances of local urban precarity are limited, and that those few cases do not represent ‘severe’ poverty – which socially delegitimizes and misrecognizes certain lived realities of local urban precarity (Weiss, 2019).

This becomes an especially pressing issue under **recent restructurings of welfare regimes**. In the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and continued wars and conflict worldwide, current austerity politics – combined with tendencies towards welfare chauvinism and populism – have reoriented welfare societies into workfare societies: state-provided care is no longer unconditionally universal, but has become dependent on someone’s ability to perform paid labour, as well as their nationality and citizenship status. These welfare state restructurings are mostly being absorbed and accommodated on the local level, which is expected to contribute to an increase in explicit sights and images of local urban precarity (Gillepsie, Hardy & Watt, 2021; Katz, 1993). The discrepancy between expected sights and images of local urban precarity under contemporary depoliticizing ‘liveable’ city imaginaries and the actual expressions of local urban precarity under recent welfare state restructurings could offer interesting avenues for existential authentication in poverty tourism as the encounter with local urban precarity.

Since poverty tourism in European welfare state cities is a relatively recent phenomenon, **a purposive sampling of all legally identified poverty tourism initiatives** in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen was conducted by running online searches with key terms related to homelessness, housing insecurity and inadequacy, addiction, squalor and street violence, and forced displacement (e.g., refuge), in combination with ‘tourism’ or ‘tours’, in German, Dutch, Danish and English. This resulted in five identified poverty tourism initiatives: *Wiener Nimmerland* and SHADES TOURS in Vienna, *Ronja’s straatwandeling* in The Hague, and Ghetto Tours and *Gadens Stemmer* in Copenhagen. All tours deal with issues of homelessness (i.e., *Wiener Nimmerland*, SHADES TOURS, *Ronja’s straatwandeling* and *Gadens Stemmer*) – whether or not intersected by challenges of addiction (i.e., *Wiener Nimmerland*, SHADES TOURS and *Gadens Stemmer*) –, or the more general challenge of housing insecurity under state-led ‘ghettoization’ (i.e., Ghetto Tours). More information on the tours themselves and their trajectories, as well as their framing within local urban tourism imaginaries can be found in the annex (infra).

5.3 Methods of data collection and analysis

In understanding existential authentication in poverty tourism, and reflecting on its potential sociopolitical-ethical implications, I draw from my own experiences of poverty tourism, as well as observations made therein, and interviews conducted with guides and other tour participants. Guides are particularly relevant for having a long-term view on tour participants’ reactions, and giving insight into potential sociopolitical-

ethical implications of tourists' quest for existential authenticity. I employ a mixed methods approach of: 1) a **social constructivist discourse analysis** of **online content** (i.e., tour reviews), **interviews and focus group discussions** with guides and tour participants, 2) **participatory observations** and **autoethnographies** conducted during touring, and 3) a **reflexive analysis** of my personal **research diary**.

1) According to linguistic philosophy, experiences of existential authenticity are situated in and collaboratively renegotiated through everyday speech acts and discourses, which themselves are reflections of broader social structures and ideologies embedded in power dynamics. This implies investigating how the concept of 'authenticity' is rendered meaningful in societal discourses, as well as how these discourses affect people's lived realities thereof. A **social constructivist discourse analysis** of interviews, focus group discussions and online content serves the latter. By discovering 'interpretive repertoires'³⁷ related to the concept of 'authenticity' in research participants' accounts, I was able to trace connections between the individual 'texts' and wider societal discourses. Herein, I looked at how 'authenticity' is socially constructed, in which contexts, and with which particular material-discursive outcomes.

Through verbally communicated invites for research participation during touring, as well as open calls and personal messages sent via email and WhatsApp afterwards, I was able to obtain eighteen **interviewees** who had experiences with one or two of the identified poverty tourism initiatives. Over the course of June 2024 until April 2025, I interviewed thirteen tour participants of *Wiener Nimmerland*³⁸ – of which six³⁹ in a focus group discussion context –, the guide⁴⁰ of *Ronja's straatwandeling*, two tour participants⁴¹ of *Ronja's straatwandeling*, three guides of Ghetto Tours – including an official interview one-on-one⁴² after partaking in their tour –, four tour participants⁴³ of Ghetto Tours, and one guide⁴⁴ of *Gadens Stemmer*. Moreover, I conducted informal talks with tour participants during my participatory tour observations at *Wiener Nimmerland*. Interviews and focus group discussions were either occurring online via MS Teams or at a place of the participant's choosing, with the exception of one interview (i.e., Lilian's) via mobile telephone. Audio recordings were transcribed⁴⁵ via OTranscribe and analysed via NVivo.

³⁷ Interpretive repertoires are routinized patterns of argumentation, description, explanation and evaluation, found through the study of particular word combinations, frequency, positioning and use, that construct meaningful views of the world and the Self for purposes of self-identification and social interaction (Hesters, 2022).

³⁸ i.e., Lilian, Güntner, Adriana, José Bucio, Madeline, Rozalia Sos, Shellyn Fortuna, Soledad, Nikita, Patricia, Koen, Bert and Emilienne (see infra interviews in annex).

³⁹ Adriana, José Bucio, Madeline, Rozalia Sos, Shellyn Fortuna and Soledad (see infra focus group discussion in annex).

⁴⁰ Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak (see infra interview in annex).

⁴¹ Patricia and Koen (see infra interview in annex).

⁴² Guide F (see infra interview in annex).

⁴³ José Bucio, Madeline, Shellyn Fortuna and Soledad (see infra focus group discussion in annex).

⁴⁴ Julie (see infra interview in annex).

⁴⁵ Transcripts of all interviews and one focus group discussion, and notes from informal talks during participatory tour observations can be found in the annex (infra). Not all interviews and talks have been audio recorded to prioritise building rapport and gaining trust, especially when establishing first contact. All audio recorded material is acquired with proof of informed consent (see annex).

In addition, **online reviews** of all identified poverty tourism initiatives have been consulted in May 2025, accessed on the initiatives' websites and social media (i.e., Bruijns-Shoblak, n.d.; (Facebook) Gadens Stemmer, n.d.; Ghetto tours, n.d.; SHADES TOURS, n.d.; Wiener Nimmerland, n.d.), and commonly-used online review platforms of Google Reviews (Google Maps, n.d.), Tripadvisor (n.d.) and Trustpilot (n.d.). After preliminary anonymized analysis, reviews showcased similar findings to those derived from interviews and informal talks.

2) Participatory tour observations allowed me to observe how tour participants' facial expressions, bodily movements and exclamations interacted with the guide's, the narrative on urban precarity being told and their spontaneous place-based surroundings, giving me tentative insights into how knowledge on local precarity was being received, contested and co-created through the collective act of its touring. Moreover, the setting enabled informal talks with tour participants, inviting them for an official follow-up interview afterwards. Participatory observations have only been conducted in *Wiener Nimmerland*-tours. After all, I have only been able to establish sufficient rapport with the guide and operator of this initiative (i.e., Martin and Nadine) to guarantee informed consent of those who are being observed (see infra research limitations). In addition, my own **autoethnographies** while touring – written down extensively in the case of SHADES TOURS and *Gadens Stemmer* (see annex) – provide accounts of my lived experiences of poverty tourism.⁴⁶

3) I kept a **research diary** of my personal engagements with local urban precarity – as encountered on poverty tours, as well as in the figure of a beggar, publicly intoxicated or homeless person in my everyday life. After all, both 'feed' into each other, restructuring my mental frameworks for understanding local urban precarity, as well as my affective and agentic reactions in relation thereto. The research diary spans from June 2022 until May 2025 and does not necessarily narrate experiences in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen only. Over this course, the diary has continuously been subjected to **reflexive analysis** (see annex). Whereas reflection refers to the action of looking back on and evaluating past poverty tours in terms of their impact, reflexivity takes this a step further by reflecting on the own positionality and associated assumptions and biases that shape our engagements with(in) poverty tourism. In distinguishing between the immediate observation of an encounter versus the feelings and thoughts that this encounter evoked in me at the moment of happening or later on, I was able to recognize and dissect my embeddedness in sociocultural-moral and institutional 'places' – whether this was my body, the spaces that I (temporarily) inhabited, or the social environments wherein I was primarily, secondarily and tertiarily socialized – and the norms and values that these imply in shaping my assumptions, thoughts and reactions (Alvesson, Hardy, & Harley, 2008). The reflexive analysis of my research diary provided additional insight into my lived experiences of existential

⁴⁶ Notes of participatory tour observations and autoethnographies can be found in the annex (infra).

authenticity when encountered in the gaze of ‘the other half’ of European welfare state cities, and how this changed after partaking in poverty tourism.

5.4. Research quality indicators of Lincoln and Guba (2007)

To enable research quality, I adhered to Lincoln and Guba’s quality indicators for qualitative research, allowing me to flexibly adapt decisions and directions taken during research design and conduct (2007). Indicators include: 1) **credibility**, 2) **transferability**, 3) **dependability**, 4) **confirmability**, and 5) **research authenticity** (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). An **entangled ethics** (Stouten et al., 2025) allows for meaningful engagements with these indicators, in particular concerning the confirmability and authenticity of research findings. Entangled ethics is an ethical approach inspired by Karen Barad’s feminist new materialism that acknowledges the collaborative renegotiation of ethical risks and opportunities during research design and conduct. It is grounded in principles of a) relationality, b) response-ability and c) situatedness. Whereas relationality acknowledges that research findings are not created by a single researcher, but emerge from continuous engagements with other agents – including more-than-human actors⁴⁷ –, response-ability supposes a sensitivity for noticing and responding effectively to the ethical risks and opportunities that emerge during fieldwork⁴⁸. Situatedness confirms that my research participants and I are embedded in particular ‘places’ that structure our experiences, understandings and enactments of “the” world, including ideas of ‘authenticity’, ‘local urban precarity’, ‘Vienna’, ‘The Hague’, ‘Copenhagen’⁴⁹ (Stouten et al. 2025).

1) Credibility refers to the trustworthiness or internal validity of research findings as emerging from the identified mechanisms and no others (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). I aspire to hold various possible factors in existential authentication and its potential sociopolitical-ethical implications into account by a) entertaining prolonged engagements with guides (either in-person or online), b) having multiple peer debriefings with fellow classmates and teachers during in-person thesis seminars in July 2024, November 2024 and April 2025, c) conducting a negative case analysis with two participants who did not engage with poverty tourism on their own accord⁵⁰, d) triangulating different kinds of data (e.g., autoethnographies, participatory observations, interviews), and e) conducting a member-checking of preliminary research findings in June 2025 with those guides and tour participants who wish to engage herein⁵¹.

⁴⁷ e.g., the sound of breaking glass or a pigeon flying by (see infra analysis and results).

⁴⁸ e.g., I sensed that my university-trained manner of speaking and writing distanced myself socially-emotively from guides, thereby prohibiting attempts at building rapport and trust (see infra research limitations). This realization encouraged alternative ways of communicating, enacting research relations differently.

⁴⁹ e.g., I did not hold ‘race’ – especially Islam as a racialized feature – into account as a white majority person and foreigner when reflecting on my own experiences with local urban precarity in Denmark, while this was very important for Ghetto Tours’ guides, being part of an ethnic-racial Muslim minority in Denmark.

⁵⁰ i.e., family members Bert and Emilienne were invited by me to partake in a *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour without providing any knowledge on the tour in advance. They expressed criticality vis-à-vis the idea of poverty tourism, and the images and sights of local urban precarity being toured (see infra analysis and results).

⁵¹ Member-checking is scheduled after submission of this master’s thesis manuscript but before its defence at the beginning of July 2025 due to time constraints. I hope to incorporate potential insights gained from member-checking into the defence. Moreover, member-checking allows for simultaneous dissemination of research findings.

2) Transferability explores the extent to which research findings are applicable to wider research contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 2007) – in this case, related to European welfare state cities other than Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen. A thick description of the research process (see annex) provides insight into the local urban contexts and their particular elements in shaping research findings, and enables research replication in other settings; which brings me to the quality indicator of dependability.

3) Dependability showcases the consistency or reliability of research findings across different contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). This requires a consistent use of frameworks and methodologies. The continuous supervision of this research process by prof. dr. Henrik – either by email or via in-person conversations – kept me ‘on track’ and redirected the research process when needed.

4) Confirmability pursues a certain degree of objectivity or neutrality of research findings, being aware of and responding to potential research biases (e.g., researcher bias and social desirability in interviews) (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). This has been pursued through a continuous self-reflexivity, which is grounded in an entangled ethics (Stouten et al., 2025).

5) Entangled ethics – in combination with member checking – is useful for pursuing **research authenticity**, which refers to the extent to which research findings are representative of research participants’ life worlds (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). Since one person’s experience and consciousness can never fully be grasped by another – existing as their own being, looking in on another from an outside perspective –; research authenticity remains difficult to achieve (Dreyfuss & Wrathall, 2006). As the concept of ‘the gaze’ showcased (supra), challenges in establishing research authenticity are reflective of wider ambiguities in existential authentication. Continuous dialogue with those who are involved in the co-creation of existential authentication in poverty tourism enables me to aspire research authenticity as closely as possible. Below, research findings are presented in accordance with priorly identified conceptual research questions.

6. Analysis and results

6.1 Who participates in poverty tourism in European welfare state cities, and why?

The five identified poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen showcase a great diversity in both sociodemographic and sociopsychological participant profiles, and personal motivations for participation. Five participant profiles are distinguished that, at times, partly overlap: 1) **youth**, 2) **policymakers**, 3) **local residents**, 4) those who are identified as ‘**socially engaged and educated**’ – including professionals and practitioners in the social, educational or health sector –, and, lastly, 5) those who are perceived as the latter’s opposite; being deemed **unreceptive** to the stories and perspectives shared in poverty tourism.

1) Youth, mostly aged between 11 and 16 years old, partake in poverty tours as part of an educational excursion⁵². Children are either pupils at a local school, or they visit the city within the framework of an ‘external’ school trip or multi-day voyage. Accompanied by their teachers, tours serve, on the one hand, prevention (e.g., educating children on the dangers of drugs and alcohol usage), on the other hand, raising awareness and building empathy towards societal ‘difference’ (e.g., homeless persons, ethnic-cultural Muslim minorities). Although their participation is often framed within mandatory school activities, often, a curiosity for the sights and images of local urban precarity, and the person of the guide is observed. This is especially the case when an (elder) family member is already professionally or voluntarily engaged with precarious people (see informal talks during participatory tour observations of *Wiener Nimmerland*⁵³).

However, children’s curiosity can be disproportionately oriented towards the ‘morbid’ aspects of local urban precarity, at times asking original but inappropriate questions to the guides, which requires the latter to redirect the conversation and adapt their overall story to avoid self-sensationalization and -spectacularization, as exemplified in the infra excerpt. In the case of school groups, guides focus on prevention and general information on, e.g., homelessness and drugs usage, rather than narrating personal experiences of trauma and severe urban precarity.

When walking from one station to the next with a group of local schoolchildren, I asked Martin – the guide of Wiener Nimmerland – if he ever adapts his story to different audiences. He responded to me that he “[...] would never tell kids that you won’t get off the streets without getting raped”, rather leaving all “juicy details” out. He concluded that adults, in contrast, need to be confronted with those details. The realization of what he had actually said rendered me momentarily speechless, enabling a silence to set in. At that moment, a child – who had apparently been eavesdropping on us – chipped in, asking Martin what “juicy” means. Martin immediately ‘switched gears’, turning around with a big smile and praising the child for his good English command, before continuing his tour at the next station.

Source: modified excerpt from participatory Wiener Nimmerland-tour observations on 07/06/2024.

2) Policymakers, such as politicians, governmental ministries and local governments, as well as indirect policymakers (e.g., judges), have been observed and reported as participants in poverty tours⁵⁴. The tours,

⁵² Besides from tours, guides also offer presentation and discussion moments on location, e.g., in classrooms. However, this implies a different experiential engagement with urban precarity than those offered by guided walking tours. Since presentation and discussion moments cannot be equated to poverty tours, the former is *not* considered in this analysis. A comparison of both ways of learning could serve future research (infra).

⁵³ e.g., a girl narrated how her elder sister – who studied Cultural Studies – imparted a great tolerance and concern for precarious people to her. I sensed that the girl in question had great respect and admiration for her sister, which partly reflected on her personal aspirations. Another girl explained how she had already extensively engaged with homeless persons, since her father manages a social restaurants where homeless persons and students meet (see annex).

⁵⁴ See participatory observations of a *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour with judges, interview with guide Ronja of *Ronja’s straatwandeling*, interview with guide F of Ghetto Tours (infra in annex).

set within the political ‘capitals’ of their respective countries, attract both local policymakers and those active in national institutions and other localities. Although policymakers are professionally involved in reducing or preventing local urban precarity as designers and implementers of laws and procedures, they are often never confronted with how these ‘play out’ in various operationalizations. In embarking on poverty tours as part of an educational team outing, public outreach or public service event, policymakers gain insight on how their laws actually function in various contexts, and how they are experienced by local precarious populations themselves; allowing for a reassessment of existing legal frameworks and measures. At the same time, policymakers built rapport with those affected and representative of local urban precarity, showcasing that they are engaged with the latter’s fate.

In order to learn more about local urban precarity, a certain pre-existing ‘open mentality’ is required. Both tour guides and some participants express the need for a certain willingness to listen and be receptive of the stories being told. However, when tour participants’ have different understandings of local urban precarity – including notions of its precursors and consequences – than those presented by the guide, verbal clashes tend to ensue, at times resulting in disrespectful questions and behaviour towards the guide. Especially policymakers – and other individuals – who adhere to a culturally conservative, populist ideology, often do not share the guide’s perspective on local urban precarity, as exemplified by an unpleasant experience of guide F of Ghetto Tours when welcoming a group of politicians.

“Our goal, at every tour we have, is to change people’s very strong opinions on us brown people in general. We have had some politicians come on our tour. The main reason is to instigate us. They didn’t want to have a fight, but a verbal fight with us. They were annoying us and saying some mean things. But we took it professionally and showed them that we can do it our way also. But this politician had his meaning: ‘Oh, so every hijabi (red., hijab-wearing person) can’t go to school or is oppressed by her family because she is a woman and she can’t show anything?’ Then some of the girls (red., hijab-wearing guides) answered “Well, do you need to see my hair? Do you need to see anything?”

Source: quote by guide F of Ghetto Tours from interview conducted on 12/11/2024

3) Local residents are a unique participant profile in comparison to “traditional’ poverty tourism in favelas, barrios and townships of the Global South, where they are mostly absent. In going on poverty tours, local residents rediscover their own ‘home’, looking at – once – familiar places through a new pair of glasses. They become acquainted with the precursors and instigators of well-known sights and images of local urban precarity (e.g., begging, squalor, public intoxication), and they start to meaningfully identify cultural practices of local precarious populations in urban spaces that were previously ‘hidden in plain sight’.

Often, local residents' curiosity is sparked by earlier physical encounters with poverty tours, running into the tour group when going about their daily life⁵⁵. In contrast to most participant profiles, who are in some way attracted by the topic of local urban precarity, local residents are initially encouraged by the sights and images of something 'unusual' or 'unfamiliar' happening in their everyday places. Although local residents are familiar with sights and images of guided walking tours – especially in highly touristified places of the inner city – the appearance of the guides (e.g., bright red or green hair; *Wiener Nimmerland*) and the places being toured (e.g., the inside of a metro station; *Wiener Nimmerland*) do not necessarily respond to such expectations. As a consequence, poverty tours are not often identified as 'touristic' activities by local residents.

4) Some participants already share a similar worldview as those presented by guides: these are deemed to be '**socially engaged and educated**', either implicitly by themselves, or by guides and other tour participants. In other words, they have an 'open mentality' (supra) to the perspectives offered on poverty tours due to a prior recognition of local urban precarity as a complex social problem. This participant profile either refers to individuals, or professionals and practitioners involved with precarious populations in the social, educational or health care sector (e.g., academics, social and youth workers, psychologists, nurses and doctors)⁵⁶.

However, this shared 'open mentality' presupposes a socialization into a cultural middle-class culture and education on critical paradigms on local urban precarity, thus challenging the 'open' character thereof (Michael, 2013). In practice, a class-based culture of 'tolerance' or 'progressiveness' that itself is not up for debate can be highly exclusionary and dismissive to, for instance, tour participants that openly question the legitimacy of guides' personal accounts (infra).

5) The latter is often perceived as "**those with fixed opinions and views**" (see interview with guide F of Ghetto Tours on 12/11/2024) by tour guides and other participants. This participant profile is regarded as entering poverty tours with 'the wrong' understandings of local urban precarity, and the unwillingness to reconsider these. They fit and adapt new images and sights of local urban precarity, as presented on poverty tours, into their own pre-existing frameworks for perceiving, interpreting and evaluating, thereby rendering their opinions and views thereon rather 'fixed'. Their sole purpose for tour participation is – supposedly – to reaffirm their own views and beliefs on local urban precarity, and, therethrough, reestablish a sense of moral

⁵⁵ e.g., during participatory observations of a *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour at Karlsplatz metro station – while wearing *Wiener Nimmerland*-merchandise – a passerby came up to me, asking me what the tour was about. Similar to other local residents who I had already spoken to during prior participatory tour observations, the man in question explained to me how he had already seen the tour group numerous times while going to and from his work, wondering what it entailed. At the end of our conversation, he took a picture of the *Wiener Nimmerland*-logo and website link on my T-shirt, and went on his way.

⁵⁶ e.g., tour participants Lilian and her niece, a retired Viennese doctor and respectively a student engaged in psychology and social work (*Wiener Nimmerland*). Tour participants José Bucio and Madeline (and myself), who are urban studies-students researching themes of homelessness and housing insecurity (*Wiener Nimmerland*). The couple of psychiatric health care workers who were also present at *Ronja's straatwandeling* when I participated therein.

and symbolic superiority vis-à-vis the guides and the local precarious populations that these represent (see interview with guide F of Ghetto Tours on 12/11/2024).

However, this reflects *guides' and other tour participants'* views and beliefs on less amenable tour participants; it does not necessarily refer to their own self-understanding and motivations for participation. There can be numerous motivations for tour participation beyond 'egoistic' self-affirmation, and the extent to which tour participants' think differently after their engagements in poverty tourism cannot be gauged by guides and other tour participants. Visible contestation can co-exist with the (emergent) presence of shared views and beliefs on local urban precarity, but these mental inner processes are often obscured to the outside world. For example, I had invited two family members (i.e., Bert and Emilienne) to participate in a *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour without them having any prior knowledge on, or interest in poverty tourism. Motivated by the opportunity to engage in a family activity, they participated nevertheless. Their body language (e.g., standing at a far end away from the tour group, beyond hearing distance) and speech (e.g., "I can already see from a distance what he – the guide – is like.") expressed adversity vis-à-vis the idea of poverty tourism and the person of the guide. However, informal talks and an interview afterwards (see annex) unveiled that their initial adversity had somewhat wavered since then, and offered explanations for their initial adversity (e.g., language barrier, as well as coming from a misrecognized positionality of growing up in precarious conditions themselves).

In sum, five participant profiles for poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen have been distinguished, which, at times, partly overlap. In comparison to "traditional" poverty tourism contexts, a more varied audience of – among others – locals and schoolchildren, are attracted. This can be linked to the explicit focus on preventive education, as well as its setting in unexpected places of affluence; showcasing urban phenomena that, in theory⁵⁷, can happen to everyone. Tour participants are **motivated by various reasons**, wanting to learn more about 'an unknown reality' (e.g., youth) or a theme they have always been quite invested in (e.g., 'socially engaged and educated'), chasing sensation and spectacle (e.g., youth) or being excited by something 'new' or 'unfamiliar' happening in everyday places (e.g., local residents), being attracted by the social setting of a group activity (e.g., "those with 'fixed' opinions and views", classmates in urban studies) or the access that is offered to a group which is usually out-of-reach (e.g., policymakers). Thus, authenticity-seeking tourism is **not primarily oriented towards 'egoistic' self-affirmation** – as stated by some authors on poverty tourism and related sorts (e.g., backpacker travel in Michael, 2013). Although poverty tours also serve purposes of self-identification, it does not necessarily result in *affirmative* self-identification – as infra findings will show –, nor is self-identification the sole motivation for participation (e.g., prior interest in local urban precarity, curiosity, social group context; supra).

⁵⁷ Notwithstanding socially unequally distributed chances to become precarious and, likewise, get out of precarious situations.

6.2 What are the intended goals of poverty tourism in European welfare state cities, and how do they ‘play out’ in practice?

Poverty tours in European welfare state cities aim to educate, both in a preventive and sociopolitical manner. **Prevention** is mostly focused on schoolchildren and other youth in non-institutional framings, employing guides’ own personal stories and experiences to discourage youth from “ending up in the same situations as I did” (see interview with guide Julie of *Gadens Stemmer* on 24/03/2025) – especially when tied to drugs and alcohol usage. This type of learning is unique to poverty tourism in European welfare state cities. In contrast to “traditional” poverty tourism in slums of the Global South, tourists – who are often affluent visitors from the Global North – do not expect to end up in similar situations of clustered and highly visible/ized instances of severe urban precarity. However, in welfare state contexts, tour participants can recognize urban precarity as a phenomenon that, in theory, can happen to everyone, including themselves; slipping through the cracks of social safety nets.

Sociopolitical learning as a type of critical pedagogy aims to reimagine local urban precarity as a sociopolitical process of (re)production in cities, highlighting local urban precarity as a systemic and complex social problem of more than individual responsibility only. Four goals of sociopolitical learning have been identified, namely 1) **combatting stereotypes**, 2) **raising awareness**, 3) **instigating action** and 4) **“taking back space”**.

1) In showcasing unexpected sights and images of local urban precarity through more nuanced and lived personal accounts thereof, guides **counter stereotypes** of local urban precarity – challenging individualizing and victim-blaming discourses in its wake. In doing so, guides attempt to undo stigmas that are tied to visible expressions and personal experiences of local urban precarity, recognizing themselves as equal to non-precarious persons.

2) When countering stereotypes of local urban precarity, the broader urban imaginaries wherein these are encapsulated (e.g., ‘liveable’ city) become renegotiable, **raising awareness** on the potential expressions of urban precarity in local urban and public spaces, and how urban precarity is experienced and rendered possible therein. The role of participants’ own actions in maintaining or reimagining local expressions of urban precarity is acknowledged as well.

3) When inciting reflexivity on the own agentic power⁵⁸ and installing a sense of hope for change, this **instigates actions** for local social change. Relations between affluent and precarious individuals become differently enacted, potentially contributing to alternative sedimentations thereof when inhabiting the same local urban and public spaces⁵⁹.

⁵⁸ e.g., by reflecting collaboratively on professionals’ and practitioners’ own practices and tools for reducing and preventing instances of precarity (*Ronja’s straatwandeling*).

⁵⁹ e.g., Nikita – a tour participant of *Wiener Nimmerland* – narrated how, after partaking in the tour, she tried to think and behave differently when encountering a group of drunk men in Praterstern, Vienna. Instead of showcasing fear and distrust – assuming the worst of intentions – she was able to co-exist with the men, perceiving them as ‘merely having fun’ instead (see interview in annex).

4) As a consequence, precarious individuals are able to “**take back space**” (see interview with guide Ronja of *Ronja’s straatwandeling* on 30/08/2024) in the city, challenging current models for urban (co-)living – more precisely, their underlying norms and values of what ‘a good (urban) life’ should be. Moreover, they reclaim their voice in the public debate on local urban precarity, sharing their perspectives on how it should be understood and dealt with in dialogue with non-experiential experts (e.g., scientists, social workers) and lay persons. At the same time, this also raises issues of representation, essentialization and belonging (infra), since one lived account of local urban precarity cannot be generalized to other personal experiences thereof (Vietti, 2022).

It must be noted that preventive and sociopolitical education entail **different** – and, at times, contradictory – **learning goals** that cannot be easily reconciled. Notwithstanding *communicated* goals, often **one of both is emphasized in practice**, depending on the audience (e.g., school groups) and the initial design of the tour and its storytelling. While preventive learning informs, e.g., youth on the dangers of alcohol and drugs usage, sociopolitical learning questions the social legitimacy of priorly-established knowledge on local urban precarity. For instance, while SHADES TOURS-tour on ‘Poverty & Homelessness’ stated the official number of homeless persons in Vienna, *Wiener Nimmerland*-tours challenge the credibility of this number – noting that only those who reside in a shelter are considered in official statistics.

Whether or not a poverty tour is mostly preventive or sociopolitical in nature is merely a matter of different priorities, but should not entail any value judgement. Nevertheless, different types of learning will have different outcomes for existential authentication as a potential tool for personal and local social transformation – as explored in this research. Sociopolitical education seems to be best-fitted for the latter, unveiling and challenging oppressive social orders. At the same time, preventive learning can also offer sites for contestation, for example, when participants ask critical questions, contradict guides, or showcase disbelief and disinterest, thereby delegitimizing the guides’ knowledge authority and the credibility of ‘the knowledge’ presented.

Moreover, **the embedment of poverty tours in local tourism industries** may hamper learning, especially sociopolitical learning which requires the incitement of negative affects among tour participants (infra). Although most poverty tour initiatives are social enterprises or self-employed persons, whose primary goal is *not* making profit, a certain degree of financial viability is required for ensuring their continued existence. In order to attract potential clients, poverty tours have to be **entertaining** besides from being educational. When encountering local urban precarity, especially the development of negative feelings of, e.g., guilt and unease among tour participants is avoided (Ruebottom, Buchanan, Voronov, & Toubiana, 2022) – albeit this could instigate reflexivity on current ways of being, knowing and doing for sociopolitical learning (Everingham & Motta, 2022). This is done, for example, by presenting ‘a happy ending’ to the guide’s story, who is now ‘in a better place’, both professionally and personally, and by downplaying experiences of trauma and severe urban precarity through humorous narrations thereof.

In a similar vein, information on the manners in which revenues through ticket sales are serving guides and the local precarious populations that they represent is often lacking, raising **questions on the communicated ‘pro-poor’ character** of some initiatives. For instance, insights from informal talks with guides of SHADES TOURS⁶⁰ seem to suggest that their income is uncertain, being dependent on the numbers of tours that they guide – including the number of tours that are ordered in, e.g., summers versus winter season – and the amount of monetary tips received on each tour. In contrast, *Gadens Stemmer* – i.e., the other non-profit social enterprise in my sample – ensures that all their guides have a fixed wage above the Danish minimum income (see interview with guide Julie of Gadens Stemmer on 24/03/2025).

6.3 What are tour participants’ experiences of poverty tourism in European welfare state cities in relation to ‘the tourist gaze’ on local urban precarity?

Poverty tours in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen are experienced in various manners, as observed in my own accounts as a tour participant, interviews with other tour participants, and online reviews of poverty tours. Most deemed the experience **‘confronting’**. Some tour participants considered guides’ narrations of their own personal experiences of local urban precarity **‘dramatic’ or ‘extreme’**, which at times installed a sense of **‘unrealism’**⁶¹. Other tour participants, such as Bert and Emilienne at *Wiener Nimmerland* (see interview on 26/04/2025), initially considered poverty tours to be **‘inappropriate’**: the guide in question could engage in more ‘productive’ and ‘sustainable’ paid labour activities – both for himself and the local precarious populations that he represents –, and they did not see any personal value in listening to his story. In addition, they experienced poverty tours as **‘foreign’**, entailing encounters with a reality of local urban precarity that is ‘alien’ to their own life worlds – which was especially emphasized by their rural backgrounds, where local expressions of precarity are taking different, more implicit shapes.

In contrast, most tour participants judged their experiences of poverty tourism to be **‘realistic’**, either corresponding to stereotypical images and sights of urban precarity in general⁶², or adding more nuance to local ‘liveable’ city-imaginaries. Although the latter **‘shocked’** participants, it did not ‘surprise’ them: in light of prior experiential knowledge of the city – e.g., as a local resident – ‘liveable’ city-imaginaries had already

⁶⁰ I have not conducted these informal talks myself, but I deem the source highly trustworthy. I cannot share the identity of this source due to risk of adverse treatment by the organization of SHADES TOURS. I wished to include the perspective of SHADES TOURS as well to potentially refute this claim, but, unfortunately, they were unable to participate in my research at that time (see infra research limitations).

⁶¹ e.g., after an accumulation of narrations of personal misfortunes, which became more and more severe at each stop of the tour, participant Koen of *Ronja’s straatwandeling* (see interview on 22/04/2025) wondered if one person can encounter that many instances of abuse and neglect. Koen was especially in disbelief when guide Ronja explained how losing her Dutch identification card disabled her from being officially reregistered, entering a housing contract and receiving medical care. The impact thereof seemed to be too ‘extreme’ to be true in light of the image that he had of the Netherlands as an effective state apparatus with digitalized administration; surely, there must be other means for reclaiming one’s official identity, Koen thought.

⁶² e.g., tour participant Güntner at *Wiener Nimmerland* (see interview on 22/06/2024) stated how guide Martin’s story was a typical story for many: growing up in the countryside without much parental supervision – or supervision by any adult –, using alcohol and drugs from a young age, ending up ‘in the big city’ of Vienna, and becoming homeless.

been questioned before partaking in poverty tourism. However, most had been unable to identify the *local* mechanisms that evoked uniquely place-based expressions of urban precarity in Vienna, The Hague or Copenhagen, having insufficient knowledge of *local* poverty-reductive and -preventive welfare measures – more precisely, of how these actually ‘play out’ in practice, at times maintaining instead of solving the issue of local urban precarity –, as narrated by Adriana, tour participant of *Wiener Nimmerland*.

“I grew up in Germany, so there you have [...] the saying that [...] ‘In Germany, nobody has to be homeless’. This always reinforces the stigma that people who are experiencing homelessness must be unwilling to get out of their situation. It puts this weird framing around what it means to experience homelessness, and be ill of addiction. These kinds of things, and the intersections between these things, are never truly taken seriously by the system (red., of poverty-reductive and preventive welfare measures). From what he (red., guide Martin of Wiener Nimmerland) has shared about the system is that it’s actually very backwards in comparison to other EU-member states, at least [related to] substitution, therapy, addiction, [something] that the system also doesn’t really want to help people with. These kind of things really gave a different perspective on like ‘Oh, Vienna is such a liveable city, and everyone is so well off there.’ Well, no, actually, because it has huge gaps in the city that deliberately push people out of the welfare regime. So, I think, that was the localized – not ‘surprise’, actually, it wasn’t surprising –, but it was something that I for sure learned with his [...] life story [...].”

Source: quote by Adriana, participant of Wiener Nimmerland-tour on 02/04/2024 and Ghetto Tours-tour on 10/09/2024; focus group discussion conducted on 31/03/2025.

In a similar vein, some were **surprised** to hear that **guides are native Austrian, Dutch or Danish citizens**; they expected local urban precarity to be tied to *glocal* structures of inequality, rendering especially newly arrived migrants and those with complex (mental) health conditions vulnerable.

On numerous occasions, the guides were praised for their ‘**vulnerability**’; here, ‘vulnerability’ refers both to the ‘**personal**’ content of a tour – i.e., telling a person’s life story, including events that could be shameful or traumatic – as well as the ‘**open**’ manner in which this is narrated – i.e., being receptive to all kinds of questions without seemingly omitting or justifying any discrediting or traumatic information. At the same time, tour guides’ well-intended accessibility and open stance towards any question incited feelings of **ethical discomfort** among some tour participants, as exemplified by a focus group excerpt below.

“I think it was really nice how he (red., guide Martin of Wiener Nimmerland) opened space for conversation. But I do remember him continuously repeating a phrase along the lines like ‘You can ask me any (red., emphasis added in intonation) question, and I’ll answer it’, or something. I think that was to create a sort of dialogue between people. But [...] that also made me think about navigating the line between telling your own story and having to bear your life to these audience members who might not ask respectful questions to the degree of this being an economic exchange. [...] [H]earing that

statement made me feel kind of concerned about how some people might take that statement in a way that was not necessarily respectful to his boundaries as a human, not just as a subject of this tour. He clearly put a lot of himself in this tour – and I think there are moments where it was more of a script and him kind of performing – but I remember there were also moments where he talked about losing friends to drug addiction, which were extremely potent, moving and affecting. [...] [I]t just made me wonder about the ethics, hoping that that line wasn't crossed with him, or [that] he wasn't pushed to commercialize his existence in a way that felt inauthentic or disrespectful to his own privacy that he is entitled to as a human.”

Source: quote by Soledad, participant of Wiener Nimmerland-tour on 02/04/2024 and Ghetto Tours on 10/09/2024; focus group discussion conducted on 31/03/2025.

The emergence of ethical discomfort, arising from a genuine concern for the guide's psychological-existential wellbeing, signals the presence of a sense of **empathy**. In this excerpt, Soledad perceives guide Martin beyond his role as offering a paid service, but recognizes him as a multifaceted person with his own feelings, thoughts, hopes and desires, who has a right of non-disclosure as well, setting boundaries to any potentially disrespectful questions. In doing so, he preserves his own 'authenticity' – undistorted by the need for commodification of his personal experiences of local urban precarity –, and retains a sense of dignity and self-respect. In contrast, whereas empathy allows tour participants to recognize, understand and *share* the guide's feelings and worldviews as if they were experiencing it themselves, **sympathy** only feels compassionate or pitiful *for* the guide; preventing any identification with the guide's affective world. The latter is often expressed through **a sense of 'feeling lucky'** for the own situation of privilege in comparison to the guide's, or by **admiring the guide's situation**; taking 'hats off' for guide's individual willpower and ability in turning their lives around for the better, or (partly) romanticizing their (past) suffering⁶³. However, such narratives misrecognizes the hardships and sufferings endured by the guide, and do not acknowledge tour participants' own role in maintaining and recreating local urban precarity, thereby depoliticizing this inherently social challenge (Benali & Kravets, 2022; Park, 2018). Moreover, a focus on individual responsibility obscures the importance of guides' networks and interactions with key figures in getting out of precarious situations. Often, both feelings of empathy *and* sympathy are incited within a person throughout the act of touring and after, drawing attention to the ambiguity of poverty tourism experiences.

Although many tour participants deemed their experiences of poverty tourism highly insightful – enthusiastically sharing their insights learned with family members and friends immediately afterwards – interviews conducted a few months later expressed doubts on the personal and societal impact thereof: they had not developed different views or beliefs vis-à-vis urban precarity, nor had it instigated concrete actions to aid in poverty reduction and prevention. In response, most considered poverty tourism rather '**pointless**'

⁶³ e.g., homelessness is sometimes romanticized by tour participants as living a more 'authentic' or 'pure' life in communion with other homeless persons, outside of 'alienating' consumerist and materialist societal norms and values, as narrated by guide Martin of *Wiener Nimmerland* in informal talks.

instigating feelings of **hopelessness and powerlessness** for change in local urban precarity. At the same time, many participants had left the tour feeling **‘moved’ or ‘touched’** by the personal stories that they had heard and the open manner in which these were told. Most reported a different spatial awareness of urban precarity⁶⁴ afterwards, associating local insights learned with other instances of urban precarity in other places⁶⁵. Although no measurable results can be uncovered at the time of writing, experiences of poverty tourism have certainly left ‘a trace’ in tour participants. After the tours, most tour participants felt **‘overloaded’**, requiring a moment for decompression and reflection on what they had just experienced, as offered by the concluding ‘coffee moment’, incorporated into *Ronja’s straatwandeling*.

In sum, when asked how participants had experienced poverty tours, a multiplicity of affective responses and narrations thereof emerged. Sometimes, these experiences questioned socially dominant sights and images of local urban precarity, then, they supported these. However, most times, various meanings of ‘authentic’ local urban precarity co-existed alongside each other: both lamentable and more implicit sights and images of local urban precarity can be deemed ‘realistic’ by one and the same person, in one and the same tour. Notwithstanding ‘liveable’ city-imaginaries – which render implicit sights and images of urban precarity in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen to be expected among non-local tourists – other local urban imaginaries, discourses on urban precarity in general, and past personal experiences with (local) urban precarity interact dynamically in a continuous renegotiation of ‘authentic’ sights and images of local urban precarity. John Urry’s notion of ‘the tourist gaze’ as structuring perceptions, interpretations and evaluations of ‘authentic’ sights and images of urban precarity in tourist places is thus more manifold and situational than it is often given credit for. Perhaps, the latter must be remodelled as a **‘tourist prism’**; sometimes, looking through one horizon of significance, then through another – or, more accurately, a combination of multiple, creating new meaningful frameworks in the process.

6.4 Which experiential elements contribute to the intra- and interpersonal emergence of ‘authentic’ encounters with local urban precarity within poverty tourism in European welfare state cities, and how are these encounters negotiated for purposes of existential authentication?

The extent to which sights and images of local urban precarity are considered to be ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ is not only dependent on the meanings that are given thereto – often embedded in imaginaries of the cities being toured – (supra), but also on the bodily- and intersubjectively-experienced encounters with local urban precarity on poverty tours. The latter is explored below by looking into the experiential elements that

⁶⁴ e.g., tour participant Shellyn of *Wiener Nimmerland* narrated how she identified handles on urban furniture in Vienna as ‘anti-homeless architecture’ after partaking in the tour. She expressed a desire to use these new ‘glasses’ professionally, for example, as an urban planner (see focus group discussion on 31/03/2025).

⁶⁵ e.g., tour participant Adriana of *Wiener Nimmerland* associated insights learned on urban precarity in Vienna to expressions thereof in her home city of Berlin (DE) (see focus group discussion on 31/03/2025).

contribute to the intra- and interpersonal emergence of ‘authentic’ encounters with local urban precarity – either encountered in narrated sights and images of local urban precarity, or represented by the figure of the guide.

Firstly, participants value the **‘grounded’ perspectives** ‘from below’ that are offered on poverty tours, deeming these more ‘authentic’ than highly touristified imaginaries of Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen, as communicated via city action plans, ‘official’ statistics and indexes, and other urban marketing tools. Guides offer a more ambiguous, ‘hidden’ and ‘local’ knowing of the cities in question, and the urban precarity taking place therein. In drawing on their own lived experiences, guides uncover the nuances of local urban precarity, offering access to a unique, local perspective of the places being toured that is often – whether or not intentionally – invisible/ized to tourists and other ‘outsiders’⁶⁶. In doing so, tour participants are able to get a glimpse of residents’ everyday life in the city – including that of the most precarious – whose ambiguities leave room for contestation of unified representations of Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen, such as those encountered in ‘liveable’ city-imaginaries.

When disrupting ‘official’ urban representations, guides paradoxically ‘play with’ stereotypes that were priorly installed by these same imaginaries, using it as a starting point for later questioning thereof. For instance, guides of Ghetto Tours deliberately named their initiative as such to evoke stereotypical sights and images of street violence and severe precarity (see interview with guide F on 12/11/2024). While touring, guides contrast these with sights and images of everyday life in a residential neighbourhood, showcasing high-quality and well-maintained public housing and urban infrastructure (e.g., playgrounds, apartments) and narrating memories of personal growth and joyful play in the neighbourhood. In doing so, they disrupt what it means to be called ‘a ghetto’⁶⁷ – as experienced by multiple tour participants (see focus group discussion on 31/03/2025).

Secondly, the format of guided walking tours offers an **embodied, direct way of learning** on local urban precarity, enabling more sensory and affective – or, ‘intensely’-experienced – engagements therewith⁶⁸. In comparison to commonly-used learning methods – which are often one-directional and theoretical (e.g., lectures, documentaries, books) – embodied learning offers a different and unique – thus, more memorable – kind of education, embedded in **place**. When touring the places in which local urban precarity has

⁶⁶ e.g., Ghetto Tours convey local ‘street knowledge’ on how to dress oneself and behave differently from gang members as part of an ethnic-cultural Muslim minority youth in Denmark. This is done to prevent potential confusion with gang members (e.g., in the case of kill shootings on the street) and recruitment by gang members (see interview with guide F on 12/11/2024). Such insights are often hidden to non-Muslim locals, let alone non-local tourists.

⁶⁷ Under racialized Danish housing laws – i.e., the so-called ‘ghetto laws’ in popular discourse –, neighbourhoods are labelled as ‘a ghetto’ on the basis of its inhabitants social-ethnic characteristic only – irrespective of the presence of crime and squalor, as expected when employing the term ‘ghetto’. This was also the case for the guides’ neighbourhood when growing up. In rendering certain residential areas ‘a ghetto’, the Danish government socially defines, e.g., the clustered presence of migrants from ‘non-Western’ backgrounds and their descendants, as ‘a problem’, which guides from Ghetto Tours explicitly contest.

⁶⁸ e.g., standing in a private basement during Ghetto Tours offered both ‘local’ knowledge and a unique sensorial experience on what it means to live in ‘a ghetto’.

happened, or, is currently happening, this enables a ‘tracing’ of its signs and symbols in space⁶⁹. Moreover, it allows for making reference to real-life events as they have occurred in space, evoking either a local collective memory⁷⁰, or imagination in its wake, as narrated by tour participants Patricia and Koen at *Wiener Nimmerland* and *Ronja’s straatwandeling*.

Patricia: “You are in the reality that he (red., guide Martin of Wiener Nimmerland) had been living. You experience where he had been sleeping, where he got his coffee, where he encountered someone on a bench.”

Koen: “You can almost feel it. You can taste it and feel it. It was also like being in The Hague (red., proceeds to talk about Ronja’s straatwandeling): you were standing next to the store where she (red., guide Ronja) bought her sanitary pads. You can imagine it better, [standing] in the moment there, than seeing it on a picture. That is different.”

Source: quotes by Patricia and Koen, participant of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour on 02/04/2024 and Ronja’s straatwandeling on 24/08/2024; interview conducted on 22/04/2025, excerpts translated from Dutch.

The guide as an **experiential expert** that speaks from an ‘authentic’ positionality is indispensable for the emergence of ‘truthful’ encounters with local urban precarity. Guides’ knowledge authority on local urban precarity is derived from their lived experiences thereof – in contrast to ‘mere’ theoretical knowing –, similar to the appreciation of embodied learning by tour participants (supra). After all, knowledge on lived experiences of local urban precarity can never fully be conveyed or translated, thus calling into question the ability of non-experiential experts – as well as tour participants, in a sense – to ‘truly’ understand and convey issues of local urban precarity. At the same time, *one* personal experience of local urban precarity – as presented by the figure of the guide – cannot be generalized to *all* precarious individuals in a locality, evoking questions of representation, essentialization and belonging (Vietti, 2022; infra).

Often, tour participants define themselves **in opposition to “traditional”, “commodified” or “touristified” guided walking tours**. Here, terms such as ‘commercial’, ‘commodified’ and ‘touristified’ do not refer to their denotations – after all, *all* poverty tours are situated within local tourism industries. Instead, they imply sights and images of, e.g., free walking tours and umbrella tours, which presumably ‘trample’ the inner cities of Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen with ‘hordes’ of tourists, offering cultural-historical narratives as advertised by local tourism boards that are to be most expected. In contrast, poverty tours are considered to be a unique, off-the-beaten-path kind of travel that is less profit-oriented and less detrimental on the locality and its inhabitants than the former. Participants experience them as highly personally charged and emotively

⁶⁹ e.g., finding a piece of packaging for pharmaceutical drugs in Karlsplatz; revealing an informal storage space for homeless persons behind Karlsplatz metro station wall (see participatory tour observations at *Wiener Nimmerland*).

⁷⁰ e.g., Güntner, tour participant at *Wiener Nimmerland* and local resident of Vienna, clearly remembered the eviction of the squat ‘Pizzeria Anarchia’, when this was narrated on the tour (see interview on 22/06/2024).

‘moving’. In that sense, both guides and tour participants do not label their activities as ‘poverty tourism’; deeming them as ‘something more’ than “mere” ‘poverty tourism’. In doing so, they refuse negative connotations that are tied to “traditional” instances of poverty tourism in the Global South (e.g., inciting exoticizing narratives and intercultural conflicts between visitors and locals). But, above all, they define themselves as ‘travellers’ that can escape the alienating and – at times – immoral influence of modern capital *tourism* industries for ‘truly’ authentic encounters with difference.

Paradoxically, when guides fail to incite the affectively-moving experiences needed for rendering such encounters ‘authentic’ in the first place – enacted through careful performance of their storytelling and interactions with their audiences (i.e., the *emotional* labour of guides in poverty tourism; Holst, 2019) – their tours are considered to be more ‘scripted’ or ‘inauthentic’, as showcased by tour participant José’s comparison of his experiences at *Wiener Nimmerland* and Ghetto Tours.

“For me, it (red., Ghetto Tours) felt more like a normal city tour. We have these stops and we go here, there's some explanation, ‘Any questions around that?’, ‘No?’, ‘Yes?’, and then [we go to] the next stop, and the next [stop]. Kind of like these umbrella ones (red., tours) that you see in the city centre. So, it felt really different (red., from the Wiener Nimmerland-tour). Also, [...] the multiple narrators made it more difficult for me to connect on a personal basis, and it felt for me also a bit more scripted in that way. A bit more like a commercialized thing: ‘You’re the group, you come here, we give you the explanation, and then you have to pay for the service, in a way’, no? That was really different for me from the emotions that the Martin (red., Wiener Nimmerland) tour produced upon me.”

Source: quote by José, participant of Wiener Nimmerland-tour on 02/04/2024 and Ghetto Tours on 10/09/2024; focus group discussion conducted on 31/03/2025.

The person of the guide – more precisely, *the connection* that is felt to their person, which is dependent on their charisma, self-presentation, and communicative skills – can support the credibility of their perspectives on local urban precarity. Referrals among tour participants, positive encounters with other precarious people while touring (e.g., greetings) and prolonged engagements over time – which a single poverty tour cannot offer – also increase trust in the guide as a knowledge authority on local urban precarity. A structured and chronological narration, as well as tailored content to different audiences and their various expectations of the tour’s content, display certain ‘professional’ skills that meet tour participants’ expectations and standards for a paid – i.e., a commercialized – guided tour. Thus, although tour participants oppose themselves against the alienating forces that emanate from “commercialized” tourism formats (*supra*), they still require a certain standard of ‘quality’ – i.e., clear and customized narratives – to be met as paying clients of commercial poverty tours.

Successful commodification of guides’ personal accounts presupposes a sensitivity to class- and race-based norms and values, requiring guides to present and accommodate themselves in a manner that is

accessible (e.g., in ways of speaking, composure and clothing) to middle-class and often white tour participants. For instance, guide Ronja of *Ronja's straatwandeling* emphasizes her identity as a researcher, policy advisor “and other important things” enables her to “speak with everyone in the same language” and be taken seriously on an equal level to tour participants (see interview on 30/08/2024, translated from Dutch). In seemingly **sharing a similar culture** to guides and other tour participants, a sense of ‘communitas’ emerges which supports processes of existential authentication. At the same time, the ‘openness’ of this ‘communitas’ can be questioned, for instance, when more adversary stances vis-à-vis guides’ narrations are denounced and delegitimized as ‘irrational’ (e.g., “those [tour participants] with ‘fixed’ views and opinions”, supra) or when guides’ must present themselves ‘inauthentically’ from (some parts of) their Being, evoking questions of representation, essentialization and belonging in its wake (Vietti, 2022). This is narrated by guide F from Ghetto Tours, switching between front- and backstages of himself as part of an ethnic-cultural Muslim minority in Denmark.

“I have a way of talking with ethnically Danish people and then with my other friends. [...] I change my personality and professional level when I’m at the Ghetto Tours or work. We use – some of my friends call it – ‘the white man’s voice’ (laughs).”

“[I]t’s just the way we dress ourselves, speak. Some people talk with a big ‘t’, and then people assume that he’s a perker (red., derogatory Danish term for people from a Middle Eastern or Arab background). I’ve also tried to correct my Danish, so I have a very clean way of talking Danish, cause if I talk that way (red., with a big ‘t’), they (red., ethnic-cultural white majority Danish people) will put me in a box.”

Source: quotes by guide F of Ghetto Tours from interview conducted on 12/11/2024.

At the same time, the figure of the guide represents an alterity, allowing tour participants to **meet them as ‘the other half’ of their own life worlds in European welfare state societies**. The tourism context of poverty tours offers a socially legitimized setting for norm transgressive behaviour, justifying encounters with, and thereby rendering ‘radically Other/red’ guides and their perspectives accessible to, middle-class and often white tour participants. In addition, tourism offers opportunities for ‘slowing down’ to engage profoundly with the ‘unfamiliarity’ of local urban precarity, as encountered in the figure of the guide. This has been noticed by Soledad, tour participant at *Wiener Nimmerland* and Ghetto Tours.

“Well, I think with these alternative tours it’s really valuable: the access you get to interact with people that you normally wouldn’t. I just thought of a bizarre comparison, like a dating app. Where you meet someone, especially in our mobile life (red., as classmates within a student mobility programme), who’s from a place where you’re not from at all, and then you might have an excuse to have a conversation with them, and see where you’re living in a completely different context. [...] [W]ith Martin too, it’s not many people who feel like they can sit down on a bench and have a conversation with him that means

a lot to him. And that's not even [coming] from a place of necessarily prejudice against him. It's just the situation, the circumstances, and everything."

Source: quote by Soledad, participant of Wiener Nimmerland-tour on 02/04/2024 and Ghetto Tours on 10/09/2024; focus group discussion conducted on 31/03/2025.

However, meeting an 'Other/ed' is insufficient; tour participants can only engage in existential authentication once they recognize the guide as both object and subject. This requires a move beyond perceiving guides as 'precarious' only, recognizing them as multifaceted persons with whom tour participants share a human fate and essence nonetheless – and vice versa (i.e., guides *also* need to go beyond 'the tourist'). In turn, encounters must take place on an equal level, which presupposes mutual emotional vulnerability (i.e., being willing to disclose personal information and express 'unfiltered' emotive responses) (Everingham & Motta, 2022). However, guides' ambiguous roles and belonging – i.e., attempting to represent local urban precarity while establishing rapport with tour participants on the basis of staged class- and race-based self-representations – and feelings of sympathy among tour participants – i.e., expressed in idolizing or pitying narratives of guides – (supra), hinder the becoming of humanization. Moreover, mutual emotional vulnerability as a 'liminal' activity does not only pose opportunities for personal transformation of both guides and tour participants, but also implies risks for psychological-existential harm (e.g., becoming misrecognized; being 'disrupted' by intense feelings of guilt, anxiety and uncertainty). In response, both tour guides and participants have developed **strategies for maintaining a degree of psychological-existential safety and distance** in the face of 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity, as given below.

Both guides and tour participants return to a familiar physical or social 'place' after touring (e.g., guide Martin of *Wiener Nimmerland* always needs to 'recharge' at his appartement). Moreover, people can have their guard up, holding parts of themselves back, for instance by not showcasing particular personal traits (e.g., a 'goofy' personality⁷¹) or initial emotive responses (e.g., crying to a 'touching' story⁷²). In addition, guides and tour participants can withdraw into their own positionalities – i.e., perceiving, interpreting and evaluating each other within their own sociocultural-moral frameworks only, without any understanding of the 'places' from which the other's ways of being, thinking and doing are coming from. Also, the group context of poverty tourism allows participants to retreat into a sense of social belonging; being among 'equals' in an environment that is devoid of any severe social judgement. At the same time, the group implies an aspect of social control, hindering the emergence of 'inappropriate' audience questions and behaviour vis-à-vis tour guides and, as such, providing the latter as sense of safety from potential disrespect as well.

Guides provide emotional safety to tour participants by 'building-up' their story in increasing intensity and concluding with 'a happy ending', referring to their current situation as being 'no more precarious' – although, e.g., drug addicts remain addicted (to pharmaceutical drugs) forever, evoking life-threatening withdrawal

⁷¹ See interview with guide F of Ghetto Tours on 12/11/2024.

⁷² See own experience at *Ronja's straatwandeling* on 24/08/2024.

symptoms otherwise. Guides create safety for themselves by only narrating and answering to those questions which do not require delving into any severely traumatic memories – thus distinguishing between ‘personal’ (i.e., about the own person) and ‘emotionally vulnerable’ (i.e., ‘unprocessed’, inciting intense and unpredictable emotive reactions) information shared. Moreover, guides present themselves in a ‘self-composed’ or ‘professional’ manner vis-à-vis tour participants. In addition, the employment of humour enables guides to engage in intercultural conflicts while rendering the implicit messages thereof more ‘digestible’ to tour participants, as such avoiding feelings of guilt, agitation and unease among the latter.

However, such **strategies of distancing hinder mutual personal transformation** of both guides and tour participants. Whereas guides cannot fully showcase their authentic Self – downplaying and thereby distorting their personal experiences of disrespect –, tour participants partly fail to recognize themselves in the figure of the guide as an equal human being who is both unique and similar to their own person. In that light, mutual existential authentication becomes possible when an **emotionally safe environment** is accounted for. For instance, guide Ronja’s ‘coffee moment’ – i.e., a collaborative discussion of the *straatwandeling* immediately afterwards at a local café – offers a collaborative space for decompression and reflection – including reflexivity on the own future practices for countering and reducing instances of (local) (urban) precarity. This occurs in a safe setting on equal footing, seated all around a table, while drinks are included in the ticket price (thus, preventing the emergence of any power hierarchies between those who can and cannot consume). A few days after the tour, an additional online meeting is set up between Ronja and tour participants, wherein they discuss the results of a take-home self-reflexive evaluation survey on the tours’ experiences and the potential short- and long-term personal and local social impact thereof (e.g., at participants’ work, in everyday life).

6.5 What do ‘authentic’ encounters with local urban precarity in poverty tourism in European welfare state cities produce, especially with regard to mutual existential authentication for local social change?⁷³

Whereas guides’ knowledge authority enabled the emergence of ‘authentic’ encounters with local urban precarity in the first place (supra), ‘authentic’ engagements add further to the guides’ **credibility** in a mutually-reinforcing loop. As stated earlier, guides’ credibility is partly dependent on the extent to which they are able to represent themselves in accordance with middle-class and white norms and values; thus, contributing further to a staging of the Self that is partly ‘inauthentic’ to a guide’s unique Being. In turn, **questions of representation, essentialization and belonging** are evoked (Vietti, 2022).

Often, guides’ narrations become one of a few personal ‘success stories’ alongside other experiences of local urban precarity, being perceived as ‘one of the good ones’ who were able to ‘make it out’ (e.g., see interview with tour participant Lilian at Wiener Nimmerland on 11/07/2024). In ‘taking up space’ in the public debate on local urban precarity through guiding (supra), some precarious local residents feel misrepresented,

⁷³ In processes of authentication, precursors (see section 6.4, supra) and outcomes (section 6.5) are mutually constitutive. The distinction made between both is thus partly artificial for reasons of clarity. Some findings will be repeated with regard to both precursors and outcomes in a slightly different framing.

evoking adversary and even hostile reactions vis-à-vis guides. This is aggravated by the touring of sights and images of local urban precarity, which entails deliberate – and, often, involuntary without any opportunities for informed consent – encounters with precarious local residents themselves (i.e., the critique of poverty tourism as ‘human zoos’)⁷⁴. Although guides acknowledge that they can only say something meaningful about their *own* lived accounts of local urban precarity, they are aware that tour participants may perceive them as a generalized spokesperson for precarious local residents. This installs a sense of pressure among guides to perform their “Self”-image in accordance with societally-valued – read: middle-class and white – manners of conduct, in order to avoid adding to any further potential stigmatisation of the populations in questions.

However, in presenting themselves more closely to middle-class and white cultural norms and values, guides – whether or not intentionally – distance themselves from those local precarious populations that they try to protect, rendering them into an ‘Other/ed’ from themselves. This has been observed in Ghetto Tours, wherein guides defined gang members as “the bad guys” who refuse to integrate and act in accordance with the rules of Danish society, as such reflecting negatively on the whole population of ethnic-cultural Muslim minority youth in Denmark (see interview with guide F on 12/11/2024). However, in doing so, guides draw moral and symbolic intra group boundaries, which fails to acknowledge intergenerational differences in educational and professional attainment and parental supervision, rendering some ethnic-cultural Muslim minority youth more vulnerable to recruitment by gang members than others. In contrast, some guides explicitly engage in self-sensationalization, rendering themselves compliant with stereotypical images and sights of, e.g., a punk squatter⁷⁵. In conclusion, guides’ role as an incomplete representative of general local urban precarity who is, simultaneously, trying to build rapport with middle-class and often white tour participants, results in an ambiguous sense of belonging, as explained by guide Ronja of *Ronja’s straatwandeling*.

“On the one hand, I am connected to homeless persons, but that group does no longer see me as one of them. [...] On the other hand, I belong to the middle-class – and I even start to grow out of that a little bit –, and I hang out with – what I would’ve called ‘important people’ in the past –, because I now work in the same sector or places. However, those people still see me as ‘homeless’. So, one group no longer sees me as one of them, and the other group still sees me as someone who came straight from the gutter. I do not fit into any [group], but that enables me to communicate well with everyone: I have experienced and taken bits and parts from everything.”

⁷⁴ e.g., guide Julie of Gadens Stemmer recalls an unpleasant encounter with a visibly intoxicated passerby, while standing close to ‘H13’, i.e., a centre in Copenhagen for medically-supervised drugs intake (see interview on 14/03/2025). The passerby in question interrupted Julie’s storytelling, delegitimizing her experiences of local urban precarity by calling her a liar. After multiple attempts by Julie, explaining that the tour merely offered a representation of her own personal experiences and kindly asking the passerby to leave, Julie had to depart instead, taking her tour group with her to another place nearby.

⁷⁵ e.g., guide Martin of *Wiener Nimmerland* deliberately paints his hair in bright colours (e.g., red, green) – inciting the appearance of a ‘stereotypical’ punk and anarchist squatter to be more recognizable to his audiences at first contact (even though Martin is no longer a squatter).

Source: quote by guide Ronja of Ronja's straatwandeling from interview conducted on 30/08/2024; excerpt translated from Dutch.

Furthermore, 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity offer sites for tour participants' **self-identification** – **although this does not always occur through processes of *existential* authentication**. In meeting their societal counterpart in the figure of the guide as a representative of local urban precarity, and touring sights and images thereof with the guide, tour participants are able to define themselves – including their self-image and personal life project – in opposition to this Other/ed. Not only do some morally and symbolically identify themselves as being 'better off' than guides – enabling the belief in their own life goals as personally and societally meaningful in contrast to other's –, but they also partake in an activity that supports this life project and its associated self-image as a 'socially engaged and educated' person. In exhibiting a certain 'openness' and 'natural' ability to engage with local urban precarity, tour participants position themselves as 'travellers' against those who do not directly engage with local urban precarity, such as "traditional" tourists, defining their own aspirations and actions as more 'authentic' vis-à-vis the latter's.

As illustrated supra, this 'tolerance' reflects a class-based culture of similar-minded people – excluding those who do not share the same norms and values (e.g., "those with 'fixed' opinions and views"). In this case, tour participants demonstrate – mostly to themselves – that they are 'open' to be confronted with experiences of difference – while the 'difference' encountered is not truly existentially authentically engaged with. In being "open" to sights and images of local urban precarity, tour participants accept these as a lived reality that does not concern their own, as such maintaining a psychological-existential distance from local urban precarity that does not require any personal transformation and agentic action to take place (Lapina, 2022). At the same time, guides' partly staged self-identity does not allow for a mutual existential authentication either (supra). As a consequence, in 'authentic' encounters, moral and symbolic boundaries of 'We' versus 'They' are (re)produced 1) between tour participants (e.g., 'socially engaged and educated' versus "those with 'fixed' opinions and views"), 2) between guides and tour participants (e.g., when pitying or adoring guides), 3) between guides and other members of local precarious populations (e.g., guides as 'one of the good ones' who 'made it out'), and 4) between tour participants and other tourists engaged in "traditional" walking tours (e.g., 'social' or 'ethical tourism' versus "commercialized" tours of the inner city).

At the same time, 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity offer opportunities for **transformative learning**, enabling the emergence of **an existential authentication** that serves mutual personal transformation of both tour participants *and* guides. Transformative learning implies a multiplicity of learning processes (i.e., affective, associative, collaborative, critical, hopeful, mutual, prolonged, reflexive, sensory and spatial learning), evoked through existentially authentic encounters with local urban precarity, for the development of a sense of empathy and solidarity between tour participants and guides (including the local precarious populations that they represent), altering their relationalities in its wake.

Affective learning refers to learning through the experience of both positive (e.g., generosity, joy) and negative (e.g., guilt, ethical discomfort) emotions. Especially negative and ambiguous emotions are productive to realise the own role in creating and sustaining urban precarity (Everingham & Motta, 2022), which is required for critical and reflexive learning (infra). At the same time, negative emotions are often reduced in commodified tourism contexts; tour participants as paying customers must be entertained while touring local urban precarity, ensuring an experience that is mostly pleasant rather than educational, thus misrecognizing guides' personal experiences of suffering and disrespect (Ruebottom, Buchanan, Voronov, & Toubiana, 2022). Moreover, tour participants engage in associative learning, relating sights and images of local urban precarity, as encountered while touring, to other instances thereof in different places and formats (e.g., encountering a homeless person in everyday life). Through continuous analytical comparison of different sights and images of urban precarity in the visited locality and beyond, a systemic body of knowledge emerges. Associative learning also ties into sensory and spatial learning, as well as prolonged learning: since guided walking tours take 'place' in bodies and spaces, learning on urban precarity becomes a sensorily- and spatially-embedded reading of 'traces' of urban precarity, both in the near and far future. For example, Shellyn, participant of a *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour, recalls how she has identified anti-homeless architecture in Vienna's Praterstern and other places throughout Europe ever since, potentially inspiring her in a future practice of urban planning (see focus group discussion on 31/03/2025).

Learning occurs in collaboration with the guide, tour participants, the places being toured and the occurrences and passerby happening herein, as well as prior experiences, discourses and mental frameworks for perception, interpretation and evaluation that influence the former. For example, when tour participants talk about their experiences afterwards with family members and friends, they encounter different views and opinions on (the touring of) urban precarity that may change their experiences retrospectively. Poverty tours also offer grounds for mutual learning, enabling guides to reconsider their past experiences and their current relationship vis-à-vis these memories in light of new information acquired in dialogue with tour participants and reactions from passerby. Guides develop communicative and social skills in practice, presenting their story in a clear and structured way while engaging different types of audiences. They also become socially recognized by tour participants as unique and moral individuals who have a valuable perspective to share, thereby offering grounds for reconciliation of earlier experiences of disrespect. The revaluation and elevation of guides' knowledge in the public debate as an alternative and socially legitimized view on local urban precarity reflects positively on their self-image and those affected by similar precarious conditions, as stated by Soledad, tour participant of *Wiener Nimmerland* and Ghetto Tours.

"[...] [A]s someone who has been involved in art, community, space, and teenagers, it is clearly moving and clearly would be powerful to be a teenager giving a tour of your neighbourhood to other people. To have your voice elevated in that way, and especially when it's a neighbourhood that is so stigmatised. In some ways, that is really exciting just point black, without even thinking of the tour

itself. Also, recognizing that something that a tour like that is bringing as much to the people giving the tour than the audience, was more at play in this tour to me (red., than in a Wiener Nimmerland-tour, wherein Soledad also participated). We also heard that some people were newer at participating, and others had been doing it a little longer, but you sort of can conceptualize what it means for everyone to create a narrative, or what it could mean, and how that might be a process that they're developing or get better at, or explore new things. [...] Overall, what sticks with me [...] is this idea around what it means to have teenagers, especially coming from immigrant families, talking authoritatively about what it means to live and grow up in Copenhagen, and authentically claiming that place."

Source: quote by Soledad, participant of Wiener Nimmerland-tour on 02/04/2024 and Ghetto Tours on 10/09/2024; focus group discussion conducted on 31/03/2025.

Mutual learning is, in turn, dependent on reflexive learning as a form of second-order learning – i.e., relating the information learned during poverty tours to the own life project, and reflecting on the latter's 'desirability' and 'meaningfulness' in the process. When poverty tours install actionable knowledge on the *social renegotiability* of those social orders that create local urban precarity and other oppressions, this can evoke existentially authentic personal transformation. Also, in recognizing the own agentic power, hope is instigated among both guides and tour participants for local social change. This, some interviewees argued (i.e., guide Ronja of *Ronja's straatwandeling*; tour participant Nikita of *Wiener Nimmerland*), requires a collaborative moment for reflection *in addition* to the tour. Touring urban precarity in itself is thus insufficient for provoking transformative learning, as hypothesized by tour participant Nikita when comparing her experiences of *Wiener Nimmerland* to a similar initiative with inmates in Berlin.

"I went to this classy thing in East Berlin two years ago. It was the prisoners themselves that gave the tour. I imagine a lot of them were traumatized, and then they were rehabilitated, and then this process became a way for them to deal with it. They give you a tour, and then (red., emphasis added in intonation) you follow this up with conversation 'What did we see?' I imagine people like my parents, who would not only be out of depth in Europe – because this is a completely different place –, but they are also coming from this very middle class mentality of what is 'right' or 'wrong', and how you should behave. I imagine that kind of demographic, just sitting and talking about it afterwards, even if there were things that they didn't necessarily understand themselves, through other people talking about it, maybe it could be a way where they were 'Oh, interesting. I didn't know about this at all'."

Source: quote by tour participant Nikita of Wiener-Nimmerland-tour, from interview conducted on 11/04/2025.

Paulo Freire's critical learning or pedagogy (supra) can be instigated by reflexivity. As stated supra, critical pedagogy is a dialogical and dialectical teaching that unveils and questions existent ways of being, knowing and doing under oppressive social orders. Through the formation of a critical consciousness or

conscientização, humanization of both tour guides as teacher-facilitators and tour participants as pupils in poverty tourism becomes possible. Local urban precarity becomes to be understood as a social problem that is inherently entangled with systemic features, shaping relationships between various sociocultural groups that are sedimented in urban and public space. At the same time, the emergence of a systemic narrative on local urban precarity is hindered when individual responsibility and social circumstances are particularly emphasized. Although well-intended – i.e., acknowledging the agentic power of those affected by local urban precarity as being more than a ‘victim’ of circumstances, who are simultaneously restricted in their social chances to act upon their precarious living conditions in comparison to others – this renders the story of local urban precarity one of overcoming personal social circumstances, instead of focusing on wider systemic elements that tie together various experiences of local urban precarity and related oppressions.

When critical learning does occur – generating the collective understanding of a shared human existence under societal systems of oppression (e.g., modern capitalism) –, it incites the development of a sense of empathy and solidarity among tour participants, guides and the precarious populations that the latter represent. Mutual social recognition, and the reimagination of local urban precarity as a social problem embedded in ‘places’ – including urban and public spaces –, renders poverty tours sociopolitical, challenging current models for urban planning and design that favour certain kinds of (co-)living above others⁷⁶. Themes of the ‘Right to the City’ – as initiated by urban scholar and sociologist Henri Lefebvre in 1968⁷⁷ – are thus implicitly touched upon and emergent during those poverty tours that evoke a sense of empathy and solidarity, as narrated by Güntner, who took part in a *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour as a teacher accompanying a class of secondary schoolchildren. At the same time, he noticed how tour participants’ situatedness or positionality – grounded in particular life worlds that install certain mental frameworks for perception, interpretation and evaluation of local urban precarity – can hinder the emergence of a critical account thereof.

“Last week, I went with a class [to the Wien Museum], and I showed them – in the [19]70s, they had the Arena (red., a formerly squatter cultural centre), where they were trying to build [a textile factory]– I’m trying to connect the topic (laughs), you know, ‘Who owns the city?’, and that was the question that was also asked in the museum. And I felt like that was also somehow addressed in that story (red., about the eviction of squad ‘Pizzeria Anarchia’, narrated by guide Martin). But I’m not sure if they really understood. We (red., the school) probably have a lot of kids – how am I gonna say? – their parents are from a more wealthy– our kids are probably closer to the people that own (emphasis) those houses (red., houses that are bought as financial assets, similar to the squat of ‘Pizzeria Anarchia’).”

Source: quote by Güntner, participant of Wiener Nimmerland-tour; interview conducted on 22/06/2024

⁷⁶ e.g., such as the premise that ‘consumption’ is required in most ‘public’ spaces, as stated by tour participant Nikita of *Wiener Nimmerland* (see interview on 11/04/2025).

⁷⁷ Introduced in ‘*Le droit à la ville*’ (1968).

As captured by Victor Turner's concept of liminality, mutual existential authentication through meeting the 'Other' – either in the person of the guide or tour participant –, entails both opportunity and danger to self-identification and -development (Turner, 1969). Mutual vulnerability is required for existentially authentic encounters (Everingham & Motta, 2022), offering both grounds for personal and local social transformation, as well as disruption of the Self – which incites existential angst, and in turn, evokes strategies of distancing for purposes of self-preservation (supra). Under current neoliberal capitalist societal structures – and the fast-paced rhythms of movement and encounter that these subscribe –, individualizing accounts of the Self often prevail over the emergence of empathy and solidarity (Laermans, De Cauter, & Vanhaesebrouck, 2018). Although travel counters this by allowing for linger and dwelling (supra), a fear of the Other – and the need for protection of the Self's personally meaningful existence (e.g., in the pursuit of work, a family with kids) – *partly* limits the sociopolitical-ethical potentiality of poverty tourism, as hinted at by tour participant Nikita of *Wiener Nimmerland*. At the same time, I argue that this potentiality for more socially sustainable and ethically-responsible tourism encounters (and engagements with difference in general) still speaks from Nikita's – and other interviewee's – personal reflections on their experiences of poverty tours, and the critical insights that these brought forward.

"If you're falling apart while reading the news, you can't function like that. You have to accept that there are certain things that you cannot change, and that you just have to do what you have to do. [...] Unfortunately, how we are able to survive under this [societal] system, is sort of distancing and dissociating. You cannot think about another group of people too much. You have to go to work, take care of a family, you have kids. You have to think about your own safety and environment, how are you gonna think about a bunch of drug addicts who are drinking and being out outside our building every night: 'Do I need to start having empathy for them?'"

Source: quote by tour participant Nikita of Wiener-Nimmerland-tour, from interview conducted on 11/04/2025.

7. Discussion and conclusion

As historical sites of concentrated capital accumulation and growth, it must not surprise that precarity has become most visible in cities, inciting various engagements therewith (e.g., by Friedrich Engels (1848), Jacob A. Riss (1970) and Jacob Holdt (1985)). Under recent austerity politics in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and persistent wars and conflict worldwide, restructurings of national welfare regimes will most likely produce more 'lamentable' sights and images on the level of European cities, rendering the call for systemic change most pressing (Gillepsie, Hardy & Watt, 2021; Katz, 1993). With the transition from 'welfare' to 'workfare' societies, social rights are no longer universally granted to every citizen as a moral human being, worthy of respect; instead, this has become tied to the ability to perform paid work. Combined with the recent flexibilization and precarization of labour markets – more and more people must, but are unable to engage in those activities that would grant them respect and self-esteem, rendering the struggle for social recognition all the more important (Schweiger, 2024). A struggle that is deeply urban; shaping and reshaping public and urban spaces in its wake – echoing Henri Lefebvre's concept of the 'Right to the City' (1968).

I started this exploration into poverty tourism in March 2024, believing that it could offer an – intrinsically urban – site for the sociopolitical-ethical struggle for social recognition (and implied personal and local social transformations) towards more socially sustainable and ethically-responsible encounters with difference. In embarking on my first poverty tour (i.e., of *Wiener Nimmerland* in April 2024), I encountered a different engagement with local urban precarity than I had ever experienced before. Instead of meeting local urban precarity in the lamentable sight of a beggar – with whom I felt I could never quite engage as persons on an equal level, being propelled forward by senses of guilt, fear or straight-out annoyance to hand-out money, while always leaving the scene with a sour taste – poverty tours seemed to offer places for actual dialogue and self-reflexivity.

At the same time, I quickly discovered that earlier scholarly accounts of poverty tourism – albeit within contexts of "traditional" poverty tourism in the Global South – were more critical of its sociopolitical-ethical potential; solely serving tourists' quest for a kind of authentic self-identification that will always remain wistfully incomplete. Under the influence of full-fledged tourism sectors, the intrinsically human quest for authenticity through encounters with the world – more precisely, encounters with an initial 'unfamiliarity' or 'difference' of the world vis-à-vis ourselves – has been exploited and become an impossible task, according to the earliest writer on 'authenticity' in tourism research, Dean MacCannell (1999). Instead of allowing for a truly existentially authentic self-identification, tourists are caught up in self-referential loops of 'authentic' conceptions of, e.g., addiction, homelessness and ghettoization in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen – as fabricated and installed by local tourism industries. In other words, tourists do not engage in any *real* confrontation with any *real* difference, thus being denied entrance into the 'liminal space' that travel once promised. In modern-day travel and tourism, existential authentication thus cannot exist (MacCannell, 1999).

Notwithstanding my initial idealism and MacCannell's valuable – albeit somewhat sceptical – account of existential authentication in poverty tourism, my extensive engagements with poverty tours over the last sixteen months call for a more nuanced answer to the question of poverty tourism, and what is actually happening herein. In engaging with the experiential and 'place'-based features (i.e., in bodies, spaces and mental frameworks) of existential authentication, and advancing such processes with Paulo Freire's sociopolitical concept of 'humanization' (Freire, 2017) and Axel Honneth's social-ethical Theory of Recognition (Honneth, 1995), I have opened up the study of existential authentication in poverty tourism as a potential pathway for mutual social recognition, installing new senses of belonging and relationalities, as enacted in urban and public space.

A mixed methods phenomenological study established insights into processes of existential authentication – including an engagement with constructivist authentication as mutually constitutive of the former – and reflected on its potential sociopolitical-ethical implications, as outlined in conceptual and empirical research questions (see supra table 1). My application to guided walking tours on local urban precarity in European welfare state cities of Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen enabled me to engage with a newly-emergent kind of poverty tourism, i.e., one that tours more implicit sights and images of local urban precarity in an embodied and 'place'-based manner, while meeting local urban precarity as well in the reciprocal gaze of the guide. These new formats and settings proved to play a significant role in the mechanisms of existential authentication.

First of all, various participant profiles and even more personal motivations for participating in poverty tours have been distinguished, questioned the premise that poverty tourism solely serves an 'egoistic' self-affirmation. In addition, poverty tours serve multiple goals of preventive and sociopolitical learning, often actualizing one over the other with regard to particular audiences (e.g., school groups) or in light of the tour's initial design. Entertainment functions as a 'hidden' goal under the requirement for commodification of tour experiences within the context of local tourism industries. This can obstruct the emergence of negative emotions, which is essential for sociopolitical learning.

The concept of 'the tourist gaze' as a metaphor for constructivist authentication has been renegotiated into 'the tourist *prism*', allowing for a multiplicity of urban imaginaries to co-exist and dynamically interact with mental frameworks for perception, interpretation and evaluation of 'authentic' sights and images of local urban precarity. Also, the experiential elements that allowed for an intra- and interpersonal emergence of 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity – either met in the sights and images being toured, or the figure of the guide – have been identified, engaging more profoundly with existential processes of authentication (in addition to constructivist authentication). These elements include: the 'grounded' perspectives offered; an embodied, direct way of learning; place-based authenticity; the guide as an experiential expert; the person of the guide; the creation of a normative 'communitas'; the symbolic opposition vis-à-vis "commodified" tourism; and the meeting of 'the other half' of tour participants' life

worlds in European welfare states. At the same time, ambiguities have been observed herein (e.g., partly existentially inauthentic self-representation by guides; strategies of distancing that hinder humanization).

Reflection on the potential sociopolitical-ethical implications of 'authentic' encounters with local urban precarity observed how guides' credibility, tour participants' self-identification, and transformative learning for both has been fostered. However, again, ambiguities present themselves; at times, evoking moral and symbolic boundaries among tour participants, guides, precarious local populations and other tourists in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen, and disabling a truly existentially authentic self-identification of both guides and tour participants. At the same time, transformative processes of learning have been incited, perhaps not resulting in any measurable impact – yet –, but leaving 'traces' in the 'places' inhabited by guides and tour participants (i.e., their bodies, everyday spaces and mental frameworks) to be deciphered. Poverty tour experiences could be unveiled as contributing to newly-emergent co-creations of the 'places' through which local urban precarity is encountered, for more socially sustainable and ethically-responsible engagements in local tourism sectors and the city as a whole.

In conclusion, poverty tours offer a liminal experience of reflexivity on the Self, social-ethical relationships, and their sociopolitical outcomes in urban and public space (Ting & Kahl, 2016). Tourism as a socially legitimized setting for norm-transgressive encounters serves as the background for messy human social relationships – and the intersubjective struggle for social recognition and '*Sittlichkeit*' (Honneth, 1995) taking place therein. Poverty tourism, as the 'place' for meeting and being met in and through the gaze of 'the other half' of European welfare state societies, gives rise to particular dialectics, sometimes, inciting empathy for an equally unique human being, then, evoking fear of the 'Other/ed' – i.e., a pendulum movement that is experienced within one and the same tour, often by one and the same person. Existential authentication is thus neither occurring in an isolated, intrinsic manner only, nor is it straightforward in its processes and outcomes. Instead, it is a highly intersubjective and ambiguous happening, which is always engaged in *mutual* existential authentication of *all* actors that are indirectly and directly involved in poverty tourism.

Below, a typology of poverty tours in European welfare state cities is given (see table 2). It is classified on the basis of supra-identified narrational *and* experiential elements of constructivist *and* existential processes of authentication in poverty tourism – and inspired by existent typologies of guided walking tours (e.g., Barber, 2019; Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2018; Weiler & Black, 2015). From this, three kinds of poverty tours emerge: **1) preventive tours** (i.e., informing on local urban precarity), **2) critical tours** (i.e., questioning existent knowledge on local urban precarity, and **3) hopeful tours** (i.e., questioning and offering actionable alternatives to existent sights and images of local urban precarity).

Within the presumed 'totality' of local tourism industries, poverty tour initiatives can offer spaces for resistance to current ways of being, knowing and doing tourism as encounters between difference. As a prerequisite, poverty tours must engage in *critical pedagogy* (Freire, 2017), denouncing current social orders of oppressions that are present in European welfare regimes by employing the ambiguities of guides' lived

experiences of local urban precarity in a sociopolitical narrative for purposes of visibilization and contestation. In addition, poverty tours must install a *pedagogy of 'hope'* (Freire, 2014), offering alternatives to current engagements with local urban precarity – or reflecting on this together⁷⁸ – for the announcement of more socially-sustainable and ethically-responsible local tourism sectors and cities in general (Roy, Negrón-Gonzales, Opoku-Agyemang, & Talwalker, 2016).

⁷⁸ See the 'coffee moment' after *Ronja's straatwandeling*, as explained supra.

Type of tour	Narrative engagement with local urban precarity	Narrative engagement with associated urban challenges	Degree of interaction	Control of interaction	Interactional skills of guide	Organizational type	Examples
<i>Preventive tour</i>	Informing	Absent	Minimal	Tour guide	Presentation skills	Social enterprise	SHADES TOURS (Vienna), <i>Gadens Stemmer</i> (Copenhagen)
<i>Critical tour</i>	Denouncing	Present	Intermediate	Tour guide	Presentation, mediation and interpretation skills	Self-employment, NGO	<i>Wiener Nimmerland</i> (Vienna), Ghetto Tours (Copenhagen)
<i>Hopeful tour</i>	Denouncing and announcing	Present	Maximal	Shared among tour guide and participants	Presentation, mediation, interpretations and improvisation skills	Self-employment, (NGO)	<i>Ronja's straatwandeling</i> (The Hague)

Table 2. A typology of guided walking tours on urban precarity in European welfare state cities (based on Barber, 2019; Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2018; Weiler & Black, 2015)

7.1 Research limitations

7.1.1 Biased participant sampling and high non-response rates

Bias is to be expected in participant profiles due to self-selection of interview participants to open invites and use of online reviews, as well as sampling from classmates and family members as tour participants. Whereas the former is assumed to express either strongly positive or negative views on their tour experiences – thus lacking more ‘neutral’ opinions in data analysis –, the latter could exhibit socially desirable interviewee behaviour in line with my research hypotheses, as expressed in personal conversations and on thesis seminars. Moreover, classmates and family members are expected to have closely related understandings of local urban precarity due to a shared interest in critical social sciences-perspectives and similar living conditions. This undermines the credibility of research findings. At the same time, family members Bert and Emilienne serve as a negative case analysis, taking on a more adversarial stance vis-à-vis the idea of poverty tourism and the sights and images of local urban precarity encountered therein. Thus, selection bias cannot be univocally determined. Unfortunately, I observed a high level of non-response among tour participants that were not priory acquainted to me; only two (i.e., Lilian and Güntner, see annex) chose to partake in the research.

In general, it proved to be difficult to establish and retain contact with research participants. For example, in the case of guides, incongruent time frames and schedules⁷⁹, means of communication⁸⁰, and manners of communication⁸¹ hindered prolonged engagements. This was especially the case when I was no longer physically present in the field and had to resort to online and telephonic contact only within the framework of my master’s programme’s continuous student mobility. Both identified non-profit social enterprise initiatives – i.e., SHADES TOURS and *Gadens Stemmer* – did not respond to my email and telephonic invites for an interview or overall involvement in the research, thus missing out on their particular, potentially more market-oriented perspectives for studying existential authentication and its sociopolitical-ethical implications in European poverty tourism. I also reached out to city councils, local tourism departments and travel agencies that function as intermediaries in poverty tourism encounters (either by setting up the necessary legal policy frameworks, marketing initiatives, or booking tours), resulting in non-response as well.

7.1.2 Language barriers

Fieldwork in Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen, and analysis of online reviews required me to speak, write and understand German, Dutch, English – and Danish, to a lesser degree. Whereas Dutch is my mother tongue and I currently have an English language proficiency corresponding to a level C2 within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, my French and especially German language proficiency is less

⁷⁹ e.g., an accumulation of booked tours in spring and summer, and the acquisition of a new guide, rendered the scheduling and conduct of an interview with Martin and Nadine from Wiener Nimmerland impossible.

⁸⁰ e.g., social media offered quicker response rates than communication via email and text message.

⁸¹ e.g., my class-based language use and long emails discouraged (fast) response rates.

developed. After eight years of French education and three years of German education in secondary school, I can express myself rather comfortably in French. However, my reproductive German writing and speaking skills are limited, which proved to be a challenge when engaging with tour participants during participatory tour observations in Vienna (see annex). Luckily, most research participants in Vienna were able and willing to engage in English, French or Dutch. When this was not the case, online translation tools and bodily expressions made up for any potential initial misunderstandings. In Copenhagen, a command of Danish proved to be mostly unnecessary due to a high level of English language proficiency in the overall Danish population. However, a language barrier was felt and expressed by me and my fellow tour participants when embarking on a Ghetto Tour: although guides spoke English, some seemed to express themselves less fluently or confidently than would have been the case in their native language (see focus group discussion in annex).⁸²

7.1.3 Ethical research relations and the issue of informed consent

I often noticed tensions between research participants' manners of engagement and my own, grounded in academic standards of rigorous scientific conduct that, at times, felt imposing⁸³. In response and after consulting my supervisor on these ethical doubts, I decided to adhere to an entangled ethics instead (supra), as such acknowledging ethics as a continuous and collaborative process of renegotiation. In doing so, I went beyond standards of ethics as a one-size fits all, and started listening and responding more effectively to opportunities for more ethical research encounters (Stouten et al., 2025). This was, for example, reflected in prioritising building rapport at first contact over obtaining relevant data for analysis; omitting technical jargon and long sentences from information letters and personal correspondence; and allowing participants to give informed consent and be represented in a manner that *they* preferred – regardless of if this was recorded or documented, and resulted in a coherent framework for participant representation.

Informed consent in particular proved to be challenging in the case of legal minors. Decisions regarding their involvement in research is often transferred to an adult legal guardian. This is done to protect children in light of their still-developing mental capacities; instead, adults are deemed to be able to make well-informed considerations about the potential advantages and disadvantages of research participation on their behalf (Carroll-Lind, Chapmana, Gregory, & Maxwell, 2006). Nevertheless good intentions, this standard for ethical conduct can inflict harm itself when denying youth decision-making power over their own situation, at times prohibiting or imposing research participation that runs counter to their own wishes (Stouten et al., 2025).

⁸² It must be noted that this Ghetto Tour exceptionally occurred in English, and that the youth who guided the tour are volunteers. Although they have perceived training, they are still learning in-situ on how to convey and present a story to different audiences, while reconciling the co-existence of six personal narratives in one tour.

⁸³ e.g., the idea that informed consent has to be recorded or documented, which was experienced as an unnecessary 'task' by most, and could evoke feelings of discomfort and distrust among some.

When conducting participatory observations with school children during *Wiener Nimmerland*-tours, I tried to obtain informed consent from their teachers as their guardians at the time of touring. I did so through a passive informed consent message, distributed via the official email address of *Wiener Nimmerland* to each teacher before commencement of their school group's tour. At the same time, I kindly asked teachers to give their students notice of my presence in the tour within the framework of my master's thesis. However, when presenting myself and my research at the start of each tour, I noticed that most pupils had not been informed by their teacher prior. During the tours themselves, I observed youth glancing at me writing in my notebook, or asking me what I would do with their data. In other words, I had not truly obtained *informed* consent, at least not by the youth who I was observing. Although data is anonymized and the research topic is not necessarily stigmatizing or harmful in any way to the youth in question, I doubt that they would have spoken out against research participation in the context of a supervised school fieldtrip, thereby partly forcing their hand herein.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Future research

Future research avenues can explore differences in existential authentication between poverty tours – i.e., as guided walking tours that tour sights and images of local urban precarity – and lectures, symposia and discussions facilitated by the same guides of poverty tours in places of their participants' choosing⁸⁴. The latter implies less experiential, dialogical and place-based ways of learning. At the same time, its embedment in a familiar physical and/or social place for participants can establish an emotionally safe environment to allow for the emergence of mutual emotional vulnerability and humanization. Furthermore, a more in-depth engagement with collaborative moments for reflection *in addition to* touring – in comparison to those poverty tour initiatives that do not provide therefor – is needed, as well as a more long-term monitoring of tour participants' learning cycles towards the potential incitement of mutual social recognition of both guide and tour participant. In doing so, the concrete personal and local social impact of poverty tour experiences can be measured. This would also require a profound exploration of local welfare regimes – and local imaginaries of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' welfare recipients linked thereto – to 'make sense' of individuals' learning outcomes in particular horizons of significance.

Additionally, the perspectives of *guides* in processes of constructivist and existential authentication has partly been neglected. Interviews with guides on their experiences of 'authenticity' in poverty tourism mostly yielded irrelevant data. After all, experiences are only partly conveyable, especially those tainted with human suffering and death are often downplayed or withheld. In light thereof, I did not deem it ethical to ask any questions that could evoke traumatic memories – especially considering the limited time for building rapport.

⁸⁴ Guide Martin of *Wiener Nimmerland*, guide Ronja of *Ronja's straatwandeling*, the guides from Ghetto Tours, and guide Julie of *Gadens Stemmer* engage in both types of educational activities.

Being a tour participant myself who organized shared visits with family members, classmates and teachers, I experienced a greater accessibility into *tour participants'* experiences of authenticity. However, by doing so, I reproduced symbolic and epistemological power imbalances in both research and society: tour guides' perspectives have historically been lacking in poverty tourism research, and those impacted by urban precarity are also under represented in societal debate as a whole (Selinger & Outtersson, 2010). Co-creative and participatory research approaches with low-threshold research methods (e.g., sensory methods and participatory-operationalized methods offer lower thresholds to participation) could allow for more direct accounts of guides on 'authentic' encounters, as experienced in poverty tourism.

Poverty tourism initiatives are shaped by the local tourism contexts in which they are allowed to emerge in particular formats and settings over others. A more comparative approach, invested in a study of Vienna's, The Hague's and, respectively, Copenhagen's local city marketing and tourism policy, could unveil nuances in current findings, potentially distinguishing typical elements of local tourism contexts for slightly-different kinds of authentication. Local, regional and national policy documents and action plans on tourism development offer relevant data, as well as interviews with local tourism boards and promoters, and consultation of the latter's official websites. A brief exploration of local city marketing and tourism policy in the cases of Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen showcases engagements with 'sustainable tourism' and 'responsible tourism'. Although this seems to imply a supportive stance towards more ethically-responsible encounters in (poverty) tourism, future research has to look into how discourses of 'sustainable tourism' and 'responsible tourism' are conceptualized and actualized in practice for each city, as inspired by a recent study into the conceptualization of 'urban social sustainability' in scientific discourse (Barrado-Timón, 2020).

7.2.2 Policy recommendations

As the research findings show, commercializing tendencies of poverty tours disrupt the emergence of mutual social recognition and solidarity among guides and tour participants. Framing these tours within a less profit-oriented setting, such as education, could potentially serve sociopolitical – and, after installing a sense of 'hope' – transformative learning better. This would not only require a greater government investment of financial and human resources into both children and adult educational systems (including life-long learning programmes and team outings at work), but also calls for a cultural shift that encourages intersectoral knowledge exchange and collaboration for innovation of existent alternative classroom experiences and *sociopolitical* learning materials (in addition to preventive learning activities). The typology of poverty tours given in this master's thesis (see *supra* table 2) could function as a starting point for designing, operationalizing, piloting, testing and refining alternative learning tools.

Herein, guides cannot be held solely responsible for humanizing themselves vis-à-vis tour participants – as remarked by two tour participants⁸⁵ –, especially when tour participants' questions and behaviour

⁸⁵ e.g., see interviews with Soledad and Nikita in annex (*infra*).

potentially imply experiences of disrespect and psychological-existential danger. In response, guides require more psychological, communicative and organizational support, calling for a network of experiential guides across poverty tour initiatives in Europe to exchange best practices and relieve emotional pressures. Additionally, professionals (e.g., social and health care workers, civil servants, academics who have perhaps engaged in poverty tourism themselves) can also aid guides in the set-up of effective organizational structures, communications and psychological supports that enable their day-to-day operations. In return, guides can offer professionals collaborations on other projects, such as giving lectures or providing consultation as experiential experts (which guide Ronja of *Ronja's straatwandeling* is already offering as a paid service). Perhaps most importantly, guides are entitled to and must set boundaries to, e.g., the participant profiles that they accept on their tours and the kind of questions that can be posed, as such communicating clear expectations to tour participants on how guides can be engaged with. Although this would perhaps imply less truly critical and adversary encounters for breaking existent ways of being, knowing and doing, the emotional safety of guides must be guaranteed to allow for an existentially authentic encounter in the first place. Again, the ambiguities and contradictories in existential authentication vis-à-vis self-identification and personal transformation cannot be easily dealt with, as showcased here.

Furthermore, most poverty tours lack moments for collaborative reflexivity and dialogue, which is highly relevant for realizing tour participants' own agentic role in creating and maintaining urban precarity and "restoring equality" among tour guide and participants (translated excerpt from interview with guide Ronja of *Ronja's straatwandeling*). Inspired by *Ronja's straatwandeling* – more precisely, the 'coffee moment' that she built into the end of her tour –, I believe that the incorporation of distinctively reflective and dialogical activities into the tour can offer grounds for personal and societal transformation, especially when this occurs – literally and figuratively – on equal footing (e.g., all sitting down around a table; drinks are included in the ticket price). A take-home survey and/or a follow-up talk, as well as the establishment of a network of tour participants can foster reflexivity even more, harnessing the potentiality that was enacted during such moments of existentially authentic engagement. In sum, in reimagining the cultural practice of guided walking tours beyond the touring itself, a genuine encounter between tour guides and participants emerges that allows for a mutual existential authentication that serves both.

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Annex

A. TOUR TRAJECTORIES

a) Guided walking tours in Vienna: SHADES TOURS and Wiener Nimmerland (April-June 2024)

Viennese tourism imaginaries

Vienna is the capital city and one of the nine federal states of Austria. Currently, Vienna has more than two million inhabitants. Positioned at Austria's eastern border, Vienna is geographically located in the middle of the European continent, calling forward representations as the geopolitical and cultural connection between 'West' and 'East' throughout European history (e.g., Christian versus Ottoman Europe; capitalist versus communist Europe). Vienna was established around 15 B.C. as a Roman military settlement called 'Vindobona'. Between 1282 and 1918 it was the main seat of power of the Habsburg empire, at its high spanning over numerous parts of Western (e.g., the low countries and northern France), Southern (e.g., Spain) and Eastern Europe (e.g., Czechoslovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, East Ukraine, Hungary, ...). A large part of the local tourism sector is focused on cultural heritage from the Habsburg era, as illustrated by the 'must see'-

proposals on Vienna's Tourist Board's official website (e.g., Wiener Staatsoper, Hofburg, Stephansdom, Karlskirche, Rathauspark, Schloss Belvedere, Schloss Schönbrunn) (WienTourismus, n.d.). In dominant tourist imaginaries, Vienna is well-known for its imposing historical architecture and coffee house culture (e.g., café Landtmann, café Sacher) of the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as its 'sustainable' and 'liveable' cultural practices and material infrastructures developed during the last century (e.g., swimming in the Danube and hiking in the vineyards; Prater park; buildings by environmental activist and artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser; social housing estate 'Karl Marx Hof' from the socialist 'Red Vienna' interwar period); an urban imaginary that gains more and more ground due to its consistently high ranking on the internationally renowned Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) index of 'most liveable cities' worldwide (EIU, 2024).

The current *poverty* tourism landscape of Vienna mainly originated from SUPERTRAMPS, a labour market integration project that was set-up in 2017. SUPERTRAMPS trained formerly homeless persons to become guides of 'their' versions of Vienna, taking tour participants on a guided walk through Wiener Prater (i.e., a park in northeastern Vienna that holds an historical significance for the Viennese homeless population as a popular place for lingering and dwelling). SUPERTRAMPS disbanded in 2021, creating two independent organizations in its wake: *Wiener Nimmerland* and Backstreet Guides⁸⁶ (SUPERTRAMPS, n.d.). In addition, Perrine Schrober had been developing her social non-profit enterprise of SHADES TOURS since 2015.

SHADES TOURS

SHADES TOURS is a social non-profit enterprise, founded by Perrine Schrober in 2015. Inspired by pro-poor tourism in the Global South as a graduate in tourism management, Schrober decided to employ experiential experts on topics of homelessness, addiction and refuge to tell 'another side' of Vienna. The revenues of the tour directly serve the coverage of the administrative and operational costs of the company, as well as the wages of the guides. Its website particularly stresses the educational importance of their tours as transformative and emancipatory for both guides and tour participants, explicitly distinguishing itself from voyeuristic tendencies found in 'poverty tourism' by opting for the label of 'social tourism' instead (SHADES TOURS, n.d.). In accordance with the definition of poverty tourism as stated in this master's thesis (*supra*), I hereby nevertheless categorize SHADES TOURS as such.

⁸⁶ Backstreet Guides is excluded from sampling after numerous attempts via their website to get into touch. I hypothesize that their potentially illegal operations – i.e., being registered as a social non-profit association ('gemeinnütziger, sozialer Verein') that does not communicate on the manners in which revenues of the tours are reinvested in the Viennese homeless population – could cause Backstreet Guides to refrain from research participation, and the scrutiny that this would imply. Nevertheless, this aspect of informality could have provided a different, valuable perspective on existential authentication through poverty tours in European welfare state cities.

At the moment of writing, SHADES TOURS offers two thematic tours – “Armut & Obdachlosigkeit” (“Poverty and Homelessness”) and “Sucht & Drogen” (“Addiction and Drugs”), mostly conducted in German – thus seemingly catering to locals and German-speaking tourists (tours in English are not offered at the moment due to low demand therefor). During approximately one and a half to two hours each, a woman in her fifties who had been homeless due to mental sickness (i.e., guide of “Armut & Obdachlosigkeit”-tour) and a man in his thirties who had been addicted to hard drugs and, as a result, had been temporarily homeless (i.e.,

guide of “Sucht & Drogen”-tour) led tour participants through central districts of Vienna. Trajectories of both thematic tours can be seen in figure 3 and 4. For a more detailed description of all the stops and their content, I refer to the online interactive version thereof, created and to be consulted at ArcGIS Storymaps (see website links). I participated in both thematic tours on June 8 and 9, 2024 (infra). Unfortunately, I was unable to interview or collaborate with (guides of) SHADES TOURS, as communicated via email due to a busy schedule with tours and related activities. Besides from my own autoethnographies (infra), empirical data on SHADES TOURS-experiences are thus limited in comparison to other tour initiatives.

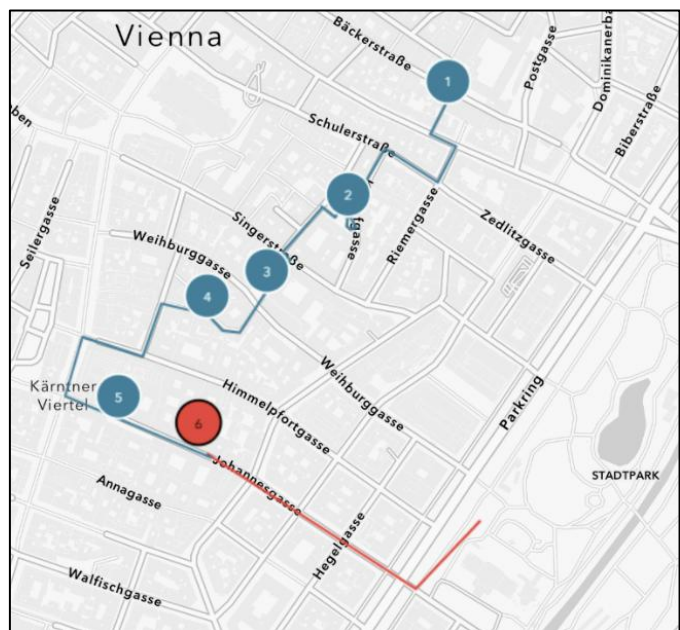


Fig. 1. Trajectory of SHADES TOURS’ “Armut & Obdachlosigkeit”-tour, created with ArcGIS StoryMaps (interactive map: <https://arcg.is/ObKS550>)

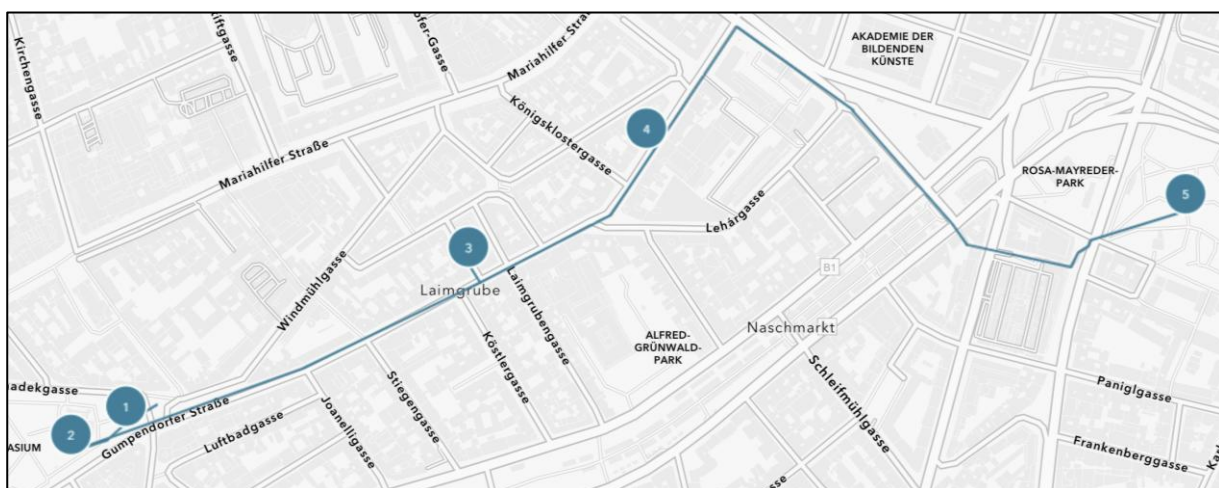


Fig. 2. Trajectory of SHADES TOURS’ “Sucht & Drogen”-tour, created with ArcGIS StoryMaps (interactive map: <https://arcg.is/jzPb51>)

Wiener Nimmerland

After the disbandment of SUPERTRAMPS (supra), guide Martin Klinger was inspired by his romantic – and, currently – business partner, Nadine Liebl, to set-up his own guided walking tour-company. Over the course of 2025, they have expanded the company by employing a second guide, Nico. The name of the company –

Wiener Nimmerland or ‘Viennese Neverland’ – refers both to Martin’s ‘punk attitude’ – arriving in Vienna as a young adult who never wanted to grow up like a ‘Peter Pan/Punk’ – and the anonymity and associated indifference that big cities such as Vienna offer (*Wiener Nimmerland*, n.d.). Whereas Martin is the guide of the story, telling about his past experiences as an addict and homeless person in Vienna (and partly in Spain), Nadine takes care of all administrative and operational aspects of the firm.

Most tours are conducted in German – having a clientele of mostly local and other German-speaking school groups –, although tours do occasionally take place in English and with audiences of private persons and practitioners engaged with themes of urban precarity (e.g., doctors, judges, social workers). The tour takes about one and a half to two hours, and departs from Karlsplatz – partly overlapping with the trajectory of the SHADES TOURS-tour on addiction and drugs. More information on the tour stations and their narrated content can be found in an interactive online map, whose website link is given under figure 5. I participated in a *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour with classmates and family members in April, 2024, while ‘tagging along’ on other tours for participatory observations between 31/05/2024 and 07/06/2024 (infra).

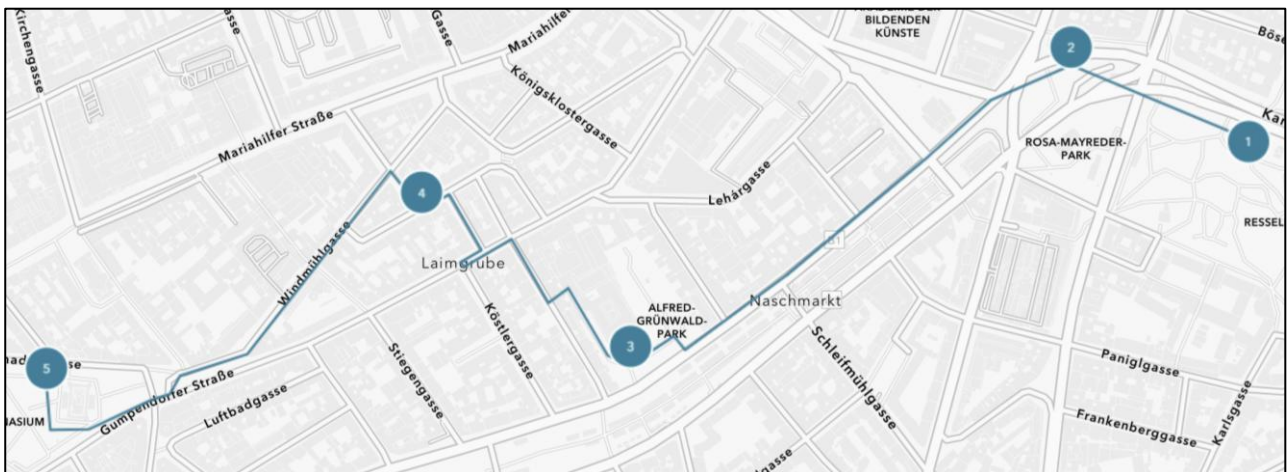


Fig. 3. Trajectory of *Wiener Nimmerland*'s tour, created with ArcGIS StoryMaps (interactive map: <https://arcg.is/1Hjq180>)

b) Guided walking tour in The Hague: *Ronja's straatwandeling* (August 2024)

The Hague's tourism imaginaries

The Hague is the political ‘capital’ of the Netherlands, clustering international and national institutions of judiciary, legislative and executive power within its territory (e.g., the historical parliament complex of ‘het binnenhof’ in the inner city; the International Criminal Court and Court of Justice in the embassy neighbourhood). It was originally established as a roman settlement, serving as a focal point for politics and trade within the low countries since the Middle Ages. With more than 800.000 residents and located closely to major cities of Amsterdam, Utrecht and Rotterdam, The Hague is part of the ‘Randstad’ – i.e., the most urbanized and densely populated area of the Netherlands. With sea side views in sub municipalities of Scheveningen and Kijkduin, The Hague attracts both cultural (e.g., visiting het Mauritshuis, het binnenhof or international courts), nature-seeking and leisure tourists, as illustrated by the listing of tourist attractions by The Hague & Partners, the official tourism marketing company for The Hague (n.d.).

Ronja's straatwandeling

Ronja's straatwandeling or 'Ronja's street walk' is a private initiative operated and guided by Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak. Since 2023, Ronja tells the story of 'hidden' – at least, to the untrained eye – homelessness departing from her own past of having been homeless in The Hague, especially focusing on the female experience thereof. During a timeframe of approximately three hours, she takes tour participants on a walk of the inner city, and concludes with a reflective and informal dialogue at local café 'The American Coffee', as showcased in figure 6. Details on the tour trajectory and its stops can be found in an interactive online map, accessible via the website link provided under figure 6.

Most tour participants are professionals engaging with themes of (urban) precarity and/or homelessness in the Netherlands (e.g., local governments, policymakers, social workers, health care workers); consequently, all tours are conducted in Dutch only. In addition to guiding, Ronja is a self-employed advisor, coach, and public speaker, as well as researcher at the HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (NL) regarding homelessness and related (urban) precarities (Bruijns-Shoblak, n.d.). I participated in *Ronja's straatwandeling* in August 2024 with two family members (i.e., Patricia and Koen) and another couple of privately-paying individuals who both work in the Dutch psychiatric sector. I also interviewed Ronja a few days after the tour (infra).

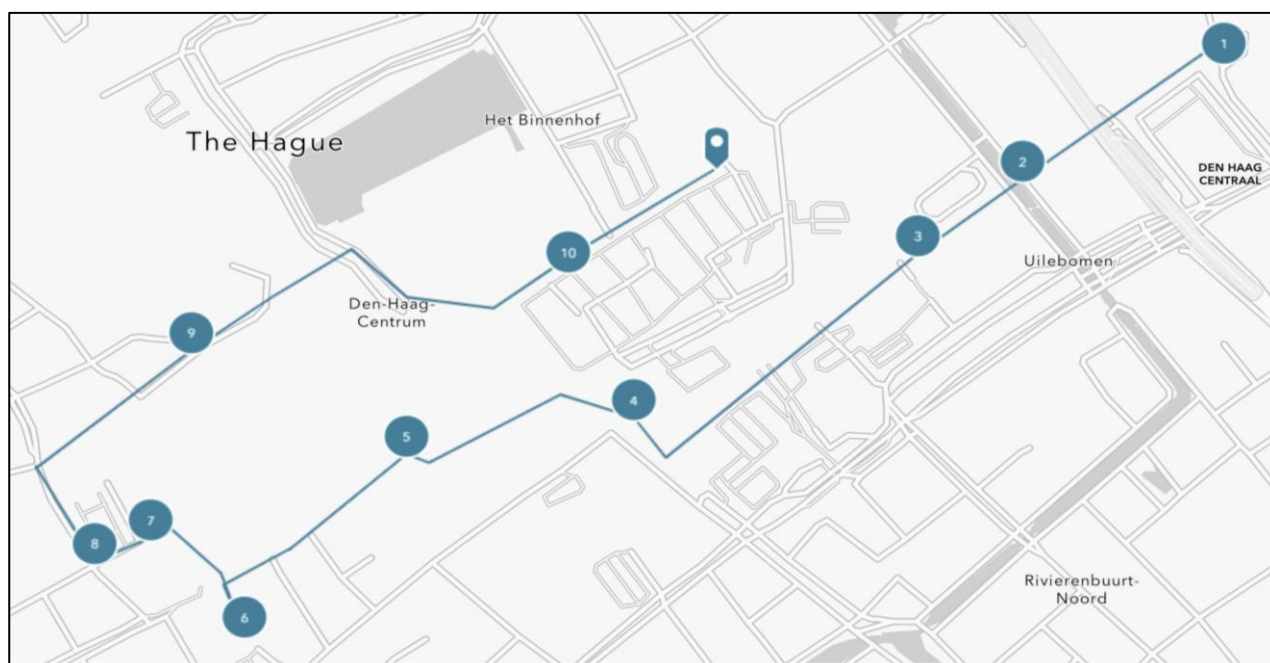


Fig. 4. Trajectory of Ronja's straatwandeling's tour, created with ArcGIS StoryMaps (interactive map: <https://arcg.is/1rXPK9>)

c) Guided walking tours in Copenhagen: Ghetto Tours and *Gadens Stemmer* (October 2024)

Copenhagen's tourism imaginaries

Located at the Baltic Sea as a natural border between Denmark and the Swedish city of Malmö, Copenhagen was established as a fortress by bishop Absalon in 1167. Currently, the Greater Copenhagen Region encompasses approximately 1.3 million inhabitants. Over recent years, Copenhagen has been transformed

from its rundown industrial imaginary in the 1980s to be renowned as a diverse and international hub that remained rooted in local traditions and customs. Official tourism marketing websites of Visit Denmark (n.d.) and Visit Copenhagen (n.d.) depict Copenhagen rather diversely, at times drawing upon its medieval and baroque past as a royal city (exemplified through sites of Amalienborg, Christiansborg, Frederiksborg and Rosenborg), other times praising its qualities as a modern design city (e.g., Danish Design Museum, BLOX, Royal Danish Opera) or a *hygge* city (e.g., shopping street Strøget; the coloured houses of Nyhavn; the decorations of amusement park Tivoli; ‘finding community’ at Freetown Christiania; social dining). Similar to Vienna, Denmark’s capital has always been high up in EIU’s ‘liveable city’ ranking (EIU, 2024), thereby adding to tourism imaginaries that praise Copenhagen’s ‘sustainability’ and ‘good life’ (e.g., the waste incinerator plant and ski slope of *Amager Bakke* or ‘CopenHill’; biking and cold plunging infrastructures and cultures).

Ghetto Tours

Operated under the banner of RessourceCenter Ydre Nørrebro – i.e., a community centre for youth in Haraldsgade, a neighbourhood of Ydre Nørrebro (Copenhagen) –, six local residents in the beginning of their twenties narrate their experiences of growing up as a Muslim and person of colour in a predominately white and secularized Christian Danish society. Instigated by the national ‘Ghetto Laws’, which label a neighbourhood as ‘a ghetto’ on the basis of social features such as migrant descentance and education level, these youth attempt to combat territorial stigmatization of Haraldsgade as a former ‘ghetto’ by focusing on moments of personal growth and mundane life throughout their childhoods instead (Ghetto Tours, n.d.).

Most participants of Ghetto Tours-tours are local school groups, or private individuals and politicians from Denmark; consequently, tours are almost exclusively conducted in Danish. Over the course of two hours, the guides led my classmates, teachers and me through ‘their’ neighbourhood. This occurred in English and during night time, thus distinguishing itself from other identified poverty tours that mostly proceed during day times only. However, the required command of English was experienced as a language barrier by some tour participants (see *supra* research limitations). The exact trajectory and content of the tour can be found in an interactive online map, which is accessible via the website link provided under figure 7. I also interviewed one to three

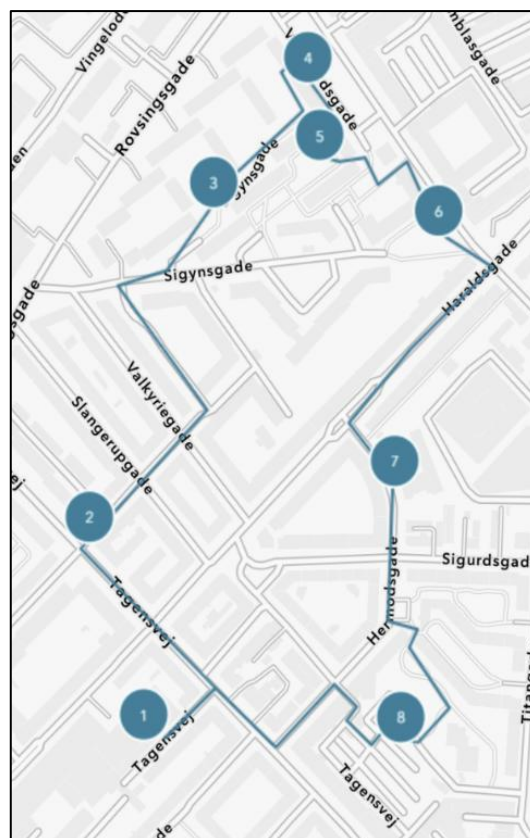


Fig. 5. Trajectory of Ghetto Tours’ tour, created with ArcGIS StoryMaps (interactive map: <https://arcg.is/0TXzP1>)

tour guides on two separate occasions; one time before participating in the tour myself in a more informal manner, and another time officially after participating in one of their tours (infra).

Gadens Stemmer

‘Voices of the Street’ or *Gadens Stemmer* is a social enterprise, established in 2010 and currently managed by Vickie Bak Laursen. The company employs (formerly) homeless and addicted persons, and those who are or have been involved in sex trafficking or crime related to psychiatric diagnoses as guides. Currently, tours of approximately one and a half to two hours are offered in cities of Copenhagen, Aalborg, Vejle, Odense and Esbjerg, all over Denmark. Lectures at preferred places of booking (e.g., at people’s homes; in schools) are also possible. Similar to SHADES TOURS in Vienna (supra), the transformative and emancipatory potential for both guides and tour participants, as well as the non-voyeuristic character of the tours are emphasized on its website. *Gadens Stemmer* offers other companies the opportunity to meet conditions of corporate social responsibility, mentioning the companies in question on its website after a certain amount of financial donations (Gadens Stemmer, n.d.). After multiple attempts via email and mobile telephone, I got no response to my invite for research participation from *Gadens Stemmer*. As such, its organizational perspective is unfortunately lacking from this research – albeit I am grateful for the voluntary engagement of guide Julie, employed at *Gadens Stemmer*.

Most tours proceed with Danish school children, although private companies and individuals are also accommodated. Some prescheduled tours in English can be booked, allowing me to participate in a tour on heroine addiction (and, partly, homelessness) by guide Julie in October, 2024. Although Julie’s narration mostly referred to experiences in other Danish cities than Copenhagen, she used places in Copenhagen that evoked images and sensations in support of her story (e.g., a medical centre for safe drugs usage; Copenhagen’s ‘red light district’ in Istedgade; the main train station as a gathering place for local urban precarity). I interviewed Julie two times after participating in her tour – in both an informal and more formal setting (infra). The exact tour trajectory can be found in figure 8, including reference to an interactive online map.

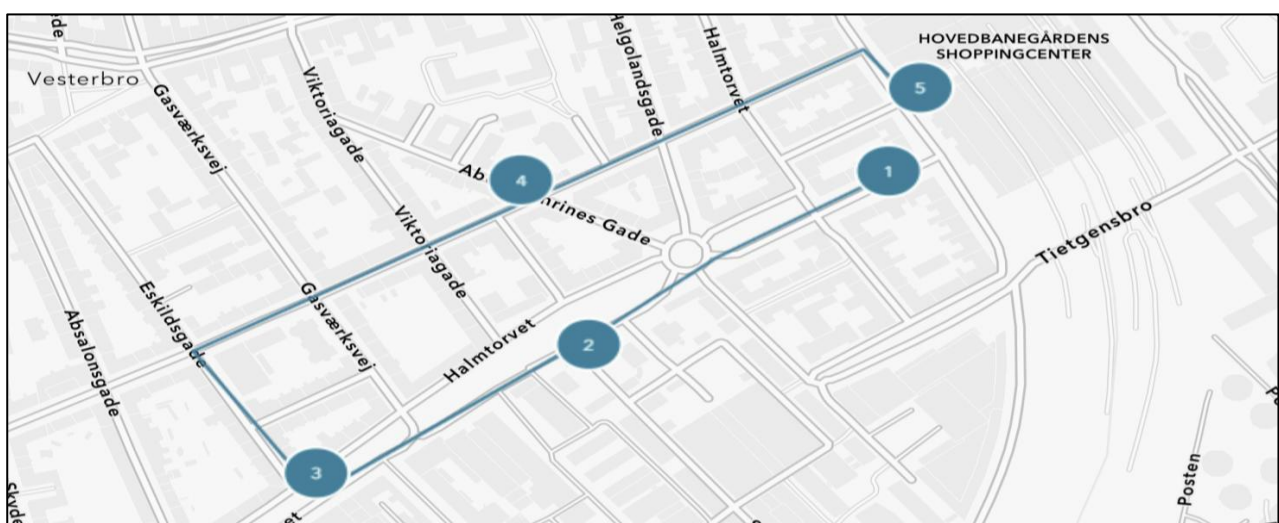


Fig. 6. Trajectory of Gadens Stemmer’s tour, created with ArcGIS StoryMaps (interactive map: <https://arcg.is/18HXzn0>)

B. INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

a) Overview of interviews and focus group discussion

- 1) Informal* interviews during *Wiener Nimmerland*-tours participatory observations
 - Duration: approx. 2 min. per person
 - Conducted in-person on 31/05/2024, 03/06/2024 (two tours were observed that day), 04/06/2024, 06/06/2024 and 07/06/2024
 - Conducted in German mostly, complemented by English, French and Dutch
 - * No audio recording and informed consent forms in order to build rapport and gain trust
- 2) Interview with Güntner⁸⁷, participant of *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour on 03/06/2024
 - Duration: approx. 13 min.
 - Conducted in-person on 22/06/2024
 - Conducted in English
- 3) Interview with Lilian, participant of *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour on 31/05/2024
 - Duration: approx. 10 min.
 - Conducted via mobile telephone on 11/07/2024
 - Conducted in Dutch
- 4) Interview after participating in tour with Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak, guide at *Ronja's straatwandeling*
 - Duration: approx. 43 min.
 - Conducted online on 30/08/2024
 - Conducted in Dutch
- 5) Informal* interview before participating in tour with three anonymized guides at Ghetto Tours
 - Duration: 60 min.
 - Conducted in-person on 18/09/2024
 - Conducted in English
 - * No audio recording and informed consent forms in order to build rapport and gain trust
- 6) Interview after participating in tour with F, guide at Ghetto Tours
 - Duration: approx. 45 min.
 - Conducted in-person on 12/11/2024
 - Conducted in English
- 7) Informal* interview after participating in tour with Jullie, guide at *Gadens Stemmer*
 - Duration: 90 min.
 - Conducted in-person on 19/11/2024
 - Conducted in English

⁸⁷ All interviewees and focus group participants are represented in accordance with their verbally communicated personal preferences. This results in a mix of anonymized, first name, and full name mentionings; favouring participants' preferences over potential coherence in representations (see ethics).

- * No audio recording and informed consent form in order to build rapport and gain trust
- 8) Interview after participating in tour with Julie, guide at *Gadens Stemmer*
 - Duration: approx. 43 min.
 - Conducted online on 24/03/2025
 - Conducted in English
 - 9) Focus group discussion with Adriana, José Bucio, Madeline, Rozalia Sos, Shellyn Fortuna and Soledad, participants of *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour on 02/04/2024 and Ghetto Tours-tour on 10/09/2024
 - Duration: approx.. 57 min.
 - Conducted in-person on 31/03/2025
 - Conducted in English
 - 10) Interview with Nikita, participant of *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour on 02/04/2024
 - Duration: approx. 66 min.
 - Conducted online on 11/04/2025
 - Conducted in English
 - 11) In-person interview with Koen and Patricia, participants of *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour on 02/04/2024 and *Ronja's straatwandeling* on 24/08/2024
 - Duration: approx. 13 min.
 - Conducted in-person on 22/04/2025
 - Conducted in Dutch
 - 12) In-person interview with Bert and Emilienne, participants of *Wiener Nimmerland*-tour on 02/04/2024
 - Duration: approx. 22 min.
 - Conducted in-person on 26/04/2025
 - Conducted in Dutch

b) Semi-structured interview questionnaires and transcripts

1) Informal interviews during Wiener Nimmerland-tours participatory observations (31/05/2024-07/06/2024)

QUESTIONNAIRE (in German)

[Spoken information at commencement of tour] Hallo, Ich bin Elien, ein Auslandsstudent von Belgien an der Universität Wien. Mein Deutsch ist nicht so gut, mein Muttersprache ist Niederländisch, also Ich spreche gelegentlich im English wann Deutsch mich versagt. Ich schreibe eine Magisterarbeit über Initiativen wie die von Martin. Genauer gesagt, möchte ich untersuchen, wie Bedeutungen geschaffen werden. Martin bereitet den Rundgang vor, aber die Bedeutung ergibt sich erst in der Interaktion, wie man sie interpretiert. Ich mache keine Fotos oder Videos, ich beobachte nur, wie die Tour abläuft, und komme gelegentlich auf ein Gespräch vorbei, wenn wir von Ort A nach Ort B gehen. Ist das okay? Sie sind in keiner Weise erkennbar in der

Magisterarbeit. Sie müssen sich keine Sorgen um meine Anwesenheit machen, genießen Sie einfach die Tour und tun Sie so, als ob ich nicht hier wäre

- Warum haben Sie sich für diese Tour entschieden?
- Haben Sie bereits Erfahrungen mit Touren oder vergleichbare Aktivitäten zu Themen der Prekarität?
- Wie beeinflusst dies Ihre Erfahrung mit der Tour?
- Haben Sie bereits Erfahrungen mit Obdachlosigkeit und/oder Sucht in irgendeiner Form gemacht? (zum Beispiel bei der Freiwilligenarbeit)
- Welchen Einfluss hat dies auf Ihre Erfahrung mit dieser Tour?
- Wie würden Sie diese Art von Initiative beschreiben?
- Wie bewerten Sie Ihr Gesamterlebnis bei dieser Tour auf einer Skala von zehn? Erläutern Sie bitte Ihre Bewertung
- Wie bewerten Sie die Art und Weise, wie er Ihnen seine Geschichte erzählt und zeigt, auf einer Skala von zehn? Erläutern Sie bitte Ihre Bewertung
- Welche Gedanken kommen Ihnen bei dieser Tour?
- Welche Gefühle löst diese Tour bei Ihnen aus?
- Was nehmen Sie aus seiner Geschichte mit? Was wird Ihnen in Erinnerung bleiben? Warum glauben Sie, dass gerade diese Geschichte bei Ihnen hängen bleiben wird?
- Was ist die Bedeutung dieser Tour? Wie kann sie sinnvoll sein?
- Kann diese Tour Ihre Wahrnehmung von Obdachlosigkeit und Sucht verändern? Auf welche Weise?
- Kann diese Tour Ihr Verhalten in Bezug auf Obdachlosigkeit und Sucht verändern? Inwiefern?

TRANSCRIPT: see infra fieldnotes (no audio recording was made in order to build rapport and gain trust)

2) Interview with Güntner, participant of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour (22/06/2024)

QUESTIONNAIRE: missing⁸⁸

TRANSCRIPT⁸⁹

Elien Stouten: You went on a tour with Wiener Nimmerland. Could you describe a bit: who are you as a participant and why did you participate?

Günter: I actually didn't really participate. I was just accompanying a class. My colleague, Roth, taught a class in ethics, and the topic is drugs and addiction. I'm the head teacher or the class teacher, and he asked me to take the class to this outing.

Stouten: Did you do a reflection, or did you hear that your colleague did a reflection afterwards in class?

⁸⁸ I have made questionnaires, tailored to each interview specifically. However, when stated 'missing', the questionnaire list as a physical exemplar has been lost during moving from one city to another within the framework of 4CITIES, or accidentally deleted from mobile devices.

⁸⁹ Audio recordings of complete interviews can be provided on request, after initial cleaning thereof (i.e., after removal of certain name mentionings and potentially discrediting information).

Güntner: I didn't. I'm sure my colleague did. I was talking to the kids afterwards, but more informal, not officially.

Stouten: What did you hear informally?

Güntner: They really liked it. They thought it was really interesting. I'm not sure if addiction-wise that there's anything really new for them, but it was a different kind of input. You can look at books and read about it, but - do you know the book 'Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo'?

Stouten: No.

Güntner: It's a book about Berlin in the 70s, a little girl, 13 or 14 years who is having troubles with the parents and is starting to get into the drug scene. A lot of those girls read the book and they loved it. It's the best way to keep kids from falling over the edge. Is different from watching a film or reading a book. The teacher tells you something about it. This was a more direct way. That was really interesting for them.

Stouten: This was different, because it was a more direct way or it was a person himself explaining?

Güntner: Yes, exactly. I think that it really makes a difference if somebody who actually went through this - the fact that he kept saying 'I'm still...'. It's not like he did it once and then it's over.

Stouten: Do you feel like it can change perceptions?

Güntner: In which way? Towards drug addicts?

Stouten: Yes, for example.

Güntner: Probably too, yes, but I don't think that was really directly a problem for them. I think they kept coming from themselves 'Would I start something?'

Stouten: It can impact their behaviour?

Güntner: I think it will. They will think twice about taking any drugs. I'm sure that there's not one book and not one person and not one lesson that will keep them, but they hear it from different sides, different ways. I think that was a very good and very direct way.

Stouten: So, it's more of a preventive story?

Güntner: Yes. And the good thing, I felt like, because he was a very sympathetic person, and he was very open. I think that's very important. They took him seriously, the questions seriously. And he answered them honestly. I think that really helped.

Stouten: Were there any reactions during or after the tour that surprised you?

Güntner: No. Not really.

Stouten: Are there for you, personally, any meanings that changed maybe? That you saw things differently or acted differently?

Güntner: The kids or me?

Stouten: For you or the kids.

Güntner: I was happy to go along cause my kids went to the school at Karlsplatz. I was wondering if he was there when I brought the kids. I let my kids go quite early alone, cause I never had the feeling that they were threatened by them. And it was also a good prevention: this saw those - I didn't want to say - kids every day,

and you could see how fucked up they were. So even if you were 8 or 9, you realise, this is no fun. I don't know.

Stouten: You know the places that we went to on the tour. Do you see them differently now?

Güntner: I saw the [red., gated] park the first time, and it was interesting. I went to the same park last week with a class, just to - because I thought it was such a nice place to sit and relax and stuff. But now I looked around and I saw signs of where people were still sleeping. That was something completely - I've never seen that park before.

Stouten: You said that you saw more signs? Are you more attentive now or you see it differently now?

Güntner: I'm not sure because those kids, those drug addicts, they are not there anymore. Several years ago, they changed some laws there. But probably, if I went to different places now, I might see them differently. But I mean, his life story, it was not like that was so surprising. I felt like it was quite typical: young kids, you start with alcohol early, some problems in the family. It's almost textbook. But still, when you read about a kid like that, you don't believe it until you talk to the person directly. For me personally, the more interesting, or the most lasting impact for me was the story about Pizzeria Anarchia. I thought that was really interesting. Cause I do remember that, and I have been talking to some colleagues and a lot of people about this. Actually, even in history class, cause that was quite interesting how the police went there with overwhelming force.

Stouten: Yes, definitely (*laughs*). That's also maybe a part of history that is maybe typically Viennese?

Güntner: Yes, that's also what I think. One of the big topics in all of big cities are gentrification. And those guys that buy up those houses and threaten them with eviction and stuff. That wasn't the topic of the tour, but it totally was - I didn't wanna say 'more interesting' - but it was more lasting for me. Cause I felt that there was a story. I looked it up on the Internet afterwards.

Stouten: Cause that's also a thing that he does. He tells about his own experiences, but he mixes it up with bigger structural forces.

Güntner: Exactly.

Stouten: Is that something which was beneficial to you?

Güntner: For me, personally, definitely. I'm still not sure if the kids really understood that part, unfortunately. I think they were still focused on the addicts story and the drugs and stuff. I don't think they really understood what was going on.

Güntner: Do you know the Wiener Museum?

Stouten: Hmm (*accompanied by affirmative nod*).

Güntner: Last week, I went with a class, and I showed them - in the 70s, they had the [Arena](#), where they were trying to build - I'm trying to connect the topic (*laughs*), you know, 'Who owns the city?' And that was the question that was also asked in the museum. And I felt like that was also somehow addressed in that story. But I'm not sure if they really understood. We probably have a lot of kids - how am I gonna say? - their parents are from a more wealthy - our kids are probably closer to the people that *own* (*emphasis*) those houses.

Stouten: Do you feel like that makes a difference in reception maybe, to ask a cheeky question, your social class or your own living experience, for example?

Güntner: Definitely, because they don't have a problem with that. An example: during corona, there were honest questions like 'Well, if they are closed up in their apartments, why don't they go outside and go to their holiday house?' You know (*laughs*). Well, not everybody has a holiday house. When we did digital learning, lots of kids had a background in an Alpine house, they had a house in [Alt Otseen?] and stuff. We have a lot of wealthy students. Gentrification is not a problem for them. Their parents are actually sometimes the perpetrators more than victims.

Stouten: Do you think that especially for kids for who this is a "switch" in their normality, that tours like this can kinda disrupt that?

Güntner: Definitely, but it's more about drugs and stuff than about gentrification.

Stouten: They are maybe a bit too young still?

Güntner: Yes, that could also be. I think that part of the story is difficult for them to grasp. The idea that those houses are bought up by people and renovated and sold.

Stouten: Can tours like these, besides from being preventive, also be sociopolitical in really changing something for addicts or homeless people in Vienna?

Güntner: Those tours? I mean, I'm not sure if they will change anything in the big way, but I feel like when those kids grow older - and it could be a more implicit in that way - that at least it gets some people to think twice about 'How many apartments are empty in the city?' You know, it is a big problem, but not for them.

Stouten: [Quickly going over the question guide] Maybe for you personally, did you ever do something similar?

Güntner: No, I haven't done. I know that some kids have. Isn't there something called SHADES TOURS?

Stouten: Hmm (*accompanied by affirmative nod*).

Güntner: A couple ones did that.

Stouten: Did you see a difference for them in how they experienced this now?

Güntner: No, I have no idea. For them, probably, it was the same (*laughs*).

Stouten: Yes, I can imagine. Regarding the tour itself: were there some things that you really liked or that you would improve?

Güntner: No, not really. I mean it was engaging. Maybe the beginning was a little long. But it's hard to do it differently cause you wanna tell his life story. I'm not sure you could do it differently.

Stouten: Do you have anything to add?

Güntner: No.

Stouten: [Concluding the conversation and discussing practicalities]

3) Interview with Lilan, participant of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour (11/07/2024)

QUESTIONNAIRE: missing

TRANSCRIPT (in Dutch)

Stouten Elien: Wat is uw ervaring van de tour geweest?

Lilian: Voor mij was het interessant om het een van de kant van een getroffene te horen. Ik woon in de buurt van Karlsplatz en daar was vroeger de drugscène. Maar ik heb er toch altijd veel over nagedacht, over de mensen die daar uit en in gingen, enzovoort.

Stouten: Riep de tour bepaalde gevoelens bij u op?

Lilian: Over het algemeen is het met verslaving aan de ene kant mijn beroep, want ik ben arts, ik ben arts geweest, ik ben nu met pensioen. Ik weet dat het een ziekte is met ongelukkige gevolgen voor de getroffen en anderen, bijvoorbeeld, het was niet veilig om daar [red., Karlsplatz] naartoe te gaan toen daar de drugscène was.

Stouten: Riep de tour bepaalde gedachten bij u op?

Lilian: Dat kan ik niet echt zeggen. Het is meer professioneel.

Stouten: Kijkt u er nu anders op terug, nu er wat tijd is verstreken?

Lilian: Bedoel je sinds die tijd dat er de drugscène was of de rondleiding?

Stouten: Sinds de rondleiding. Of u daar nu anders op terugkijkt nu er enkele weken voorbij zijn?

Lilian: Nou, nee. Het was wel interessant, maar het heeft niets veranderd.

Stouten: Heeft het volgens u een verandering gemaakt in uw gedrag, bijvoorbeeld ten opzichte van mensen met een verslaving of mensen die dakloos zijn?

Lilian: [Vraagt om verduidelijking: interview via telefoon was moeilijk verstaanbaar] Nee, dat heeft bij mij niks veranderd.

Stouten: Heeft het uw percepties veranderd over hoe u kijkt naar mensen die verslaafd of dakloos zijn?

Lilian: Ik heb met mensen met verslaving ook gewerkt. Dat is niets nieuws ofzo. Alleen een fijn ervaringsverhaal hoe hij ermee omgegaan is en ermee omgaat, en ook toegeeft dat er nog steeds problemen zijn. Maar hij maakt wel een positieve indruk van zijn eigen toekomst. Er kunnen ook andere kijken zijn.

Stouten: Wat maakt het precies tot een andere kijk? Ligt het aan hoe hij het verhaal brengt of aan andere zaken?

Lilian: Hij is optimistisch. Er zijn ook veel verslaafden die gewoon denken 'Er wordt niks te beter'.

Stouten: Geeft dat ook hoop over het thema in het algemeen, of lijkt het eerder een individuele zaak te zijn?

Lilian: Dat hangt ervan af, van de omstandigheden. Hij weet waar hij naartoe kan gaan als er iets mis is. Hij moet niet stelen ofzo om aan zijn dingen te komen, dat is toch zo.

Stouten: Heeft het u als inwoner van Wenen anders doen kijken naar de stad?

Lilian: Neen, ik woon hier al lang voor het werk.

Stouten: Wat is het voordeel of nadeel van zulke tours, verteld door iemand die het heeft ervaren, ten opzichte van andere media, zoals een film of een boek?

Lilian: Nou ja, omdat het heel persoonlijk is. Je kan vragen stellen. Het is ook heel goed dat hij het vriendelijk doet. Dat is zeker een heel andere toegankelijkheid. Zeker een veel betere toegang.

Stouten: Ik heb eigenlijk zelf geen vragen meer. Heeft u nog iets dat u wilt toevoegen?

Lilian: Eigenlijk niet. Ik vond het heel interessant en ben heel blij dat ik het gedaan heb.

Stouten: U bent blij omdat u het gedaan heeft: omwille van een bepaalde reden, bijvoorbeeld uw eigen persoonlijke ontwikkeling?

Lilian: [Vraagt om verduidelijking: slecht verstaanbaar en telefoonlijn valt weg. We hebben elkaar meteen teruggebeld] Neen. Eigenlijk, voor persoonlijke ontwikkeling ben ik al veel te oud (*lacht*), en ik heb daar al langer mee te maken gehad. Maar het was vooral gedaan om informatie, vooral natuurlijk ook voor mensen die het probleem niet willen zien of er nooit te maken mee hebben gehad.

Stouten: Daarover ook, ik merkte tijdens mijn bezoeken aan de tour dat het vooral mensen zijn die op voorhand al geïnteresseerd zijn in de tour, die deelnemen. Denkt u dat dat te overkomen is, of dat het vooral mensen zal aantrekken die al geïnteresseerd zijn in de tour?

Lilian: Ik denk wel dat het mensen zijn die voor één of andere persoonlijke reden daar mee willen gaan. Ik kan me ook voorstellen dat kinderen vertellen dat ze op school mee waren en dat ouders willen weten wat ze daar gehoord hebben. Dat kan ik me goed voorstellen.

Stouten: Inderdaad, veel schoolgroepen, dus zo zou het zichzelf wel verder kunnen verspreiden.

Stouten: Oké, super. Ik heb dan eigenlijk geen vragen meer, tenzij u nog iets heeft toe te voegen?

Lilian: [Vraag over interview met haar nichtje en afronding van interview, onder andere over geïnformeerd toestemmingsformulier]

4) Interview with Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak, guide at Ronja's straatwandeling (30/08/2024)

QUESTIONNAIRE (in Dutch)

- Wat is de straatwandeling?
- Hoe is de straatwandeling ontstaan, en om welke reden?
- Wat is jouw visie op dakloosheid - of breder, armoede en onzekerheid -, en hoe geef je deze concreet vorm in de straatwandeling? (Bijvoorbeeld, als een verdoken iets, als een sociaal probleem, als een gestigmatiseerd iets, als een complex iets,...)
- Wat is jouw ervaring van de straatwandeling?
- Welk publiek ontvang je doorgaans op de straatwandeling?
- Hoe pas je je verhaal aan een verschillend publiek?
- Hoe reageert het publiek doorgaans tijdens de boeking (voor de straatwandeling)?
- Hoe reageert het publiek doorgaans tijdens de straatwandeling?
- Hoe reageert het publiek doorgaans na de straatwandeling?
- Welke reacties van het publiek herhalen zich vaak?
- Welke reacties van het publiek hebben je verbaasd en waarom?

- Je hebt een koffiemoment nadien: Wat is de bedoeling hiervan?
- Je geeft een korte vragenlijst nadien: Wat is de bedoeling hiervan?
- Je zei tijdens ons koffiemoment dat je gelooft in een combinatie van systeem- en paradigmaverandering: Kan de straatwandeling hierin iets betekenen volgens jou? Waarom wel/niet?
- Zijn change agents (zowel bottom-up als top-down) op de hoogte van de straatwandeling?
- Hoe beïnvloedt de straatwandeling veranderingen voor dakloosheid in Den Haag/Nederland/global?
- Kan je hiervan concrete voorbeelden geven?
- Wat zijn volgens jou de essentiële elementen van de straatwandeling om de gestelde bedoeling ervan te bereiken? (Bijvoorbeeld, ervaringsexpert nodig? Wat je wel/niet vertelt, hoe je vertelt, ruimtes laten voor stilte/afkoppeling/reflectie,...)
- Is een straatwandeling op zichzelf staande voldoende om verandering te bekomen voor dakloosheid, en waarom wel/niet?
- Ken je gelijkaardige initiatieven?
- Heb je nog andere interviewees die je me zou aanraden voor dit thesisonderwerp?
- Kunnen we in contact blijven en kan ik interpretaties/'bevindingen' bij jou aftoetsen?

TRANSCRIPT (in Dutch)

Elien Stouten: Ik zal ook wat vragen stellen, die ik misschien ook tijdens de straatwandeling zelf heb gesteld. Een heel algemene vraag, wat is de straatwandeling?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: De straatwandeling is een wandeling waarbij ik mensen mee de straat opneem om hen uit te leggen wat dakloosheid betekent en hoe het is om dakloos te zijn, hoe moeilijk het is om hulp te krijgen - ook als je daarom vraagt -, en hoe moeilijk het is om daar weer uit te geraken, en hoe belangrijk individuele mensen zijn waarin ze jouw ondersteunen - het kan een gemeentewerker zijn, een vriendelijk persoon op straat -, om die wispelturigheid, die willekeurigheid van dakloosheid mee te geven aan de mensen. Het doel van de straatwandeling is bewustzijn creëren, maar ook actie - het is echt wel actiegericht -, en ik verwacht wel dat mensen die met mijn straatwandeling mee gaan - niet particulieren, maar ik bedoel professionals zodat ze dat ook echt toe kunnen passen daarna.

En anderzijds is het ook - misschien een spirituele uitleg -, om ruimte terug te pakken in de straat, van de stad. In mijn wandeling vertel ik ook wel eens 'Ja, wie is de stad?' en de stad is eigenlijk van consumenten, en als dakloze persoon ben je eigenlijk het tegenovergestelde van consument. Dus, het is voor mijn ook een manier om mijn ruimte terug te pakken.

Stouten: Ja, dat is een heel mooi antwoord. Ik zal misschien ook even toelichten waar mijn thesis over gaat [licht toe].

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Kan ik ook een vraag stellen aan jou?

Stouten: Ja, zeker.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Want jullie hoofden zaten vast helemaal vol, maar hoe was het voor jullie, alle informatie, in de dag erna, bijvoorbeeld?

Stouten: Ja, dat was inderdaad wel even, dus Stouten: Ik vond het een heel fijn dat er een koffiemomentje nadien was, maar ik had meer tijd nodig om het nadien te verwerken. We hebben er nadien over nagepraat, dat het toch wel heel straffe verhalen waren inderdaad, en hoe dan het systeem ook werkt. Dat het toch wel heel straf is dat er geen hulp is en dat hetgeen wat helpend zou moeten zijn eigenlijk niet helpt. Hoe je ook letterlijk wordt weggeduwd, bijvoorbeeld uit die bib dan, vond ik wel heel schrijnend.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: [Vraagt om herhaling; niet verstaan]

Stouten: Dus er waren echt wel veel voorvallen, waarvan ik dacht 'Dat is eigenlijk niet hoe het zou moeten zijn', inderdaad. Dus ja, ik vind het wel straf. Ik zou niet weten wat ik zelf zou kunnen doen, ik probeer gewoon naar dakloze mensen anders te staan - zoals je zei, niet altijd een broodje kopen, bijvoorbeeld. Maar het voelt wel een beetje machteloos op hetzelfde moment. Ja.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, ik snap het.

Stouten: Ja, want voor jou ook, je doet eigenlijk altijd een evaluatie nadien, of vraagt mensen hoe ze het hadden ervaren?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, ik vraag - ik had het er even bij gepakt [*red.*, haar evaluatievragenlijst], misschien is het behulpzaam; ik kan het je laten zien, maar misschien ook wel voorlezen. Ik heb een formulier dat ik mensen na x-aantal tijd laat invullen, van 'Oké, wat is bijgebleven, en op welke manier heb je er iets mee kunnen doen?' Bijvoorbeeld, hier schrijft iemand dat ze een cliënt toch wel een huis hebben gegeven. Dat soort gevolgen.

Stouten: Dat is wel heel mooi dat je merkt dat het toch wel iets doet. Ik vroeg me dan ook af, voor jezelf, je wilt iets actiegericht, je wilt hier ook echt iets mee betekenen, en je zei dan, vooral naar de mensen - ook vriendelijke mensen op straat natuurlijk, maar niet perse naar particulieren gericht -, vooral beleid. Maar voor particulieren dan, wat is het doel van de straatwandeling voor jou?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Voor particulieren is het meer van bewustzijn creëren. Ik heb niet zo vaak een wandeling met particulieren eigenlijk, maar ik denk dat het wel belangrijk is dat het toegankelijk blijft voor particulieren, omdat - ja, ik had bijvoorbeeld, we vertelden laatst over een dakloze man die we iets hadden gegeven om te eten. Mijn familie ging gelijk 'Oh, maar sommige doen ook alsof ze dakloos zijn.' Ja, dat zijn wel de mensen die stemmen, en die ouderwetse gedachten zorgen er wel voor dat zoveel mensen rechts stemmen. Dat komt niet ten goede voor het beleid voor Wonen en Dakloosheid. Het is ook om hen inzichten te bieden en hen woorden te geven waarin ze nieuwe gedachten kunnen creëren, waarvan ik dan hoop dat het zich verspreidt als een olievlek en zij ook weer iemand durven aan te spreken, als iemand zoiets zegt van 'Ja maar, ze doen maar alsof', 'Ze kochten er drugs voor.'

Stouten: En merk je, een straatwandeling, je schrijft je daar vrijwillig voor in, merk je dat je dat publiek ook aantrekt of dat het vaak mensen zijn die al in die mindset zitten?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja. Het zijn vaak mensen die al sociaal betrokken zijn, of van zichzelf vinden dat ze sociaal betrokken zijn.

Stouten: Heb je manieren, of zou je weten hoe andere doelgroepen te betrekken die daarover conservatiever denken?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ik denk dat het wel kan - dat ik het wel aan zou kunnen trekken -, maar ik wil dat zelf niet. Dat is wel het behulpzaamste eigenlijk, maar dat is voor mij niet emotioneel veilig. Ik heb wel eens zulke mensen in mijn wandeling gehad, en hun reactie heeft ook een invloed op mij, om dan niet een breder publiek aan te spreken.

Stouten: Dat begrijp ik ook, ja. Want je vertelt nog altijd vanuit jouw ervaring, dus.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja.

Stouten: Zijn er zo reacties geweest van mensen die je echt hebben verbaasd of gepakt of wat je zelf ook niet zo goed wist wat je daarmee moest of op moest reageren?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Oh ja, zeker. Zelfs een man een keer - ik ben ook onderzoeker en ik werk bij de VVG - , zelf een keer een man die tegen mij zei 'Vind je het niet vervelend dat je werk doet, wat er niet toe doet?' En zo bleef hij er maar op doorgaan en doorgaan. Je kan niet, en gebruikmaken van mijn service, en dan boos zijn dat ik die service bied. Hij vond de straatwandeling dan wel leuk, maar hij vond dat het niks oploste, en dat ik mij moest inzetten om iets op te lossen. Maar dat is eigenlijk aan de andere: ik heb mijn vereisten al behaald, en dat is dan een voorbeeld, maar dit soort reacties dat kan ik niet begrijpen.

Stouten: Nee, begrijpelijk. Heb je ooit al eens voorgehad dat hetgeen je vertelt anders wordt opgevangen of geïnterpreteerd?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Nee, dat niet, omdat ik heel erg beschrijvend ben laat ik daar weinig ruimte voor over. Aan de andere kant neemt iedereen zijn eigen perspectief mee. Wat jij bijvoorbeeld zegt over de bib, dat dat jou precies raakte; iedereen wordt weer aangesproken door iets anders. Het voorbeeld van die appel die ik moest wegen net zolang tot het mijn kleingeld *matchte* - zeg maar, ik had 50 cent, dan kon ik geen appel kopen van 53 cent - dat raakte iemand anders dan weer erg, en kon die niet stoppen om het erover te hebben. Dus, het leeft bij iedereen op een andere manier. Maar ik denk wel, als je minder omschrijvend bent dan ik, is er wel ruimte voor om verkeerde opvattingen te hebben.

Stouten: Want, wat zijn voor jou zo de kernelementen van de straatwandeling die het maken tot wat het is en maken dat het de doelen kan ontmoeten die je jezelf stelt?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: [Vraagt om herhaling; niet verstaan]

Stouten: Wat zijn de doelen - je wilt dat het actiegericht is, bewustwording maakt - wat zijn volgens jou de elementen die daartoe bijdragen?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Mijn doelgroepen of mensen die het meest de straatwandeling wandelen, dat zijn mensen die ver van de doelgroep afstaan. Hoe verder zij van de doelgroep afstaan, hoe moeilijker het is voor hen om hun werk uit te voeren, omdat zij een belangrijkere taak hebben op langere termijn dan mensen die het dichtst bij de doelgroep staan. Wel belangrijk op langere termijn, omdat zij invloed hebben op beslissingen

van het beleid, etc. Wat ze normaalgesproken doen - kijk, ik word ook wel eens uitgenodigd om te spreken op een conferentie, en dat doe ik heel graag, maar je kunt dissociëren, veilig op een plekje zitten tussen mensen, maar je hoeft je niet kwetsbaar op te stellen. Maar ik denk dat de kern van de straatwandeling is, je kunt niet tegen mij zeggen, als ik in een steegje sta waar ik zeg 'Oké, hier plaste en poepte ik vroeger', dan kan je niet tegen mij zeggen 'Ja, je zal het er zelf wel naar hebben gemaakt.' Dus, heel confronterend, je kunt niet dissociëren, je moet in het nu bij mij zijn. Je moet je kwetsbaar opstellen. Als ik zo tegen jou praat denk ik dat de kern is dat zij zich ook kwetsbaar moeten opstellen. Ze hebben geen andere keuze dan het binnenlaten. En niet iedereen kan dat, daarom gaan soms ook mensen weg tijdens de wandeling.

Stouten: Dat is inderdaad iets wat je hebt ingebouwd, die momenten van 'afkoppeling', is dat ook bewust dat je dat hebt ingebouwd vanaf het begin?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, dat doe ik vanwege triggers omdat veel mensen ervaring hebben met - ik bespreek zoveel onderwerpen, ik praat over mijn vader die is overleden tijdens zijn dakloosheid. Het kan zomaar zijn dat iemand z'n vader is overleden en dat het dan moeilijk wordt, om het zo maar te zeggen. Het is aan de ene kant dat als mensen getriggerd worden dat het voor hen emotioneel veilig blijft, aan de andere kant omdat ik weet dat niet iedereen zich kwetsbaar op kan stellen.

Stouten: Die kwetsbaarheid, daar vroeg ik me over af, hoe is dat voor jou? Want je staat altijd in contact met mensen die zich al dan niet kwetsbaar opstellen, je moet zelf kwetsbaarheid tonen. Hoe weegt dat op jou? Want dat moet ook niet gemakkelijk zijn, denk ik.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ik stel me altijd kwetsbaar op, maar ik probeer me tijdens de wandeling altijd iets minder kwetsbaar op te stellen; als in, wel persoonlijk, maar niet per se kwetsbaar. Ik zorg ervoor dat alles wat ik vertel, dat ik daar al een verwerkingsproces voor heb doorgemaakt. Ik zorg wel goed voor mezelf na de wandeling. Bijvoorbeeld, nadat jullie weggingen, ben ik wel nog ergens koffie gaan drinken ofzo, en toen heb ik die avond nog een taart gebakken. Dus daar kan ik m'n energie even in kwijt. Dus, het is wel belangrijk om voor mezelf te zorgen, maar ik denk dat het voor mij minder kwetsbaar is dan voor de mensen die meelopen. Is dat een antwoord op je vraag?

Stouten: Oh zeker. Ja, er zijn geen goede of slechte antwoorden. Ik vroeg me ook af, het koffiemomentje nadien is ook heel bewust ingebouwd: wat is daar de reden achter of de aanleiding? Hoe is dat ontstaan?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Dat heb ik er vanaf het begin af aan in gehad, omdat mensen zitten redelijk vol, en praktisch, ze gaan aan het verkeer deelnemen - lopen of rijden of iets - en dan moet je wel je hoofd erbij hebben, maar emotioneel om mensen even tot rust te laten brengen. En het is ook goed dat ze mij daarna weer in een setting zien van 'Ik ben gelijk aan hen', dat we weer rond dezelfde tafel zitten. Dan herstel je die gelijkwaardigheid, en kan je voor ze samenvatten wat ze zojuist hebben ervaren. Ik vraag hen altijd 'Wat is echt blijven hangen?', en daar ben ik zelf heel erg benieuwd naar, maar het is ook voor henzelf dat ze weten wat ze er echt hebben uitgehaald. Want anders ga je naar bed, en de volgende dag weet je nog flarden, maar niet meer 'Wat ga ik nou echt overdragen aan de rest?' Als ik wil dat het zich verspreidt als een olievlek, is

iedereen die bij mij een wandeling doet ook een soort van ambassadeur. Niet alleen van mijn wandeling, maar ook van de principes en de kennis die je meeneemt.

Stouten: Dat mensen dat dan eerst voor zichzelf op een rij moeten kunnen zetten van wat er eigenlijk is verteld en wat zij daarvan hebben meegenomen.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Dus, voor hun eigen emotionele veiligheid, zodat ze veilig in het verkeer mee kunnen doen, en zodat ze, wat ze geleerd hebben in de straatwandeling, ook kunnen overdragen aan andere mensen.

Stouten: Dat is heel mooi. Ik vond het eigenlijk wel sjiek dat je dat had ingebouwd, want dat is inderdaad wel iets dat je nodig hebt om 'Wat heb ik nu eigenlijk allemaal gehoord', even op een rijtje te zetten.

Je zei ook, de gelijkwaardigheid herstellen. Merk je een verschil in gelijkwaardigheid tijdens de tour zelf?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Er is niet per se een verschil in macht, maar meer een ongelijkwaardige relatie. Want, de mensen die meewandelen horen alles (*benadrukking met intonatie*) over mij, echt alles (*benadrukking met intonatie*), en ik weet helemaal niks over hen. Ik ben wel onderzoeker en dit en dat - allemaal belangrijke dingen, zeg maar -, maar op het moment dat ik zo'n wandeling doe, dan zien zij mij ook echt als 'Oh ja, Ronja die was dakloos.' Dus het is voor mij om de gelijkwaardigheid te herstellen 'Zie, ik ben ook een professional die gewoon leuk met jullie mee kan praten in hetzelfde jargon.' Aan de andere kant is het voor hen fijn dat zij ook iets persoonlijks kunnen vertellen, als ze dat willen, zodat zij de gelijkwaardigheid bij mij kunnen herstellen.

Stouten: Nee, inderdaad. Want je ben ook onderzoeker, je geeft ook lezingen - hoe zie je hoe dat allemaal samenhangt, de lezingen, onderzoeker, de wandelingen geven?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Het gaat eigenlijk allemaal over hetzelfde onderwerp. Alles dat zich bindt is mijn ervaring, mijn persoonlijke, geleefde ervaring. Ik ben onderzoeker dakloosheid, ik geef rondleidingen over dakloosheid, ik werk als adviseur bij de VVG over dakloosheid. Maar mijn geleefde ervaringen daarin is de gemene deler.

Stouten: Hoe belangrijk is het ook voor jou - want dat heb ik ook wel gehoord in Wenen, bij de andere straatwandeling - hoe belangrijk is het dat dat echt vanuit een ervaringsexpertise komt, en niet bijvoorbeeld iemand die wat verhalen heeft gehoord en dan wat komt vertellen?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: [Vraagt om herhaling; niet verstaan]

Stouten: In Wenen bijvoorbeeld, waren er ook heel veel mensen die aanhalen dat Martin - heette hij - vanuit zijn eigen ervaring vertelt. Hoe belangrijk is het dat er een ervaringsexpert is, die daar staat, en niet, zeg maar, iemand vanuit de academici, die het nooit zelf meegemaakt-

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, hier heb ik een hele sterke mening over. Ik denk dat dat heel belangrijk is, echt heel belangrijk. Dakloze mensen en dakloosheid zijn één van de weinige onderdrukkingen waarbij andere mensen er iets over kunnen zeggen en het dan nog leuk overkomt. Stel je voor, ik zou lezingen geven over racisme, en hoe het is om racisme te ervaren. Dat zou heel raar zijn. Of stel je voor dat ik - ook al zijn er ook witte mensen die daarover praten, maar goed - niet in een rolstoel zit en ga vertellen hoe je opritten moet bouwen en hoe moeilijk het wel niet is. Dat is niet aan mij. Die ruimte mag ik niet opeisen, vind ik. Maar als

het over dakloosheid gaat, dan mag iedereen er iets over zeggen, en als je er dan iets van zegt van 'Hallo, dat zou ik zelf kunnen vertellen?', dan wordt er gezegd 'Ja, maar je moet gewoon blij zijn dat ik bijdraag aan het doel' - het doel is dan bewustzijn creëren over dakloosheid. Dat is dan een soort van reddingscomplex, een *white savior* complex van 'Ik help toch, ik help toch.' Maar eigenlijk zijn die mensen dan zichzelf aan het helpen, want die mensen willen zichzelf goed voelen, en zichzelf misschien - dat zie ik in Nederland - heel erg profileren op het onderwerp. Die willen aangezien worden als 'Oh, dat je dat allemaal vertelt.' Als je gelooft dat jij het beter kan vertellen dan een dakloos persoon, dan geloof je dus eigenlijk niet in gelijkwaardigheid, want dan ga je er niet vanuit dat een dakloos persoon, of een ex-dakloos persoon het even goed kan vertellen als jij. Aan de ene kant neem je de ruimte af van dakloze mensen en zeg je hoe ze ruimte moeten krijgen. Tegelijkertijd, terwijl je die dakloze mensen aan het ophemelen bent, geloof je niet dat zij het verhaal net zo sterk kunnen vertellen. Ik ben absoluut voorstander van [ervaringsexperts]. In Nederland heb ik daar heel erg (*benadrukking met intonatie*) veel last van dat mensen die ruimte innemen ten koste van mij. Omdat het een sociaal onderwerp is, waarover we het allemaal kunnen eens zijn dat we dat niet willen. En die *unity*, zeg maar, hebben we niet als het gaat over discriminatie op huidskleur of fysieke beperkingen of uitkeringen of weet ik veel wat. Maar iedereen is het ermee eens 'Oké, niemand zou dakloos moeten zijn.' Dat is makkelijk om er aandacht voor te vragen. En dan gaan mensen eraan voorbij, wanneer ze die ruimte van mij afpakken, dat het voor mij niet een onderwerp is waarop ik mij even leuk kan profileren. Want mijn doel is dakloosheid tegengaan, de andere mensen hun doel is gezien worden als mensen die goed zijn. Daarbij hebben we echt een conflict in onze doelen, zeg maar. Misschien ben ik een beetje aan het ratelen zeg maar?

Stouten: Oh nee, helemaal begrijpelijk.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Dakloosheid is nu zo'n *hot and trendy* onderwerp dat mensen vergeten hoe zwaar het voor mij is geweest om dakloos te zijn. Het is niet zomaar een onderwerp van 'Oh, ik heb iets meegemaakt. Oh leuk, nu kan ik effe [?]' Mijn tijd op straat, dat zit gewoon in mijn DNA nu. Om antwoord te geven op je vraag: ik denk dat niet-ervaringsdeskundige mensen een stapje opzij moeten doen, omdat zij niet begrijpen wat dakloosheid is. Ik denk dat ze moeten accepteren of begrijpen dat ze het niet begrijpen. Ja, het zit me hoog (lacht).

Stouten: Nee, helemaal begrijpelijk. Om dan misschien een beetje een stoute vraag te stellen, denk je dan - want je zei dan, ik zou graag systeemverandering en paradigmaverandering voorstellen - en je doet veel activiteiten, zowel bottom-up als top-down, denk je dat die bewustwording ooit helemaal compleet gaat worden of dat mensen het ooit helemaal gaan kunnen begrijpen en ernaar kunnen handelen, of dat er echt iets kan veranderen?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Nee, dat denk ik niet - als in, dat het niet helemaal kan veranderen -, want toen er nog geen woningcrisis was, was er ook dakloosheid. Dus, er zullen altijd mensen bestaan die geloven dat je een huis moet verdienen in plaats van dat het een mensenrecht is. Het is een mensenrecht, maar er zijn mensen die het daar niet mee eens zijn. Ook als we genoeg huizen hebben, dan denk ik niet dat dat het op zou lossen. Dat er alsnog mensen van mening zullen zijn dat je je huis moet verdienen. En dan komt de vraag

ook bij mezelf op 'En ik dan? Hoef ik mijn huis ook niet te verdienen? Ik werk toch ook?', maar mensen zien niet in wat voor een privilege het is dat ze kunnen werken of zichzelf kunnen onderhouden.

Stouten: Nee, zeker. En dan ook, misschien, als ik nu een beetje subjectief mag zijn. Betaald werk wordt ook heel erg in een bepaald paradigma gezien als heel belangrijk, terwijl er ook andere manieren van bijdragen aan de samenleving zijn.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Precies.

Stouten: Het is inderdaad - je hebt dan wel al lokaal gehoord van mensen die bepaalde wetgeving hebben veranderd, of bijvoorbeeld gezegd van 'Ik ga dat huis nu toch verhuren aan iemand.' Wat zijn zo concrete initiatieven, waarin je dan wel hebt gezien van 'Ah, de straatwandeling specifiek heeft wel echt iets verandert.'?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, professionals die casussen beet durven te pakken. Dat mensen inzien welke rol zij zelf hebben, binnen het systeem, maar ook de organisatie waarbinnen zij werken. Meer begrip vanuit beleidsmakers en ministeries. Heel praktisch, ik denk dat mensen ook meer geld geven als ze zelf inzien wat een dakloze persoon nodig heeft. Ik denk echt dat het heeft geleid tot destigmatisering. Ik denk dat de helft van de mensen die met mij mee is gelopen echt wel een ommezwaai heeft gemaakt in hun gedachten van 'Oh ja, dit en dat dacht ik, maar eigenlijk zit het zo helemaal niet.' Het stereotype beeld van de dakloze persoon is veranderd. Ik heb wel eens gehoord dat ze dakloze mensen eerst niet zagen, en sinds mijn wandeling dat ze dat wel zien. Dus ik denk, heel praktisch, herkennen wie dakloos is. Ja, dat.

Stouten: Wat zijn zo vaak reacties die je terug hoort, wat echt een patroon lijkt te zijn van wat mensen meenemen?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, dat ze het schokkend vinden dat het zo gaat in Nederland. Dat dat beeld van 'Oh, alles is zo goed geregeld hier.' Dat ze zich realiseren dat mensen echt tussen wal en schip kunnen vallen en dakloosheid niet altijd bij het individu ligt. En dat ze begrijpen dat uit dakloosheid komen echt (*benadrukking met intonatie*) moeilijk is. Wat ik veel van mensen hoor is dat ze zich verbazen hoe het systeem zichzelf in stand houdt: want, de gemeente, die kan dit niet, en de overheid wijst naar de gemeente, enz. Ik denk dat mensen zich moedeloos voelen, echt een beetje depressief voelen. En professionals, die voelen zich, en moedeloos, en tegelijkertijd voelen ze ook nieuwe motivatie om echt aan de slag te gaan. Voor de rest reacties, meer praktische details: bijvoorbeeld, een groep veldwerkers heeft met mij meegelopen, dan zeggen ze dat ze nu beter begrijpen op wat voor manier ze moeten aanspreken.

Stouten: Voor jezelf, haal je er ook persoonlijk iets uit van energie, of juist moedeloosheid, of?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Nee, zelf haal ik er echt wel energie uit. Ik vind het leuk om te wandelen, ik vind het leuk om te praten (*lacht*). Ik vind het ook leuk van mensen te zien van 'Ah ja, oké, zo zit het.' Het kost me energie, maar het brengt me ook energie.

Stouten: Als je bedoelt 'Hoe zit het', als in, hoe zit het bij hen in het werkveld?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Nee, ik bedoel dat ze die 'Ah ha'-momentjes hebben. Dat vind ik leuk om te zien dat ik dat teweeg kan brengen met iets dat ik gewoon maar een keer ben gaan doen. Maar ook, wat je zegt, ik

leer ook wel veel van hen, van hun werkveld en hoe het eraan toegaat. Daar word ik dan wel weer een beetje moedeloos van, als ze mij uitleggen hoe het systeem tewerk gaat in hun organisatie of binnen een overheid, maar ik vind het wel weer interessant. En, ik haal er een netwerk uit. Echt.

Stouten: Als ik het ook zo begreep tijdens de straatwandeling, wie is jouw publiek vooral? Zijn het vooral professionals, of waar komt iedereen zo'n beetje vandaan?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ik denk, gedeeld door drie, één deel is ministeries, één deel gemeenten, en één derde zorgorganisaties.

Stouten: En dan particulieren is echt wel een hele kleine minderheid?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, omdat ik dat zelf - ik wilde dat eerst alleen voor particulieren doen. Toen dacht ik 'Ja, maar, ze gaan er niks mee doen.' En dat wilde ik wel. Met particulieren weet je ook niet wie je voor je hebt. Ik heb echt een paar keer een nare ervaring gehad met mannen die mee liepen, terwijl als mensen met een organisatie mee lopen, dan moeten ze zich wel gedragen.

Stouten: Eigenlijk die onveiligheid, dat je dat nooit zeker kan weten.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, voor mijn veiligheid probeer ik zo min mogelijk met particulieren. En je weet ook niet, wat ik heb verteld tijdens de straatwandeling, er hebben zoveel mensen misbruik van mij gemaakt. Wie weet zoeken ze mij een keer op en boeken ze een straatwandeling.

Stouten: Dat zijn allemaal zaken inderdaad, je weet maar nooit, dus ik begrijp het wel. Je zei ook dat je nu met kinderen of scholen zou gaan werken.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, klopt. Lezingen op school.

Stouten: Dan is het eigenlijk het verhaal van de straatwandeling, maar dan aangepast natuurlijk omdat je dat niet echt fysiek kan doen of naar de plekken toe kan wandelen. Hoe verloopt het verhaal in een lezing?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Daar ben ik zelf ook niet helemaal over uit, want je moet het wel iets kind vriendelijker maken natuurlijk. Iets meer praktisch gericht op wat had ik vroeger willen weten, wat had ik nu gewild dat ik vroeger had geweten.

Stouten: Want ook die verschillende doelgroepen die je nu hebt, de ministeries, de zorgorganisaties, kinderen nu dan - hoe pas je eigenlijk je boodschap aan het publiek? Heb je een bepaalde methode daarvoor?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, ik heb een hele uitgebreide tekst voor de straatwandeling, en voor iedere straatwandeling pas ik dat net een beetje aan. Bijvoorbeeld, een keer voor het Rode Kruis heb ik een wandeling gegeven, en die was echt gericht op gezondheid en dakloosheid. Een andere ging meer over armoede. Weer een andere ging meer over mensenhandel, bijvoorbeeld. Dus ik haal er elementen uit die wat minder relevant zijn, en ik breng er elementen in die relevanter zijn. En ik vraag aan ze wat hun leerdoelen zijn, voor het team, 'Wat hoop je te leren, ook?', vraag ik.

Stouten: Ook wel belangrijk, inderdaad. Een heel fysiek iets, je wandelt, je ervaart van alles, wind, regen, echt heel erg met je *senses* zeg maar. Wat voor invloed heeft het dat het een wandeling is?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Zeg maar, in plaats van een lezing. Ik denk dat als je wandelt, dan leer je meer. Er bestaat ook ergens een onderzoek over dat als je beweegt je dingen ook beter kan onthouden. Wat ik al zei,

je moet je kwetsbaar opstellen, en het is confronterend omdat je het echt ziet. Als je de hele tijd in je hoofd gaat leven - ook als je een boek leest, dan maak je je eigen beelden daarbij, terwijl nu kijk je dan een film, ik denk dat dat het verschil is.

Stouten: Hoe is de wandeling eigenlijk ontstaan, heel praktisch?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ik wilde het al heel lang doen, maar landelijk. En dat had ik zo lang uitgesteld, want het was zo groot in mijn hoofd gemaakt, dat ik dacht 'Je gaat gewoon beginnen.' En toen heb ik het allemaal op papier geschreven, de route uitgestippeld op Google Maps. Dan heb ik samen met een groepje vrienden de pilot gedaan. Ja, dat was een succes. De eerstvolgende klant was het ministerie van buitenlandse zaken.

Stouten: Ah ja, wow. Dat als tweede klant hebben is (*lacht*).

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Als eerste betalende eigenlijk. Ja, zo. Dus, ik ben het gewoon gaan doen, en naarmate ik het deed, paste ik mijn wandeling een beetje aan, en heb ik mijn communicatie erover veranderd.

Stouten: Want ook de plekken, sommige plekken zijn heel duidelijk waarom die gekozen zijn, bijvoorbeeld het hostel waar je ooit hebt geslapen, maar hoe heb je eigenlijk de selectie gemaakt van 'Ik ga die wandeling maken, en ik ga die plekken laten zien.'?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, ik zat te denken 'Oké, ik ga een wandeling doen in Den Haag.' Eigenlijk was het allemaal niet zoveel werk. Op een half uur tijd heb ik al die plekken opgeschreven. Ik dacht 'Waar in Den Haag heb ik allemaal een keer iets meegemaakt? En wat is echt belangrijk voor dakloosheid?' En dan ben ik dat rondje gaan lopen, want ik liep vroeger als ik dakloos was altijd een rondje, en ik dacht 'Ah ja, ik kom eigenlijk wel wat tegen op die ronde.' En dan ben ik op Google Maps gaan kijken. Wat zie ik dan eigenlijk in Google street view als ik om me heen kijk. 'Ah ja, die tunnel, daar bedelde ik vroeger. Ah ja, het station, daar kom ik aan.' Zo heb ik proberen op te bouwen op chronologische volgorde zoveel mogelijk, aan de andere kant heb ik het zo opgebouwd dat de wandeling niet luchtig begint, maar minder zwaar begint dan het einde. En op het einde heb je dan 'Oké, toen kwam het weer goed. Dan gaan we koffie drinken.' Het bouwt op, ook zeg maar voor de emotionele veiligheid. zodat je niet in één keer in het diepe gegooid wordt. Eerst gaat het over bedelen - daar is iedereen wel mee bekend -, dan vertel ik over overlijden op straat - iedereen weet ook wel wat gebeurt -, en dan wordt het meer persoonlijk. Zo heb ik die wandeling gemaakt.

Stouten: Ja, heel duidelijk. Ik ga nog even door mijn vraagjes heen, maar ik denk eigenlijk dat we al veel dingen gewoon pratend hebben aangeraakt. [...] Ik vroeg me ook af - want we gingen eigenlijk op vakantie naar Den Haag en dit was dan het eerste wat ik had gevonden - heb je dat breed geadverteerd - want inderdaad, ministeries komen bij je, sociale organisaties - of is dat een beetje mond-aan-mond-reclame?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ik heb één LinkedIn-post geplaatst. Die heb ik ooit een keer op m'n website - die heb ik nou niet meer - had ik een pagina over gemaakt, en dan is dat allemaal via-via gegaan. Ik had het nooit verwacht dat het zo'n hit zou zijn.

Stouten: Ja, want je doet het nu sinds, welk jaar?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Sinds vorig jaar, winter.

Stouten: Heel mooi, wel, als je dat op die kleine periode eigenlijk. Ken je gelijkaardige initiatieven in Nederland of waarmee je al contact hebt?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Nee, ik heb wel iemand die mijn idee soort van heeft afgepakt. Het idee van 'Hou ik concurrenten dichtbij.' Ik vind het dan niet zo leuk dat het weer in Den Haag moet, maar ik heb geen contact met mensen die het in andere steden doen. In deze sector is er ook veel afgunst, want niet heel veel ervaringsdeskundigen krijgen ruimte, krijgen een platform, dus dat ik dat wel krijg, dat ik die ruimte wel pak, daardoor gunnen andere ervaringsdeskundigen mij ook niet zoveel.

Stouten: Ja, want, als ik dat hoor, zou ik persoonlijk kunnen denken 'Het is juist fijn dat één iemand van 'ons' - zeg maar, die het heeft ervaren - dat dan wel kan zeggen.'

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, dat zou ik ook denken, maar ik ben er steeds meer achter gekomen dat dat echt afgunst is. Bijvoorbeeld, ook onder mijn post op LinkedIn, posten andere initiatieven 'Ja, dat doen wij al heel lang, kom ook maar bij ons.' Dat gaat over een heel andere stad. Dat is geen nieuw begrip ofzo, andere mensen doen dat ook.

Stouten: Je zou ook kunnen zeggen, het gaat over een andere stad, die initiatieven kunnen naast elkaar bestaan, ieder verhaal is uniek en anders. Eigenlijk is er zo geen collegialiteit dat je met elkaar kan uitwisselen?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Nee, eigenlijk het tegenovergestelde.

Stouten: Merk je dan wel, omdat je ook aan onderzoek en advies doet, dat je ook daaruit kan putten of dat dat de straatwandeling nog beter maakt?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Dat ik een onderzoeker ben, bedoel je?

Stouten: Ja, en adviseur, en dat je het netwerk opbouwt en daarvan kennis verkrijgt.

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, zeker. Als mensen met mij praten, denk ik dat zij begrijpen dat ik hun kant ook begrijp. Want ik heb alle kanten van deze sector - die maak ik mee - top-down [*red.*, of bottom-up]. Dus zij kunnen niet tegen mij zeggen 'Ja, maar je weet niet hoe het zit.' Ik weet hoe het zit. Ik heb in de politiek gezeten, ik ben onderzoeker, ik ben adviseur. Dus, snap je?

Stouten: Ja. Je zei zelf al, om misschien weer een stoute vraag te stellen, dat je je moreel daarmee ook hoger zet. Denk je dat het anders zou zijn of dat mensen je misschien minder serieus zou nemen of in twijfel trekken?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja, echt ja. Ik sta echt met één been - oké, ik heb een probleem, wat zeg maar ook een voordeel is. Aan de ene kant ben ik verbonden met dakloze mensen, maar die groep ziet mij nu niet meer als één van hen. Dat geeft hen een gevoel 'Maar je bent helemaal niet meer één van ons.' Aan de andere kant behoor ik tot de middenklasse en begin ik zelfs daar een beetje uit te groeien en ga ik om met - wat ik vroeger zij 'belangrijke mensen' - omdat ik nu in diezelfde sector of diezelfde hoek werk, maar daar zien mensen mij nog als dakloos. Dus de ene groep ziet mij niet meer als één van hen, en de andere groep ziet mij nog als iemand die uit de goot komt. Dus, aan de ene kant pas ik nergens bij, aan de andere kant maakt dat wel dat ik met iedereen goed kan communiceren, omdat ik van alles wat heb meegemaakt, meegepakt.

Stouten: Heb je dan soms het idee, omdat je in sommige middens echt wordt weggezet als 'Ah ja, dakloze', dat dat hetgeen is wat jou definieert, dat mensen dat label echt op je plakken en daar je hele zijn van maken?

Dat dat stigmatiserend kan werken op een manier, of daklozen of ex-daklozen kunnen zeggen, nu is die te zeer in hoge cirkels van beleidsmakers?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ik snap je vraag niet.

Stouten: Vind je soms dat je wordt geëssentialiseerd van 'Ronja, dakloos, dat is haar wezen, dat is haar zijn', of 'Ronja, hoogopgeleide beleidsmaker, adviseur, oké, dat is ze', als in, dat definieert je hele zijn dan, volgens hen?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Ja. Ik zie mezelf graag als 'Ronja, beleidsmaker, onderzoeker die ervaringen meeneemt over dakloosheid, over mensenhandel, over armoede, blablabla'. Maar ik denk dat andere mensen mij zien als 'Ronja, ervaringsdeskundige, die ook wel strategisch is'. Dat is wel een goede vraag. Ik sta daar zelf nooit bij stil hoe andere mensen mij zien.

Stouten: Want dat is inderdaad wel iets dat ik mij afvroeg, nu met de straatwandeling met jou, maar ook met Martin in Wenen, wat een impact het zelf ook op jou heeft om die straatwandelingen te geven. Want je kan wel zeggen, we proberen iets met die straatwandeling om actiegericht te zijn, om er iets aan te doen, maar of het voor jou zelf dan niet heel kwetsbaar is of moeilijk?

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Nee, wat ik net al zei. Ik denk dat het voor andere mensen moeilijker is dan voor mijzelf, omdat ik het verhaal ook al ken. Ik vind het ook echt leuk om te doen, dus. Werk waar ik heel veel zin in heb.

Stouten: Oké, dan heb ik eigenlijk zelf geen vragen meer. Had jij nog dingen in gedachten, waarvan je denkt 'Die moet ik zeker meegeven?'

Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak: Nee, hoor. Maar als je je thesis hebt afgerond, ben ik zeker benieuwd naar je bevindingen enzo.

Stouten: [praktische afsluiting: voorstel van participatief onderzoek, mogelijkheid participant interviews contactopname, bedanking]

5) Informal interview with three anonymized guides at Ghetto Tours (18/09/2024)

QUESTIONNAIRE

- Can you introduce yourselves?
- What is Ghetto Tours?
- How did Ghetto Tours originate?
- How is Ghetto Tours organized?
- Is it important for your message to have guides who have experienced/are experiencing the neighbourhood themselves? Why so/not?
- Is it important to be self-employed/ independent to tell your story? Why so/not?
- Does Ghetto Tours receive any funding? If so, which funding, if I may ask?
- Which particular places do you visit on the tour, and why those places specifically?
- What is the main message participants should get from your tours?

- Who is the 'typical' audience of Ghetto Tours?
- How do you feel when *preparing* the tours?
- How do you feel when *conducting* the tours?
- How do you feel *after* the tours?
- Is there some form of post reflection you ask the participants to make?
- What are common reactions of participants?
- Are there any reactions of participants that surprised you or made you think differently? If so, which ones and why?
- How do you prevent voyeurism?
- In what way do a walking tour and any other means of education, such as sitting in a classroom, differ, and why is it important to Ghetto Tours?
- Why is it important that Ghetto Tours exists?
- Can Ghetto Tours change participants' thinking regarding (inhabitants of) Nørrebro and other so-called "ghettoes"? Can Ghetto Tours change participants' behaviour regarding (inhabitants of) Nørrebro and other so-called "ghettoes"?
- What concrete changes have you seen in or about Nørrebro the past years, which can be (partly) traced back to the efforts of Ghetto Tours, according to you?
- Are you into contact with any so-called 'change agents', like social movements, policymakers, etc.? If yes, please elaborate.
- Looking back on the past years, how would you evaluate Ghetto Tours? What has it achieved? What are its future goals to achieve?
- Do you know similar initiatives like yours, whether or not in Copenhagen? On which basis would you define these as similar/different?
- Could I stay into touch with you to
 - o Find interviewees who have walked the tour?
 - o Talk about some of the thesis interpretations with you?
 - o Connect you to classmates who would be interested to research x?
 - o Book a tour for me and my classmates to experience the tour?

TRANSCRIPT: see research diary (no audio recording was made in order to build rapport and gain trust)

6) Interview with F, guide at Ghetto Tours (12/11/2024)

QUESTIONNAIRE

- Can you introduce yourself?
- What is Ghetto Tours?
- What is the topic of Ghetto Tours?

- Which places does Ghetto Tours show?
- Why these places exactly?
- From which perspective are these places showed?
- Your neighbourhood isn't a ghetto anymore -> why is Ghetto Tours, here, still relevant?
- When designing the tours, how did you do so?
- By which frameworks were you inspired?
- You speak from your personal experience a lot. The broader reflection about the racialized inequalities in the Danish school system were not part of the tour. However, these were most interesting to my classmates -> is there a reason why you don't abstract your experience and tie it to wider societal problems in Copenhagen, or Denmark at large, such as racialized discrimination?
- As a participant, there seemed to be a tensions -> how do you strike a balance between:
 - o Self-stigmatisation and emancipation?
 - o Voyeurism and pride?
- What do you aim to do through this tour?
- The usual audience of your tour, which feedback do you get from them?
- How does the tour impact/change them, you think?

TRANSCRIPT

Elie Stouten: [Discussion of information letter, recording and informed consent form]. I'm also gonna repeat a few questions that we talked about prior (see informal interview before tour). The first question: Can you shortly introduce yourself and your role at Ghetto Tours?

F: Yes. Should I say my name also? [Reference to prior agreement - i.e. before recording – to be anonymized]

Stouten: I will indeed leave it out. I won't really use this as raw data in the thesis.

F: It's just for you.

Stouten: It's just for me, yes.

F: So, my name is /. I'm 20 years old. I have one human education and I work with kids in this volunteer centre. I am studying in a college, called [can't understand, in Danish]. Right now, I volunteer at a coffee course and a youth lab course for leadership and youth administration. So, we have quite some projects going on here, but the main one is Ghetto Tours.

Stouten: How would you describe Ghetto Tours?

F: Ghetto Tours is a group of youngsters who got together to change the perspective of Nørrebro and ghettos for people who are stigmatised and in general put stereotypical opinions on us, brown people. They have their - what do you call it? - square opinions of us: they think that every brown people is a terrorist, a gang member, someone who only wants Denmark to go down. They have their very strict meanings about us. So, we got together to talk about our growth in the ghetto, and how we experienced being a brown kid amongst a white social community.

Stouten: If I'm understanding, you're focusing on a specific part of the neighbourhood called Nørrebro, which is called...?

F: The part is called Nørrebro, which is a city part in Copenhagen. The more specific part is called Aldersrogaadekvartere, which is another side of the big street called Titangade. We have one stop that is one the other side of Titangade, which is my home, where I have my story. All the other sides are in the Aldersrogaadekvartere, where we also do the tour.

Stouten: At this moment, is it still labelled a ghetto?

F: At this moment, the Aldersrogaadekvartere, where we do our tour, was actually taken of the Ghetto [red., list]. I'm pretty sure it isn't on the Ghetto [red., list] anymore, but I am pretty sure it was because of the ethnicity living there, that it wasn't ethnically "Danish" (*gestures air quotes*) people living there. So, yes, I'm 98 percent sure it's not on the Ghetto list anymore.

Stouten: Just to be sure, how would you define the Ghetto list?

F: For me, the Ghetto list is a list where you put people, just to signify their oppressions. I think it's a list where you put people in a box, even though they are not meant to be in a box. Some of the people you met, some of the members of the group, they are all in colleges or universities, and the Ghetto list signifies that the people living in the ghetto can't come into universities or colleges; they are a minority and they don't have the same chances as the ethnical Danish people. I haven't read up on the Ghetto list, but from what I've heard and my friends, they say it's because of your study, where you're from and where you live.

Stouten: I also did a little reading into it, and it is indeed based on certificate or diploma. But one of the criteria - if I'm not mistaken - is that 50 percent of the population is a migrant or someone descendent from "non-Western origin" (*emphasis added*).

F: That can be there, and most of the people are either Arab or Africans. And by Arab [red., I mean] Middle Eastern, Palestinian, Lebanese, Iraq, Iranian, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Very mixed cultures.

Stouten: We also talked about it prior in another interview (see informal interview). We talked about the fact that the Danish society can sometimes be discriminating, also based on cultural or religious items that you have. Now, in the Ghetto law, you have the non-Western criteria. How would you even define 'non-Western'?

F: Well, non-western would be, as perceived from western eyes, brown culture. I'm Pakistani. One thing we brown people have in common is that many of us are Muslim. There's a pretty big Muslim hate going on, Islamophobia, so one of the things we couldn't do in Aldersrogaadekvartere is the call to prayer. We can't do that because we live in Denmark and the western view on Islam: every Muslim is a terrorist. In school you are looked different at, and if you're the only brown in a white social event, you will get looked different on. I actually just quite my job, because I had to focus on my study more, but it was the first time that I experienced so many different cultures in a single workplace. It is called [can't understand, in Danish] for Volkswagen, Audi, Porsche, Lamborghini. It was a car firm that I worked for, and it was nice to see that there were so many different kinds of cultures. But the western view on us, it is a hard question.

Stouten: Whatever you want, there is no right or wrong [answer].

Stouten: On the tour itself, you really tell from your own experiences. What is the goal or what do you want people to *get (emphasis)* at the end of the tour?

F: Our goal, at every tour we have, is to change people's very strong opinions on us brown people in general. We have had some politicians come on our tour. The main reason is to instigate us. They didn't want to have a fight, but a verbal fight with us. They were annoying us and saying some mean things. But we took it professionally and showed them that we can do it our way also. But this politician had his meaning "Oh, so every hijabi can't go to school or is oppressed by her family because she is a woman and she can't show anything." Then some of the girls answered "Well, do you need to see my hair? Do you need to see anything?" And he couldn't answer to that because either it would get very sexually or it would be "Why do you care? It's my body and so on." But we've had many people come on with their very strict views on us, and every goal we have is to change their perspective and make it more welcoming, make *us (emphasis)* more welcoming for *them (emphasis)*.

Cause everybody on the tour, every member we've had, has experienced some kind of abnormality with 'white people', you know, the Danish ethnical groups. I went to school in a full Christian white school. Me and my brother, we were 4 brown kids in a school with over more than 500 kids. And when we had the youngsters kids parties and the middle school parties, when you need to get some food, the pizza would never be halal. You couldn't eat it because there would be pork. Every small thing, for me it is a big thing, but the Danish groups "Oh, he needs to be halal. Oh, he can't drink alcohol." Some of the members prioritise their prayers, so they pray 5 times and you can't even pray 5 times.

Stouten: There aren't any rooms or accommodations?

F: Nothing. On my school, if you would get got praying, they would have valuable reason for you to get kicked out, which I see as a very crazy thing to say. But nobody took it up, so I can't take it up.

Stouten: If you say that you as guides need to make yourself more welcoming - do you sometimes feel like you need to present yourself in a certain way when doing this?

F: Yes. There is this thing called frontstage, backstage and middle stage. Frontstage is as I'm talking with you: I have my own stage to talk about. With my friends, it's also frontstage, but you change you're personally, depending on who you're with. If I'm with my friends who I've known for 10 years, I can be a very different person. But if I'm with a whole new group of persons, I can be a very introverted person. But, as soon as these Ghetto Tours [start], I feel like I have a role 'I represent every brown kid and every muslim kid on the block.' So, I need to be more professional, I have to be not talking like a - there is this way of talking which they call 'perker'. Perker is a term - not a very good word -, but it signifies a group of people in a bad way. So, we have this way, when they talk, they call these kids "Oh, he's a perker." I have a way of talking with ethnically Danish people and then with my other friends. So, it depends on the group, and you change your personality to be professional, to be in friendships, it's very different. But yes, I change my personality and professional level when I'm at the Ghetto Tours or work. We use - some of my friends call it - the 'white man's voice' (*laughs*).

Stouten: (*laughs*).

F: Instead of using the young kids' [voice]. The white man's voice usually works.

Stouten: So, there is this duality - if I read it correctly - that at one time you want to be accepted and you want to show that all differences should be accepted, but at the same time you kinda need to accommodate or?

F: Yes, there is a balance to anything. We have to accommodate to anything.

Stouten: Cause, I also noticed in our talks, and from your tour, that you really draw from your experiences, but maybe - if I can play the devil's advocate a bit -, you didn't really go into the big structural Danish discrimination narrative. Is that deliberate that you didn't really talk about the very societal, but kept on the experiential level of growing up in the neighbourhood?

F: Our goal, when we talk about in the Ghetto Tours, it's about our growth in the block. We had some bookings where we had to talk on a bigger level, in social and politics. But the main - when people book our tours - we usually go from our scripts. Everyone has worked on a script, we have gotten a communications course and speaking to a crowd-courses, and we have a specific story everybody has to tell. Sometimes, we have gotten a special request "Can you elaborate on these kinds of topics?" But, the main reason is that either we don't get asked about it, or we don't have it built in into our stories. That's the main reason.

Stouten: It's not that - cause there's also maybe that tension between not stigmatising yourselves and wanting to draw a different narrative. I was personally thinking 'Maybe it's because they don't want to focus on - let's say - always the bad and the structural parts and the discrimination, but also on the positive and the emancipatory - as in - the ghetto isn't really "a ghetto".' Is that also part of it?

F: Yes, our focus is that the ghetto isn't a ghetto. I don't know if you've seen the American ghettos?

Stouten: Yes.

F: These drive-by shootings that are done every day, people injecting themselves in every corner with narcotics, kids being shot at, kids dealing drugs. It's not that it isn't happening here, but it's not on the same level. For me, a ghetto - I've also written that into my story - is an American ghetto: there are drive-byes every day, there are shootings every day, there are stabbings every day, you have kids dealing and doing narcotics. But, these kinds of ghettoes, where it's based on your skin colour and your stuff, how you live and where you live: that seems irrelevant to me. But if we didn't talk about this - i.e. skin colour - it could be Hellerup, Østerbro, Vesterbro, but because of the skin colour, because we're immigrants from a country, it's "a ghetto" (*ironic intonation*), so yeah.

Stouten: You said sometimes people ask about it - what are some of the questions or things that participants brought up that surprised you or made you think differently or maybe brought some tension?

F: We had some questions where we were like "Why do you say that?" We had one questions where I was not stunned, but I was like "Why?": "If you're living in the ghetto, why don't you just move?" And that was from an older person. We broke it down to him: in our culture we don't move unless we get married, or else we just stay at home and we make our savings. We save up, we work and we study. When we get married, we can move. There are some in our culture who move who are also studying, which is to get an apartment

later on. But it seemed like this person didn't recognize what we were saying. He was just like "You could move out of the ghetto." We could, but it's not our choice right now. You're talking about a ghetto where you see shootings every day. For us, this is just our home. We know some of the shops, there is a candy store over here, every kid in Nørrebro knows about that shop, it's been here forever. If I were just to move, I would lose very important memories here. Everything has happened here: I have had fire here in front of my home door, I have had whole doors melted, we have had bombings here, there have been shootings down my street. But there is something about it that the good outweighs the bad. So when we said "You can just move out", yes, I can, but why, this is my home. It's where I grew up, why should I? You could move out. Not because it's a ghetto, but you could. I've lived here for so long that it has become part of my day. But just to say "move out", I got kinda mad, but again, you need to be professional and use 'the white man's voice'. You can't get mad and explain it to a level so *he (emphasis)* understands, and that level is very steep.

Stouten: Whenever you indeed encounter such an experience, do you manage to find common ground?

F: We've had some people who we can change their perspectives on, and they started on the whole 'west side', we were on the 'east side', but - how do you see - we could reconcile on the things together and they could finally understand us, but they were still leaning on their own opinion. It has never been that they are fully 100 percent "Oh, okay, it's like that, that's why you don't move, why you're dressed like that." There's always something blocking their own - it's like they don't want to know. They ask, but they don't want to change their opinions. Every time we change someone's perspective, they say "Yes", but after some time they get back to their own opinions again. So you try and you try. There are some times where you change the whole person's perspective, but it's because I remember some of the politicians and the specific groups where they just came to instigate and then they left with the same opinion. They didn't get what they wanted.

Stouten: In that light, how do you feel about the impact of the Ghetto Tour?

F: I think it's been very good. We've had some schools come here every year now, and those teachers we've worked with, they have a new grade every year, so that grade - it's 28 kids that just got to know the truth about here, then there's another 28 kids and so on. So, we've had a small impact, but we're doing the stuff because we like it and we want to change the perspective on it. But, it could be nice with more groups like this and more attention to this. I wouldn't mind it, because it gives a chance to the brown kids.

Stouten: Do you feel like with younger kids and schools - in an educational context maybe - it is more 'doing it's thing' or helpful?

F: I think it helps with very old people, because they're sweet and they want to hear about it finally, or either it's very young kids. But it really depends on their experience with immigrants. If you've had a bad experience with an immigrant trying to assault you or being very smart, they think "Oh, he's a perker." And again, that term, they use it. "Oh, the perker. He dressed the same and they're all the same." It really depends on their history with the type of people we are. If they've had only good experiences, we've had very good impact on them. But if it's a bad impact, they could go like "Oh, okay, but he's still a perker." So, it really depends on the history they have, but 80 percent of the time it has worked. I still take it as a win.

Stouten: Yes, that's really good to hear. What I noticed, maybe in other kinds of tours - on homelessness, totally different topics, but it were mostly people who were already sympathetic or in the same mindset. Do you feel like the audiences that you often draw are already open and in the mindset to accept?

F: Yes, they have to be open themselves to accept our situations. But, if they're already locked in on their own opinions, we can't change it. So it's always people we need who are ready to see the truth and are ready to change their meanings and hear about our opinions. We can never change those politicians. They have their own opinions, they are locked in with their own opinions, so we couldn't change their opinions. Again, it has to do with what they've experienced with an immigrant before.

Stouten: But maybe, if you don't go – let's say 'the politician route' - the tour could change narratives, imaginations in people's minds, how we see each other: maybe from bottom-up, something could change.

F: We hope it changes people's perspective. We've seen it does, but I know - how do you say. I feel like I'm in Denmark and skral [can't understand, in Danish] - I don't know if you know what I mean, but you've lived here long enough to become one of them. They see a brown kid like me, and I start to think "He's one of the reasons why I get called 'a perker'."

Stouten: Ah okay.

F: We have the good – I'm going to say – the good ones and the bad ones. The good ones are acting the way - and I'm gonna say something I shouldn't say - but they're acting the way they *should* (*emphasis*) act, and then there are those who take everything for granted and shit on the Danish system and shouldn't be where they are. When they aren't there, they shit on every system. It doesn't matter. I have some classmates with an immigrant background. Every classmate has the same story: one of their parents came to this country and wanted to get a better life for the kids. The other two immigrant kids, they're not doing anything in school, they're taking everything for granted, they meet up late, they go early when it's group work. They don't want to do anything, but why did their parents just leave a country at war to give them a better future? So, as a person who does the right thing - I meet up every day, I try to do my side of what my parents want me to. When I see those kids do the opposite things, I think "Okay, *he's* (*emphasis*) the reason I get called 'a perker'. *He's* (*emphasis*) the reason I get looked down upon." Just because he does everything wrong and everybody sees what he's doing - because *he* (*emphasis*) gets the attention - then they look at me and go "Oh, so he's the same as that guy." It's annoying; it's one of the main reasons that annoys me.

Stouten: So, there is even - when you could say "We could all stand together - as brown people, if I can use the term?"

F: Yes.

Stouten: "We can all stand together and together try to present ourselves and be accepted into society." At the same time, there is internal differentiation where not everyone is – let's say "one block".

F: That's the main reason again, cause some take it all for granted and others don't. But yes, it's really individual, but most of the people here don't take it for granted, everyone here wants to be something. We have kids who come here on a leshcafé [can't understand, in Danish], when it's open until 9 o'clock in the

afternoon, in the evening. Everybody wants to be something and they're working hard. There are 3 hijabis - i.e. women of colour who wear an hijab - here in my brewer's course, and I know them: they work hard, they study hard, but they still want to have fun. As soon as they got out off the community, they are looked upon as "Oh, that's a brown woman of colour, but because of her hijab, she's oppressed by her religion, her family, just because she wears the hijab." But, I know them as a person and they're happy hear and they're happy at home, but it's because of those negative meanings and opinions of people that affects us.

Stouten: Also, when you said prior that some people aren't really working for school and maybe are one of the reasons why the stereotypes are reaffirmed. Can you kinda understand why people would do that?

F: Yes, I can see why. One of the things that happened when us immigrants came here - the Danish people said "There were fewer jobs. The brown guy just took the job that I could have." Well, the brown guy, who studied on college and university for 10 years to become a doctor, and you're the guy who's on *kontenje* [don't know how to spell in Danish] - which means you need to get money - and housing [benefits], and everything you're not doing. The brown guy needs to be something and you're just at home, not doing anything, and you say this guy stole your job? They say that "It's because they took our jobs we want them out off the country." These types of people are everywhere.

Stouten: In the tours themselves, you really show the places that you grew up in, your homes: could that be voyeuristic a bit?

F: What do you mean?

Stouten: That you're really *gazing (emphasis)* - let's say - into your neighbourhood, and really getting "outsiders" to look at it?

F: We use our places where we grew up to give them examples what we as a hijabi, as a brown guy, as a black guy, as everybody who represents Islam also - we've had the same growth [i.e. childhood, upbringing] - I don't know what it's called in English.

Stouten: Yes, I get the grasp.

F: We've had the same as the Danish kid, we just didn't eat pork, didn't drink and kept our culture and religion. So we did everything that the Danish kid did, but we also did it, just in *our (emphasis)* neighbourhood. He went to kindergarten, I went to kindergarten; he went to fist grade, I went to first grade, and so on. But I just have another culture and another religion. But when we say that I did everything that you did, but just here, they're all thinking "Huh, he really did actually." It's part of my story when I signify that I did everything that you did, just here. I also ended it with that I actually went to a Christian school with white kids, and I also sang in the Copenhagen Royal Choir for the queen and the king, for which I had to sing in a church every second Sunday. I'm Muslim, I don't go to churches. But for me, going to a church isn't going to pray, but because I had a 'job' as a fourth grader "You need to go to a church and sing." So, for me, it isn't like my culture and my religion stopped me: I did what the Danish kid did and more.

Stouten: You also kinda made it a hybrid cause you could also say that singing in a church is a cultural thing, not only religious.

F: For me, it wasn't like I'm breaking any rules in Islam. I'm just doing what my school wants me to do. I didn't pray in the church, but I find it fascinating to see other cultures and religions. But, there are those who still think that "Oh, just because he's brown, he hits his sisters at home. He controls what the women have to wear." Everybody has their opinions on Islam, and that's a big thing here in Denmark, still. There are those who, as soon as they see a brown guy, they think 'immigrant', and they think bad things before the good things. I've had a classmate in third grade, he said "Oh, when I got to meet you, you are actually very kind, but other perker I've met were actually very evil and they used to bully me." So I said "Well, I'm not every perker, I'm just me and you didn't even get to know me before you judged me." So he judged me before he got to know me. When he said that, that stayed in my mind all the time. When I meet someone, I use the white man's voice, and then after some time, I can finally put my guard down and be who I want to be. If you act a certain way they will say "Oh, he's that guy again", even though I'm not.

Stouten: But you always assume that when you meet someone, they will label as.

F: Yes, they label me as a specific kind of guy and I really don't want to be that guy. When they do that, your social status goes down. They don't want to talk to you, they don't want to work with you. You know when the bus, the metro, the trains are filled, and there's 1 place to sit by, and that's beside you, but everybody wants to stand. So nobody wants to sit by the brown guy. If experienced that so many times, and so many friends, and the hijabis specifically. That the bus is full, everybody standing, but no one wants to sit there. For me it's "Oh, another place to sit my bag" (*laughs*). But I know what it means, they just don't want to sit here. Most of the times it's because of the racial slurs, but I've never asked them, so I can't be sure. It's still a theoretical for me.

Stouten: But I get if you see a pattern.

F: If I see a pattern in *every* (*emphasis*) friend I've had, we know what it's for.

Stouten: The word itself, does it have a literal translation in English?

F: What?

Stouten: Perker?

F: Perker is the definition we Danish youngsters and immigrants use. It's not a very nice word, but it says here [he searched it up online] that perker is a person with a Middle Eastern or Arabic background. It's used as condescending and a swear word. There's an example where they say "There's a lot of people here in Hellerup that don't like immigrants, so they call them 'perker'." So, it's condescending as a swear word also. Now it's just a normal thing to say. If I catch a white person saying it or an ethnically Danish person, I'll turn around and say "What the fuck did you just say?"

Stouten: Most people don't realise?

F: No, they don't realise. Also, when they're alone, I know that Danish people say it. They also say the n-word all the time.

Stouten: Okay.

F: I've caught them so many times, but some of them - most of them - are good. But there are those that think that immigrants are bad, or perker are bad. So, they use the words, cause they don't like them. But, the people who respect us - most of them do - they don't use the words.

Stouten: Was it a term that originated out off nowhere, or was it positive once?

F: No, it was never positive. It originated in 1988, I think, or 1980, but it wasn't used as a good word. It was never used as a good word. It's the same as calling a black person "monkey". It was racially, and then it got more political, and then depending on what you look like.

Stouten: Since, in your daily life, you're of course dealing with these topics but also in Ghetto Tours, does it sometimes feel self-essentialising in a sense, that you always need to talk about skin colour or religion as *the (emphasis)* defining characteristics of your person or your being?

F: We have our stories to go about, but as soon as you mention racials or skin colour or your upbringing on that side of the story, I see everybody "Oh, that's something we don't know about." Everybody seems to tense up and listen "Now, let's talk about the things we wanna hear about." When we tell our stories, they are always intrigued and want to hear about it, but as soon as I say something about skin, they go in defence mode "What did you say?" So, the friend group, the tour group, we have some inside jokes "So, my skin colour...", and then everybody "Huh, huh, huh?"

Stouten: (*laughs*).

F: And everybody laughs, cause we know they want to defend something, the ethnically Danish values, but we just say what we have in our stories. But it's fun. We have some small things that we do to make ourselves laugh. There are still some guards that they don't want to put down. They're always on the defence mode and want to protect. It's like the politicians that wanted to instigate us. He always had his guard up and didn't want to recognize us.

Stouten: Recognize you, as in *beyond (emphasis)* skin colour or issues of race?

F: Yes, beyond skin colour and dealing with the issue of being a brown or minority immigrant. They didn't want to recognize us as anything else then "He's a black person, he's a brown person."

Stouten: With others, who also have their guards up, not only politicians, do you then notice that it's more about, they don't let their guards down because they don't want to talk about these topics or say "Oh, it's multiculturalism, there's no problem here and we all love each other"?

F: They see the few people who ruin it for everybody else - like the gang members, they are a *big part (emphasis)* of why we get looked down upon. When they see us, the people on tour think "Oh, here's a member that looks like a gang member." In my story I've also said that I can't go out with my hoodie on at night because I'll look like another person that could be a gang member, and that's a saying from my mom because she was afraid that something could happen at night. Some of the people here have a certain specific clothing type they like, and just because there are many immigrants or minorities or brown people that like that, it's called the perker tostilor [can't understand, in Danish]. It's a specific style associated with the minorities.

Stouten: On that, I also noticed during the tour, when you speak of gang members, that there are “good” and “bad” ‘immigrants’ so to say - but of course, people also grew up here, so not everyone is an immigrant, but that’s how it’s envisioned often - Do you feel like you’re sometimes labelling people as the “bad” and “good” within the story.

F: We say the “good” and “bad”, but the bad are those that actually do the bad things. We only label them as bad when they’ve done bad things. The bad people are those who does something that brings down the whole immigrant community. When the media sees a brown guy, they say “He’s a brown guy, he’s Muslim and he’s from Pakistan.” Those are the kinds, every time I see an article gang-affiliated, they chose to outweigh those kinds of information instead of “He’s affiliated with those gangs, he’s at this age.” But when they say “white kid, Danish ethnically kid” who does something wrong, they just say “a young kid, a young man”, instead of saying “Danish young kid, Christian religion.” It’s every time I see an article. And every time I see such an article, I’m scared to go into the comments cause every time there is a brown-hater or an immigrant-hater or an Islam-hater, and it’s every freaking time. So, for now, it’s just a thing I do, I see an article, I go into the comments, and I get more hate for Danish people. The people are always old or it’s the very young ones. And the young ones are affected by their parents. So again, it has something to do with their experience or what they see. So, either it’s someone who does bad things and brings down the whole community, or they experiences something bad with an immigrant and they label the whole immigrant community as bad.

Stouten: Indeed, in the case when it’s white ethnically Danish, there is often sympathy for the conditions that brought someone to do violence or a bad act, while otherwise, those social categories are mentioned, and there's no explanation at all, besides from race or religion.

F: Those are the most typical things.

Stouten: When you mentioned the whole community as well, who is living here, that you also have some kinds of mechanisms to go against this, e.g. parents who look out for you. That was pretty striking to see how you tried to show, okay, some people delineate from their path, but it’s more action-based than those social categories that are inscribed to your body.

F: It’s always the parents that save their kids. If the kids have done something bad, there are either two ways to go about it: the kids go secretive on it and the parents don’t find out, or they say something to the parents and the parents do something. Either way, it’s always the parents who say “You don’t have to be affiliated with these kinds of guys. Return the narcotics, the drugs, the guns, whatever you have, and get out off this environment.” I’ve been told I couldn’t go out with a hoodie, “Don’t be with these guys. If you see someone that wants to give you something, don’t accept it.” It’s small things that I’ve grown up with that helped me, like “Don’t go with a scarf covering your face. Don’t go swinging with your arms, cause some of the gang members they swing their arms when they go. Don’t go with a puff jacker, because every gang member has a puff jacket.” Because of them we have a specific type of things we can't do. It’s because of them we have small tricks of our parents that kinda saved us. Everyone here knows someone that knows someone who has been in some kind of gang or environment, and we’ve cut those people off. Everyone who’s in this place is

someone who wants a better future for themselves. They're still running around, playing with big man and guns and knives.

Stouten: It's also pretty tacit knowledge, or the fact that you need to know "Oh, I can't wear a puffy jacket."

F: For me, it's street knowledge. It's like the American gangs: you can't wear red in a blue area and you can't wear blue in a red area. But clothes are just for the Danish people, then you're labelled as someone bad. But for us, it's just "Oh you look good in this" "Oh thanks." But for some Danish people you get labelled as a perker, "It looks bad" or you like like "any other immigrant", "He isn't smart of anything."

Stouten: Do you think that that particular aesthetic or the puff jacket for example, would that be differently perceived if it was an ethnically white Danish?

F: Yes, but we've seen these ethnically white Danish wear the same kind of style and there's a term for them also, it's called 'plastik perker'.

Stouten: Hmm.

F: And 'plastik perker' is a term used for the Danish kids trying to be a perker, wannabe brown kids. For me, if they like the clothing, let them be. It doesn't have to resemble their whole personality.

Stouten: Is it a fetish or something?

F: No, it's just, if I have a brown friend who only goes with a friend group who drinks and does drugs, he's also gonna end up like that. So if you have a white friend in a brown friend group, that white friend is gonna dress the same way eventually. So, we get affected by the people we are with, which is not always bad, it's just the way we dress ourselves, speak. Some people talk with a big 't', and then people assume that he's a perker. I've also tried to correct my Danish, so I have a very clean way of talking Danish, cause if I talk that way, they will put me in a box. Every small thing that my parents did, they did it for our better.

Stouten: It's just personal expression and indeed with the people you grew up with: it doesn't need to be stigmatised, if it's sounds or clothes or whatever. And, since you then behave differently, you speak differently, you use the 'white man's voice' - so to say -, do you feel like sometimes you're seen as "one of the good ones"?

F: I'm always seen as one of the good ones until I reach my breaking point. I've never experienced being recognized as the bad one. They always thought I was the bad one, but then they get to know me and I'm actually good in their eyes. But it always starts with the way I dress. If I had a cap and scarf on, I'd look like a mean guy, but in school, I have this on and I try to be goofy about it. But I like the way my hair is and I like the way I have my cap on. But some gang members have their cap on like this, and some members have this silver chain. It's just the way I like to dress. So, when I'm in my Danish class, I still like to have my guard up and guard down. Some things I can't say, some things I can.

Stouten: Do you feel like, since you're always trying to present yourself in a certain way, that you can ever go beyond those social categories that are inscribed in your body and people perceive each other in?

F: I need to know someone for quite some time before I can let my guard down. but, if it's some new kids or Danish people, I always try to act the same with the upmost respect. Trying to act respectful at a young age

is very different: you have to be mature, but you're not mature, but you're still a resemblance of other brown people.

Stouten: Relating it back to the walking tour, do you feel like there is that experience in the walking tour itself that you can go beyond?

F: What do you mean?

Stouten: As in, "You don't need to see me first, as like a brown kid, but as a person"?

F: In this class I started in, I was with a group of people who actually didn't treat me as an outsider. I was, of course, 1 of 3 brown people in the class, but when I introduced myself, I had the white man's voice and tried to be more smug about it. Even my name isn't very Danish, but every time I meet new people this tactic always works and I can then start making those jokes I use with my friends, but they have to know me before. It's a façade the first time they meet me, they could think "Is he joking or not?" So, it depends.

Stouten: How it gets received?

F: Exactly.

Stouten: The tour itself, you're doing a walking tour. Would it be different if you would do, let's say, a presentation?

F: Yes, I think you would lose people's interest and it wouldn't be the same as getting to live in our upbringing. If it was a PowerPoint presentation or the uni scholar professors, when they have 2 hours presentations and it takes a long time, it's like that.

Stouten: (*laughs*) [I arrived late to our in-person interview and kept him waiting due to a university class that went over time]

F: You need to go out and see the physical things that they try to get in *our (emphasis)* environments. We always have the people's interest. When we speak, if someone's talking, I say "Can you please shut up and listen, or else just go away?" And people who go on our tours are always interested. We haven't experienced people that don't want to listen, only if it's a public school because they're forced to be there.

Stouten: The public school, could you still draw them into the story?

F: Yes, cause they see we're young, they're young. They see us in themselves, just as brown kids. So, I've had the Danish culture where you can party. So, I've told I've been to Danish parties, even if I can't drink, "You people are weird when you get drunk." It's funny cause they say "Oh, but you can't party without alcohol", then we have our culture clashes. "Our weddings are without alcohol, and your weddings are with alcohol." Imagine using alcohol to bring down your guards and you can't have fun without it. Also that you need to get an appointment with your mom and dad to go out when you live out by yourself. Those small culture clashes we have is fun. I always talk with my friends "I don't pay house rent. My mom don't ask me." And also when I'm older, I'll take my parents with me. I like those topics.

Stouten: In the tours themselves, do you bring them up on purpose?

F: Sometimes, when we can see the crowd is playful, when they are not just getting information but they want to speak with us. We can sometimes “So guys, you need alcohol to have fun”, we can pick on them. We have never had any bad reactions from them.

Stouten: It’s actually kind of nice how you show we’re all similar using these cheeky little differences, but it also sparks the conversation.

F: It’s fun and they also like it.

Stouten: Besides from that, I don’t think I have any more questions, unless you have. [conclusion of interview]

7) Informal interview with Julie, guide at Gadens Stemmer (19/11/2024)

QUESTIONNAIRE: missing

TRANSCRIPT: see infra research diary (no audio recording was made in order to build rapport and gain trust)

8) Interview with Julie, guide at Gadens Stemmer (24/03/2025)

QUESTIONNAIRE

- Can you introduce yourself?
- How long have you been working with Gadens Stemmer?
- What is Gadens Stemmer?
- Who are your main audiences?
- How would you define or describe your own tour?
- What do you want audiences to get from your tour?
- You said that you made this tour together with Gadens Stemmer: how did this process go?
- What did you want to include for sure, in terms of narrative and spaces?
- Where there things or places that you did not want to include?
- Besides from financial reasons, why are you a guide? Why does it matter to you personally to be a guide?
- What are your positive experiences of being a guide?
- What are your negative experiences of being a guide?
- Have you ever experiences something unpleasant during the tour?
- Have you ever experienced something dangerous – e.g. to your own person and mental state – during the tour?
- How did you mediate this?
- What do you get from these tours? In which ways do they enrich your life?
- What have participants ‘taught’ you?
- To what extent do you feel recognized in your past experiences and hardship by doing these tours?
- To what extent do you feel recognized as a person, not necessarily tied to your role as someone who has been addicted by doing these tours?
- What do you think participants get from your tour?

- Is it important to organize tours that show the reality of addiction?
- Is it important that the guide has experienced addiction themselves?
- Why?
- Do you know any similar initiatives?

TRANSCRIPT

Eljen Stouten: Can you introduce yourself as part of a guide of Gadens Stemmer?

Julie: Yeah, of course I can. As I said and you know, my name is Julie, and I'm 34 years old right now. I work for 'the Voices of the Street' here in Denmark. My story is about the life that I have been living in my twenties, when I had a heroine addiction. So I tell how my life ended up when I had that addiction, how I lost my job, how I became homeless and how I was able to afford my addiction at that time.

Stouten: How would you define voices of the street?

Julie: We are not that big of an organisation. I think it is 23 guides here in Copenhagen now. As I said, we all have different stories of how we've been living, and we have all these places throughout Denmark. We have an organisation in [lists them].

Stouten: If I understood correctly, you were also approached by the organisation to create your story together. How did that process go of creating the tour together, the story, selecting the places?

Julie: Mostly, we make our history ourselves. That is because it is easier. We tell the story to the office, so that they can help us, maybe if we need to change something. Mostly they pick the places. We tell them our story and then they will find places that fit our story. So it is 50/50. They help you with some of the things, and the rest you will do yourself.

Stouten: For the story, are there certain things that you wanted to stress, that you wanted to tell specifically?

Julie: Yeah. Of course there are things that I'm not talking about in the open, cause it is also, what do people want to hear and what do they need to hear, you know. And there's also a difference when I'm speaking to grown-ups, I will tell them much more than I'm telling to children. I don't want to scare them and stuff like that. So my story is a bit different when I'm talking to children compared to grown-ups. So my story changes a bit, if you can say it like that. It depends who I am speaking to, what I will tell them.

Stouten: Cause, to be clear, your audiences are mostly who exactly?

Julie: Most of our audiences are seventh grade in Denmark, so from 13 [years old] and up. Mostly schools.

Stouten: Schools really know the organisation and they contact it departing from their own initiative, so to say?

Julie: [asks clarification.] Yes, exactly. Every time they get a new class, they will get one of our trips, so to say.

Stouten: You also said that there's a difference between what people want to hear and what they need to hear. What do you mean by that?

Julie: Oh, you know, - how can I explain that? All the dangerous stuff, so to say, people find that interesting. And it sounds a bit weird, but the question I get the most is actually if I have been homeless and if I have been

arrested by the police, and all that stuff. You know, horrible thing, but they find it interesting to hear. I think that's because people who live a normal life have never tried such things, and compared to hearing about it on TV or in a film, it is not the same when you hear it from a person who has actually tried it on their own body, you know. They like hearing about all the stuff you usually don't talk about.

Stouten: Are there sometimes things that you deliberately leave out, regardless of if it's a grown-up or a kid?

Julie: [asks clarification]. It does not matter. It is the same almost.

Stouten: You also talked about it a bit prior, at the café (see interview in November), but what are your positive experiences as a guide, which you really remember, that are kinda 'stuck' with you?

Julie: Oh, there are actually many things. I've never had a "bad" (*intonation emphasis*) experience. People always find the story very interesting and people have a lot of questions. They are usually so glad that I'm in another place today. I have been clean for more than 1,5 years now, and it is priceless how people would sometimes react to the tour. It is hard to describe individual things. Most of it is actually just positive.

Stouten: The feeling of recognition that you get in a sense?

Julie: Yes, exactly. Cause I remember when I started at this job, I had many doubts about 'Oh, how are people gonna take this? What are they going to say?'. Many people in Denmark, they think that 'You have chose it yourself' when you have an addiction. So, I was a bit scared about how people were going to react when I told them that I've had a heroine addiction. I was a bit scared of 'Would they be mad? What would they say to me?', but people have never reacted in a bad way, most of them understand how you can get up in these situations. Most of the times I have experienced very positive reactions.

Stouten: Does it in a sense - maybe it's a big world - *heal (intonation emphasis)* that stigma that you had earlier 'Oh no, what are people gonna think?'

Julie: Exactly, exactly. And that is also why I'm doing it. I want to teach people that it can happen to anybody, and you don't need to be ashamed because you have had a bad life and have made some bad decisions. It can happen for all of us, even if you've had a nice childhood and did not have heroine problems, it can still happen to you, it is just a matter of a bad decision.

Stouten: No true. Cause, maybe in contrast, have there ever been any reactions that were pretty negative or that you didn't like?

Julie: No, I actually don't think that I've ever gotten any questions where I was thinking 'Oh, why would you say that?' or 'That was rude'. It has always been... - people, they are just so kind, I don't know how else to explain it (*laughs*). They have never said anything mean to me or asked about anything I was uncomfortable about telling them. So, I have never actually had a negative experience. I'm just lucky, I think, cause I have heard from some of my colleagues, who've had pretty personal questions. One of my colleagues got a question 'Oh, but why have you never been homeless? Then you can't do a job like this?' And it was just like 'Why? Why can't you do a job like this, just because you haven't been homeless, you know'. There can be so many other things you talk about like addiction or whatever. It doesn't mean that you end up being homeless. So, I have heard about some other people who have had negative experiences, but I myself haven't.

Stouten: Okay, that's really good. But still, for your colleagues. You're really into touch with your colleagues? You're kind of a team, friends maybe?

Julie: Ja ja ja. Of course. We actually have our own Facebook group. We talk to each other very often. When we have some bad experiences on these trips, we will talk about it between ourselves on these Facebook groups. Our [...] are not in this group, so it is easier for us to talk about this stuff, you know (*laughs*). So, all of us are friends and we share a lot of our experience with each other.

Stouten: Is that also - you don't need to answer if you don't want to - a thing that you're all not self-employed, but employed by 'Voices of the Street'. Is there sometimes some tension between that, or not really?

Julie: No, not what I have experienced, so yeah.

Stouten: Okay. Yeah, that's really good. I also heard from other initiatives, for example in Vienna, the guide does not only do tours, but he also goes and gives lectures at schools, for example. Do you also do other activities within 'Voices of the Street'?

Julie: We have actually started to do that, but we haven't done that in the past. Schools needed to come to us, and everyone else who wanted to hear our story needed to come to us. But 3 or 4 months ago, we started to do our lectures at other places. I have travelled to a couple of schools, and I also have gone to private stuff, you know, where people just invited us. That can be a birthday, or something like that, we're people have hired us to come and tell our story.

Stouten: Oh wow, super cool.

Julie: Yeah yeah yeah, it is. So, we have started to do that in the last couple of months.

Stouten: That's really cool to hear, that you've started to do that.

Julie: Yes, it's very different from doing our lectures in Copenhagen. I have always loved travelling around the country and experiencing other cities. It is also another energy when you travel home to them, compared to when they need to come to us. I think they are more 'safe' (intonation emphasis) in their own environment.

Stouten: As in, they are maybe more 'open' (intonation emphasis) to engage?

Julie: Yeah yeah yeah, exactly. I don't know why. Maybe it's the same with us, when we are home we feel more safe and what do you say.

Stouten: Yeah, that's true. Cause, when you compare it to the tours in Copenhagen, to what sense is it different? It is a different type of 'teaching' (intonation emphasis) or speaking or interacting, right?

Julie: [asks clarification]. When I tell my story in Copenhagen, I am in the drug environment. I am in the middle of where people take drugs and sell drugs. I don't know if I want to say 'scare people' (intonation emphasis), but you cannot compared it to when I'm home with them. Yes, it is in their own environments and they listen to a horrible story, but still, it is not in Copenhagen, it is not around other drug addicts and so on. You cannot compare those two things.

Stouten: Cause I also noticed during our tour, when we walked past the building H17.

Julie: Yeah yeah yeah.

Stouten: Do you sometimes feel uncomfortable, cause I noticed that you were like 'Okay, come on, let's walk' (*laughs*), and not stare too much.

Julie: No, not at all actually. People sometimes recognize me, but that is not a problem for me. They know who I am, and I know that is just the way it is. But most of the time, why I hurry, that is because if people in my group start to look at the people who are high, they can start to argue with them, and that is a very bad idea, to start to argue with people who are on drugs. So that's why I mostly hurry between that building, so people don't make bad decisions and don't do things that are unfortunate.

Stouten: Yeah, true. It's kind of a caring act to the people who are on your tour, but also maybe the people who are in that building, that they don't need to engage all the time?

Julie: Exactly. People who are in the building and have just taken drugs, they don't want other people to look at them and find it interesting that they have taken drugs, you know. So, they are hiding a bit, but still, if you are outside, people they will look when you are high. They know what they are getting into. But that's why I hurry, cause I don't want those situations to happen.

Stouten: Cause, you said that they also recognize you, the people who are kinda around that place at the time. How does that go then? Do you say 'hi' or do you feel some tension?

Julie: Most of them are actually pretty sweet. They are waving at me or saying 'hello'. That is it, and then I just walk past them and say 'hello' to them. But some of them can be pretty annoying, because, maybe if they are high and they are not thinking, they just start to talk to me and asking me some very stupid questions. Some of them may ask me if I want to take drugs with them or something like them. Then I need to stop my tour and tell them that I don't take drugs anymore. And then they start to have all these other questions, and then I need to tell them that I don't have time for this, and then they can also be - what can I say. They think I have an attitude when I say I don't have time for them, but that's when I need to explain that I have a job to do and I need to go past them. It is not because I don't like them or stuff like that. I have a job to do and that's why I'm there.

Stouten: When you're doing the walking tours, you're really in the environment itself instead of in a classroom. You don't have any other people, or whatever can happen.

Julie: Exactly. Actually, one week ago, I had a bad experience with one other drug addicts at one of my trips. I had a school from the USA, and I was actually passing H17 - as we're speaking about that building -, and one alcoholic, she came over to me. That was when we had stopped and I was starting to tell them about my story. She started arguing with me about the things that I was saying. She started saying to the students that I was lying to them and stuff like that. She was actually so rude and we needed to walk away, because she didn't want to go, so I had to drag all my students to another place so I could continue. I could not make her disappear, it was not possible. I have never experienced anything like that. People mostly take me serious when I ask them to leave, but she wouldn't. She was just *so* (*intonation emphasis*) rude. That was one of the bad experiences I've had, but I only had it this once. That was not fun.

Stouten: No, I can imagine. Cause it was really your personal story, and she was arguing about that? You can't argue about a personal story, right?

Julie: Exactly. And that's also what I tried to tell her. 'You don't know me', so how can she stand there and tell me that I'm lying. But she didn't want to listen to me. She was drunk and also high at that time, so I couldn't explain it to her. She had just made up in her mind that things were like that, so yeah. We just needed to move on so I could continue my story in another place.

Stouten: Wow, that's really something. Cause, besides from that, I was also wondering, you're always telling your personal story. How about emotional vulnerability. Is it sometimes coming too close, or are questions sometimes too invasive?

Julie: No, actually not. That is also what I'm telling people before I begin. I mostly tell them that they can ask me anything. I will answer them as best as I can, and they can ask about anything. So, they don't have too think about 'Oh, is it too personal? Will she be ashamed because I'm asking about that?'. They don't have to think about that. As I said, I'm not ashamed about my past, I can't change it anyway. So, they can just ask whatever they want.

Stouten: I also noticed with other guides, although they are being authentic in their story, how they are telling it is a bit more staged or performed. They built a story with a beginning, an end, a climax, to make a narrative out of it, so to say. But by telling the story as a kind of performer, they also detach themselves a bit from what they experienced, so they don't need to relive it every time that they tell it. Is it kind of the same for you, or not at all?

Julie: I think it's actually the same for me. Yeah.

Stouten: Yeah, I also understand that you kind of have your own ways of telling the story. It's also nice for you.

Julie: Exactly, so yeah.

Stouten: Also, how important is it for you that it needs to be someone who has experienced it who's telling the story, and not, let's say, a teacher in a classroom?

Julie: I think it is much more interesting to hear it from people who have experienced it themselves, compared to a teacher or a professor who has read about it in a book. You can't compare those two things. They don't know how it is to be in our situations, even if they have read about it for many years and seen stuff like that. You need to have tried it on yourself, if you want to really explain an experience, how it is. There is a big difference between those two things.

Stouten: You also said that the main thing for you is, you do it because you want to change the narrative. To make it less stigmatized. Do you feel like that's also what people are getting from it, that they're worldviews are changed and maybe also engaging in more empathetic questions towards each other.

Julie: Yeah, I really do. And I also think that's why people are also so positive about anything. They get another, they see another life compared to what they see from television and films. They hear the truth, if you know what I mean, so yeah.

Stouten: Also, when you look back on your own experiences know of 'Voices of the Street', what have you gained over these past months?

Julie: That is a hard question actually, because I really love my job. I love doing what I do. It is actually one of the jobs that I have liked the most compared to some of the other jobs that I've had. That is because I think I can make a difference with this job, you know. As I said, I want to teach the children about the bad situations, and if I just can make a couple of persons help from not ending up in the same situations that I did, then I'm glad. I'm using my own stories to maybe help other people. I love it actually. It gives me very much.

Stouten: No, indeed. I can imagine the reactions that you get, knowing that you're also contributing to something bigger.

Julie: Exactly, exactly.

Stouten: About that: you said that there was less interaction during the tours than at people's home, for example. How is that level of interaction? How important is it to have a mutual conversation, and not only you telling the story?

Julie: It is very important actually. Cause I have had some trips where I can see that people want to ask me about something but they end up not doing it and I don't know why. It is totally different if I go out and I have these stories at their place, you know. They don't keep back their questions, they just ask me about anything they want, and I don't know what the difference is. As I said, I'm not sure if it's just because they're in their own environments, but there is a big big difference. It is very important that we can be on the same level and talk about anything. They don't need to hold back. I will answer them as good as I can. If it is something I have experienced, I will tell them about it, and if not, I will just tell them [*red.*, so].

Stouten: Cause, if you say 'on the same level', do you sometimes feel like you're a bit put on a pedestal, a bit detached from the audience, where you're saying everything and people are just not responding? (*laughs*)

Julie: Exactly, exactly (*laughs*). That is precisely what I think. As I said, I'm not special, just because I've tried it, made some bad decisions and have come out of it again. I'm just a normal person, just as they are. So, let's talk about it, and that's it.

Stouten: Yeah, cause I can imagine for you, it's also really fun to have some reactions that can maybe change the way you're seeing or telling things?

Julie: [asks clarification]. You're totally right. It is just easier, you know, to talk to people when they are at the same level as I am. [interruption of phone needing to be charged]. I actually don't know how to explain that, but you are right about that.

Stouten: Do you know any initiatives like yours, and if so, have you ever interacted?

Julie: I'm actually not sure if we have more stuff of this. I have never heard of any institutes that do the same as we do. Of course, as you said, you can get lectures about drugs, but that's mostly from people who haven't tried it themselves. They have just studied about it for a couple of years. But I don't think you have much organisations like ours where you can get a tour with people who have been addicted to drugs or homeless

or talking about their problems and stuff like that. I think we're the only organisation that does that in Denmark.

Stouten: Yeah, you're also the only one I've heard of in Denmark.

Julie: Yeah, cause also when I go with schools, they tell me they were seeking on the Internet, and we are the only company that pops up.

Stouten: It's also pretty random. People deliberately search for you, but it's also not such a big thing, so you also need to know that it exists.

Julie: Exactly, exactly. We have been here for about 8 to 10 years now. But the first couple of years you need to build the firm up and it takes a lot of time to get the word out that we are doing stuff like this. It is exactly the last 4 to 5 years where we have sold over 1500 trips per year.

Stouten: Oh wow, that's a lot.

Julie: Yeah, so it's going in the right direction, but it has taken time.

Stouten: Yeah, I can imagine. You were there when they started to become 'big', so to say?

Julie: Exactly. I have only been working for them for almost three years now, so I have only been there during 'the good period', so to say. I have just heard about before from the others who have been there.

Stouten: When I look, there aren't that much of these initiatives in Europe in general, but I know in Prague - I didn't go there personally - there is something which is not a walking tour but people accompany someone who is homeless and spend the day as a homeless person with that person. What are your thoughts on that?

Julie: Really? **That sounds interesting (laughs).** I have **actually** never heard about that but *okay (intonation emphasis)*. So you say you can get one day with a people who is actually homeless?

Stouten: Hmm, and then you just tag along.

Julie: Okay, and do everything with them?

Stouten: Yeah, everything for 24 hours, apparently.

Julie: Okay. Uhm [silence]. But if it works for them. I don't know if it would be something that I want, to be honest.

Stouten: Yeah, same.

Julie: I think it is... - you really need to be a special person if you want people to join you for a whole day, and it also depends on what your life looks like. Things can't get much worse if you're homeless, but if you also have an addiction on the side, it can be very special to have another person. You need to share this, especially when they don't have addiction themselves. Normal people can... - I don't know what I would feel about it, to be honest. As I said, if it works for them and they want to do it, that's fantastic, but I don't think I would have done that for 24 hours.

Stouten: Yeah, same. I also have some mixed feelings, wondering how it would feel for the people guiding those visitors.

Julie: Exactly (*laughs*).

Stouten: Around the 2010s walking tours on these topics have emerged all over Europe, kind or around the same time, pretty recently. But you are in favour of that, since it can be educational and transformative?

Julie: Yes, and to be honest, I don't know how much it is in Europe; I have only heard about our company here in Denmark and we don't integrate with other organisations in other countries. I don't know too much about that.

[End of conversation and giving information about following course of research]

9) Focus group discussion with Adriana, José Bucio, Madeline, Rozalia Sos, Shellyn Fortuna and Soledad, participants of a Wiener Nimmerland- and Ghetto Tours-tour (31/03/2025)

QUESTIONNAIRE (applied to each tour)

- Why did you decide to participate in this tour?
- How do you now look back on your experience?
- What did you like or appreciate about the tour?
- What did you NOT like or appreciate about the tour?
- What was lacking from the tour according to you?
- What would have improved the tour in your view?
- What exactly did you expect from the tour in advance?
- How were your expectations met?
- What surprised you about or in the tour? How did it surprise you exactly?
- What were your immediate reflections the first days or weeks after the tour?
- Have these reflections stayed with you in some way? If yes, how exactly?
- What did you learn from the tour?
- What specially did you learn about homelessness and addiction in Vienna / ghettoization in Copenhagen, in contrast to any other place?
- Did you relate it to other experiences or knowledge you already had prior to the tour, or have experienced afterwards? If yes, please explain how it relates exactly.
- Did it change your view on homelessness and addiction/ghettoization? If yes, in which way?
- Did it change your mindset on homelessness and addiction/ghettoization? If yes, in which way?
- Did it change your actions towards homeless and/or addicted persons / those living in a so-called 'ghetto'? If yes, in which way?
- Did it change your actions towards urban challenges related to homelessness and addiction / ghettoization? If yes, in which way?
- How did you see Martin / the youth from Ghetto Tours before commencement of the tour, and did this change during and/or after the tour?
- Do you recognise yourself in Martin/the youth from Ghetto Tours? How (not)?
- Would you define this tour as 'tourism'? Why (not)?

- What are the benefits of a learning format of going on a guided walking tour by someone who experienced the story itself?
- What are the disadvantages of a learning format of going on a guided walking tour by someone who experienced the story itself?
- How important is it to you that the guide tells their own story, and not that of someone else? Please explain your reasoning.
- What is the importance of the group context in your experience? Please explain your reasoning.
- To which audiences/populations specifically would you advise the tour? Why?
- To which audiences/populations specifically would you NOT advise the tour? Why?
- Did the guide provide enough opportunities for interaction according to you? If yes, what entails 'enough' or 'sufficient' interaction to you? Please describe your ideal scenario of interaction, and how it relates to the tour.
- What is your opinion on the TOPICS that were selected for the story?
- What is your opinion on the WAY the story was told?
- What is your opinion on the selection of sites visited? Would you choose, or present your choice of places differently? Why (not)?
- How did the experience of walking impact your experience of the tour, you think?
- How did the timing of the tour, namely in the afternoon/evening, impact your experience thereof, you think?
- Is there anything you want to share, or that I'm missing?

TRANSCRIPT

Stouten Elien: Why did you decide to participate in this tour?

José Bucio: The topic was interesting to me cause I'm also researching something related to homelessness, so that was the main interest for me. I read the website and it sounded really interesting and fun, not like, really morbid, or whatever. Not like poverty tourism, but more like him telling his life story. That attracted me.

Madeline: Me too at the time. I was interested in researching housing and homelessness at the time in Vienna - which I ended up not doing, but yeah. That's why I did it.

Rozalia Sos: For me it was more like interest in the tour and what it is like, and how I had no knowledge about this. I didn't really know these tours existed before, so I was just curious. Since you organized it, I was like 'Oh, that's quite handy.' (laughs). I remember that Yvonne (red., our teacher for the course within which framework I, as the facilitator and transcriber of the focus group, organized the tour) mentioned it on the first day, and I was like 'Oh, that is something that I would be interested in'. There is no specific reason, for my research or whatever.

Shellyn Fortuna: That was also a similar reason that I had, but also the topic of homelessness has struck me since our Brussels' semester, where we had a class wherein homeless people were presented as actual human

beings, some of them became homeless because of structural things, and I was just wondering 'What is Martin's story on homelessness?'

Adriana: I also have no particular research interest, I was just interested. Actually, I was unaware of these kinds of tours, in Vienna, and I actually wanted to do some kind of city tour, but just not really participate in this like touristified, first district situation. This was also just an opportunity that you just offered to us. I don't have a lot of external reason, besides being interested in also a more critical perspective on whatever the city of Vienna might be, you know.

Soledad: I don't have anything new to say.

Stouten: Then, second question. How do you all now look back on the tour?

Adriana: I really appreciated it. I feel like now I have a bit more context, also from what I know from your research, or what I've seen so far (red., referring to my peer debriefings at thesis seminars). I must say I really appreciate it because I feel like it is something that is also kind of a story that you can encounter in many other cities - so, it's not really Vienna-specific -, but it gives you a perspective on what may also be my city, where I'm from, where I grew up, but of course what I was also already aware of. But, these personal stories of experiencing homelessness, addiction -. And I also think, now what stuck with me is thinking about the systemic ways in which addiction is dealt with in Austria, and the restitution drugs that they give to people (red., referring to the pharmaceutical drug of Substitol, as mentioned by guide Martin in the Wiener Nimmerland tour), and the problematic around that. That really stuck with me. So, I actually keep thinking back to this as a fact that was really 'Wow', surprising to me.

Madeline: I think the Pizzeria Anarchia relates back to me, and I think the image of all the police, the military, I don't know, standing on the road, was really interesting, and I ended up doing a project for Yvonne's class later. That was really interesting, and also, I lived quite close to Karlsplatz (red., where the Wiener Nimmerland tour started). So, walking through it, I didn't really know the history of the redevelopment of the square, and the displacement of people experiencing homelessness. And I was also working on the group project (red., for another course at the University of Vienna) on displacement at Praterstern, which was his place too (red., guide Martin mentioned it as the new drugs scene, after Karlsplatz. We did not physically visit Praterstern on the tour.), so that gave me a lot of context to the changes in the city.

Rozalia Sos: For me, it was really inspiring, the whole tour, in many ways. I kept talking to my parents about it. Now, looking back on the long term, I don't know. I kinda forgot about it (laughs). So, I think that's also an interesting thing to add, how it changes with time, but I don't think it's like 'Oh, I completely forgot about it.' I think it was a very valuable other side to the classes that we had (red., at the University of Vienna at that time), and it gave a completely different story to what we saw in class. Also, I connected it to Praterstern, what was happening there, and one of the projects that one of the groups had was that square, and how easy it is too see only a sub group of people's interests, which, probably, we are a part of. Subconsciously, you forget about other groups that are maybe not so visible, so it was really inspiring.

Soledad: Yeah, I feel like in some ways it did become - because there were so many from 4CITIES - almost an alternate classroom experience to some degree, which is nice as well. I think part of the reason why I also went is because so many people were interested in going, and it felt like a cool excursion, you know, outside of the classroom, to learn in a different kind of way. Thinking about what I take away from it, I agree with Rozi (red., full first name 'Rozalia'). It's not necessarily that it has left a strong specific imprint in my mind, but when you were recalling those stops (red., at the beginning of the focus group, non-audio recorded), I feel like what came up for me were the small, individual stories of the city to which you don't get access unless you're talking to someone who lived there, who knows it so well. For example, I was struck by, in the train station, where there was this informal space where people guarded their stuff. That was just so beautiful to me. Or, then, in the park, where he talked about his trip to Spain. Actually, what I (emphasis added in intonation) remember from that stop is him talking about someone who worked as a journalist in the building there and buying him coffee every single day. Then also, in the Pizzeria Anarchia, the idea of the solidarity between this older woman who refused to be evicted, and these punks that were sent in by, like (laughs), developers, as a weapon, and a refusal to sort of participate in that capitalist mindset, which is perhaps the most anarchist (laughs) aspect. And I do remember, right after the tour, that was the story that I kept on telling and felt so moved by. These are stories that you don't see in academia or the news necessarily, so it was really special to have that, from him. Also, for the environment to be - although he was clearly sharing so many of his personal knowledge -, he was very vocal about it being a conversation and somewhat of an even playing field between everyone, so, I don't know, a discussion as supposed to a traditional tour. I mean, there would definitely be a clear power dynamic.

José Bucio: I think for me, in the long term, what I really got out of it is the opportunity to make a living out of this. I thought it was really clever, nice and interesting that you can make your life story into your job. Especially, someone that has lived like these kinds of things and in these conditions that he never followed the traditional career path - which would make it really difficult for him to be involved in the traditional job market. I thought that was really interesting, and Martin is only one of the guides. I was not aware of all the things you are researching, this alternative way of tourism and city tours, that really struck with me. More like in the short term, the emotions. I thought it was really nice. Also what Sole[dad] was telling about, more the horizontal relationship that you could feel. Also, I really liked that normally the power dynamics which these kinds of subjects are always really difficult to access. If you have ever done some volunteering or anything with migrants or homeless people, it's always really-. You know it's not the same position. You can become friends and everything, but you also feel like going back home at some point, and 'I have like this life arranged for me, and I'm not playing with my life, here, in these conditions'. And I felt that with Martin, at least for these two hours, more like erasing that part, and he was also at another level of not just him [saying] 'Oh, poor me, I've been through so much'. But it was more like, I'm telling you my life story, I'm also giving some kind of statement about it. Because the last bit was quite emotional and also reflective of him, and that I really liked and made it more inspiring for me in a way, not just 'Oh, poor little me'. That makes a whole

different experience, because you actually get to know more about the person and it's more transparent in a way. So, I really liked it.

Shellyn Fortuna: For me it's like, I always reflected that to the urban. For example, when we passed through the stations. Every time we pass through the stations, I always tried to see whether there were some cardboard boxes. If these were there, I thought about what Martin told us. Following this tour is also another way for us to know how to plan a city 'Oh, so this is how they see the city'. Also, it makes me more sensitive to things that are there in our space. For example, the chairs that have too many handles, I reflected on 'Oh, it's not a convenient space for homeless people to sleep on'. I feel like it got me in a way, more related to the urban aspect. It changes the way how I see the space, it maybe changes the way how I plan things in the future.

Stouten: Okay. What did you specifically appreciate about the tour, what did you think was lacking or would have improved the tour? Are there some reflections on these kinds of things?

José Bucio: I really liked that he constantly said 'If you have any questions, just come to me'. I had some conversations with him in-between stops. Also at the end, when our cohort (red., class) wanted to stay, he was there for twenty minutes if we wanted to ask something. So that I really liked, his openness to any topic that he had touched upon.

Shellyn Fortuna: This is not about the tour itself, but the way we ended the tour. When we ended the tour and we handed him money, the situation was not pleasant because he was sitting down and we were all standing up and giving him money from atop. It feels so not nice. I still remember that until now.

Adriana: Same, I also think about that now.

Rozalia Sos: What I liked was the structure of the whole tour. It felt very structured and there was kind of a clear storyline, which I think helped us to join him on the journey across space. I felt like I learned a lot of new things that I otherwise wouldn't have, so it was quite informative. It is a bit of a criticism in itself: it was for me more focused on drugs and the experience of people with drug use, rather than homelessness, which for me wasn't a problem, but I was just surprised maybe, not what I expected. But I guess it's closely interrelated.

Soledad: I don't know what this falls into, it was just an observation based on what José said. I think it was really nice how he opened space for conversation. But I do remember him continuously repeating a phrase along the lines like 'You can ask me any (emphasis added in intonation) question, and I'll answer it', or something. I think that was to create a sort of dialogue between people. But I think that also made me think about navigating the line between telling your own story and having to bear your life to these audience members who might not ask respectful questions to the degree of this being an economic exchange. Not that I want to make any value judgement on whether or not he should have said that - but hearing that statement made me feel kind of concerned about how some people might take that statement in a way that was not necessarily respectful to his boundaries as a human, not just as a suspect of this tour. He clearly put a lot of himself in this tour, and I think there are moments where it was more of a script and him kind of performing. But I remember there were also moments where he talked about losing friends to drug addiction, which were extremely potent, moving and affecting. So, do you think that's a very tricky line that was very present in this

tour - which maybe was not so present in the Nørrebro tour (red., referring to Ghetto Tours, in which she also participated). Cause it was someone telling their own personal story. There is something really empowering about that, and the way José was saying too. Martin said specifically the fact that I was able to make this my life and that my partner helped me make this business, is so amazing. But it just made me wonder about the ethics, hoping that that line wasn't crossed with him, or he wasn't pushed to commercialize his existence in a way that felt inauthentic or disrespectful to his own privacy that he is entitled to as a human.

Stouten: That's definitely true. I also noticed in other tours, such as in The Hague, where the guide, Ronja, she was saying 'Well, sometimes I just don't accept certain clients, cause I know there questions will put my person in a very vulnerable position and I don't want that'. So, it really aligns indeed with the tension.

Shellyn Fortuna: Do you know if Martin selects his audience?

Stouten: I don't think so.

Stouten: Was it according to your expectations, or did it surprise you in some certain ways, and if so, in what ways?

Shellyn Fortuna: I actually had no expectations to the tour cause I had not priorly done such a tour. Everything surprised me, because I have no expectations.

Stouten: No, I get that.

José Buccio: Yeah, pretty much the same [others agree with 'yeah.']

Stouten: Do you think, when you reflected on it afterwards, is it different on the first days after versus now, when months have passed?

Shellyn Fortuna: I feel like, cause we also had the tour in Copenhagen (red., referring to Ghetto Tours, in which she also participated), I was like looking into whether there are more similar tours in Copenhagen. And apparently there are. It just makes me curious. This idea wasn't there when we finished the tour in Vienna, but when we were in Copenhagen, I was just thinking 'Is this a common thing in Europe in general, or is it specified in Vienna and Copenhagen, or are there other tours in other cities?'. If yes, it got me thinking about how they are coordinated or inspired by each other, and something like that in Copenhagen.

Stouten: Honestly, what I'm noticing now is that there isn't that much exchange between all of these organizations. Of course, especially with social enterprises which employ people who aren't self-employed then, you notice that they are inspired by some of these initiatives, but they don't seek each other out, they don't communicate with each other at all. But mostly indeed, you see it popping up in Europe everywhere now. Mostly in the form of guided walking tours, but there's also one in Prague which is a bit different. Maybe you'll have your own opinion on it, but you go with a homeless person for 24 hours a day, and you "live the life" next to them, so to say. Yeah (laughs).

Shellyn Fortuna: Did you try it?

Stouten: No, I didn't try it. For me personally, ethically, I don't feel comfortable about that, but yeah.

Stouten: We also touched a bit on the specific context of Austria, and how it handled, for example Substitöl, the pharmaceutical drugs, but I wonder, is there anything specifically that you learned about homelessness in Vienna, or Austria, for example, related to Substitöl, but also broader, which really made you think about the place where you were, and not the experience of homelessness or addiction in general?

Rozalia Sos: I did mention already, looking at the city and infrastructure itself from a different perspective. I saw uses that I didn't imagine before.

Adriana: I also feel like, maybe, in terms of the localized experience, that the city - because we were there in the context 'Oh, it's such a liveable city', and it actually has a lot of defensive architecture features that actually have a lot of practice of deliberately pushing people that are experiencing homelessness out of the centre. Also, the policing aspect. I think he mentioned this in the Karlsplatz part. I think it was a football championship?

Shellyn Fortuna: Yeah, the European football cup championship.

Adriana: Where the police basically used this as an excuse to "clean" - in quotation marks - get rid off all the people who hang out there or consume or use - whatever. That people could never return after that event because police was heavily. Maybe that kind of showed the dialectic reality of Austrian society, in a sense, or the Viennese reality, of 'Oh, it's so liveable', but only for the people who are secure in the welfare regime, not people who are experiencing what it means to be out off that or falling through the grids. I grew up in Germany, so there you have also the saying that - is very rude in my opinion - 'In Germany, nobody has to be homeless'. This always reinforces the stigma that people who are experiencing homelessness must be unwilling to get out off their situation. It puts this weird framing around what it means to experience homelessness, and be ill of addiction. These kinds of things, and the intersections between this things are never truly taken seriously by the system. From what he (red., Martin) has shared about the system is that it's actually very backwards in comparison to other EU member states at least, e.g. of substitution-related therapy, of addiction, that the system also doesn't really want to help people with. These kind of things really gave a different perspective on like 'Oh, Vienna is such a liveable city, and everyone is so well of there'. Well, no, actually, because it has huge gaps in the city that deliberately push people out off the welfare regime. So, I think, that was the localized - not 'surprise', actually, it wasn't surprising -, but it was something that I for sure learned with his example, life story and what he shared.

Adriana: He also put in perspective that addiction doesn't end, it's a disease that you experience for life, also because of the substitution. I also know people who have experienced this, that it's something that is so stigmatized in society. If you're an addict, you have to be clean in order to get anything from the state. This is such a big exclusionary system or gap - in the Austrian case, but also in other cases - that every benefit or help that you can get is on the premise of getting sober. This is so hard, and nearly impossible for people to achieve. You need to get help first, before you get to the point of being clean, no? This is like a big contradiction that I see within the system, and I always wonder like 'This is a loophole. How to get out off this?'. And then people still blame the people who are experiencing that, so it's really showing, again, the

multiple layers and ways in which the system works against the people but pretends like it is only there to help. So, that's something that definitely became clear throughout the tour.

Madeline: Kind of related to that was the story of the developer who asked these - quote unquote - "punks" to come in and displace this older woman. I think in class in Vienna, and also my perception of Vienna before being there, was with the welfare state and housing being extremely protected, these issues of commodification of housing existing, sure, but not really there. It sort of being this golden standard of how social housing should happen, and that housing is affordable, and blablabla. So, I think such a blatant example of the way that that can happen, and the lack of consequence for the developer in that situation, and thinking about who's being impacted by that the most, and who's being kind of used as a tool to achieve that goal, was really interesting, because it's not something that you think about when you think about Vienna. Also, from what Adi (red., Adriana) said, do you know if there is any Housing First program in Vienna? Is it becoming more popular in Vienna?

Stouten: There is. In Vienna specifically, I don't know for sure. I feel like it is taking off, but it's not enough at the same time. It's not really structural, because the scale is really small - or, at least, that's what Ronja said (red., guide of Ronja's straatwandeling in The Hague), because she's really involved in rolling it out in the Netherlands.

Madeline: I think it's really interesting cause a Housing First program would align with what you think of as a liveable city, and people having the tools and the support that they need to have a good life. But, then, obviously, Housing First programs aren't helping people that are dealing with addictions and are in difficult situations. So, it's kind of interesting to see where the narrative and the morals that you situate in a country or city, how that actually happens in practice.

Stouten: Yeah, definitely. So, it also made you think about policies that exist now, if they're always counterproductive - like Substitöl -, or if they can help, maybe. If there are some grains or some seeds there.

Shellyn Fortuna: Adding to what Adi (red., Adriana) mentioned, the European championship. There is one thing particularly interesting in my notes (red., of the tour). There is this substitution treatment for the drug users, and apparently these drugs have a lot of drawbacks. A lot of companies have banned this, but not Austria. The company is produced by one of the members of the Austrian politics, so it's kind of surprising to me that even in Austria, this can still happen. The politics and the business is still connected. That was striking.

Stouten: I was wondering if it not only changed your views, but also how you act now?

Shellyn Fortuna: Same like I mentioned before. I'm more sensitive to my surroundings. When I walk, I'm not really observant, in a way.

Rozalia Sos: For me, not really. And what I would be curious to see, if, once I start working, I hope it will have an impact, but it really depends on what I will be working in.

José Bucio: I don't think it really really impacted me as 'Oh, now I want to dedicate my life to these kinds of things'. But it made me think of more important issues in homelessness, and that's one of the reasons why I

started focusing on death in the homeless community, and not just on hostile architecture (red., in my thesis research). More focussing on the important things.

Shellyn Fortuna: I'm not sure if it is relevant to your question, but in Indonesia I have a WhatsApp group chat with a few of my friends who are always discussing about urban issues. And I shared this tour as being really fun, and they were like 'Oh, it's interesting. Is there anything similar in Indonesia?'. They wanted to join as well. I feel like many people are interested in looking into the way how these groups are looking into spaces.

Stouten: Is there anything that you want to share that we have not discussed before? Or did we discuss most of it?

Adriana: I think how it's politically rooted, the whole issue, and that it's also a leftist issue - you can clearly see that, at least in the city of Vienna and where Martin was coming from. The conservativeness of Austria or Vienna - the marginalisation clearly comes from the right, in political terms, and the leftist movements, you know squats and these kinds of counter movements have always created networks of care for people experiencing homelessness, also in Vienna. This is not only in Vienna, but general in various cities in Europe. Also, in terms of support networks for people using addiction. What happens in terms of music, culture, ... it's a very anarchist scene and people have strong bonds in that network, supporting each other's political causes. That was nice to see.

Stouten: Martin indeed keeps up with people, and also donates part of his revenues to local causes.

José Bucio: A bit connected to the other question about things that surprised me. I guess what surprised me is that he was a non-migrant Austrian citizen, going to a pipeline of homelessness at a really young age. And, still, no one stopped it. So, I would kind of expect this happening more to migrants, or more intersectional, vulnerable conditions.

Stouten: Automatically, that brings me to the second tour (red., discussion on Ghetto Tours), if you want to go there (red., affirmative 'hmm'), very quickly, cause we don't have that much time. Since some of us are able to compare both tours, what is your impression of Ghetto Tours? These youth were Muslim who grew up in a neighbourhood labelled as a 'ghetto' under the ghetto laws in Copenhagen, which we all learned about. They tell about their own experiences growing up, they went to housing estates.

[Short interruption to move to the shade due to heat of the sun]

Stouten: What stayed with you? What was your impression?

Madeline: I think the Ghetto Tours was a lot less - maybe because it was multiple people leading it -, but there wasn't that much of a narrative of one person sort of tracing his own experiences of his life. It was a bit more fragmented, which at times made it a little bit less engaging (followed by affirmative 'hm' by José Bucio). They sort of followed the story. But, again, it was interesting to hear from multiple different people, and these sort of experiences. I was more familiar with the context.

Shellyn Fortuna: Honestly, initially, I didn't have any expectations as well about the tour. And I also didn't know who will lead the tour. It's surprising that it's kids who grew up in there. It gives a lot of perspective that they can show us the way that they see the space when they were little and where they are now. It also brings

me questions. A lot of them are Danish, but a lot of native Danish don't perceive them as Danish, just of because where they're from. To what extent will - until which generation will the native Danish perceive these immigrants coming in as the 'real' Danish? To what point will they be seen as Danish? It is really interesting to see what they mention. They were also sharing about the gangs. They are also a victim of the gangs, but the police perceived them as affiliated with the gang. I don't really have any critiques or comments, but it's just interesting to see their experience.

Soledad: The fact that it was being led by teenagers is hugely influential on the perception of the tour, as everyone can see. But also as someone who has been involved in art, community, space, and teenagers, it is clearly moving and clearly would be powerful to be a teenager giving a tour of your neighbourhood to other people. To have your voice elevated in that way, and especially when it's a neighbourhood that is so stigmatised. In some ways, that is really exciting just point black, without even thinking of the tour itself. Also, recognizing that something that a tour like that is bringing as much to the people giving the tour than the audience, was more at play in this tour to me. We also heard that some people were newer at participating, and others had been doing it a little longer, but you sort of can conceptualize what it means for everyone to create a narrative, or what it could mean, and how that might be a process that they're developing or get better at, or explore new things. That idea as a construct really stuck with me. It's also interesting because I very much lived in that neighbourhood, and I had heard about the stigmatisation but not seen it at all, so it was really interesting to hear about these stories from (emphasis added intonation) these young adults who were growing up in the neighbourhood. That was a different sort of side, certainly. Overall, what sticks with me, and is perhaps not really rooted in the place, is this idea around what it means to have teenagers, especially coming from immigrant families, talking authoritatively about what it means to live and grow up in Copenhagen, and authentically claiming that place.

Shellyn Fortuna: When we were in Brussels, I was researching about Copenhagen ghetto as well as part of a course. When they mentioned how they want social mix and everything, the image that came into my mind is 'ghetto is slum area', where the facilities are far from each other. But when we went there, they looked just like other residents. There are no infrastructural differences, in my opinion, but apparently, they don't see this as infrastructural separation/segregation, but as ethnic-religious segregation. It's not seen, but the government recognizes it as something that separates. It is really interesting, because in my mind 'ghetto' is like 'slums', that's why it's a serious issue.

Soledad: This is not something that I was thinking about at the time, but now, also in context of the research that I'm doing now in Madrid. You wouldn't use the word 'ghetto', but an 'ethnic enclave' in Madrid as an area that is coded as belonging to an immigrant community, and also has issues with gangs, drugs, and stuff. To some degree, that becomes sensationalized as 'this area is not somewhere you can be, ever, at any time. It's dangerous at every single moment of the day'. This tour, while speaking to the difficulty of that, also very much contextualized the fact that there can be drugs and violence on the side of gangs, but also police occurring in these spaces. That's a reality in some ways that does get stereotyped and blown out of

proportion. People live their lives in these kinds of spaces, and it still works, and there are beautiful great things about these spaces. I remember the playground where they loved hanging out. That's another powerful thing. Even though it's literally called 'a ghetto tour', the picture that it was painting was more of the lives of these individual teenagers growing up there, that didn't necessarily have so much to do with these issues of stigmatization as well.

José Bucio: For me, it felt more like a normal city tour. We have these stops and we go here, there's some explanation, 'Any questions around that?', no, yes, and then the next stop, and the next. Kind of like these umbrella ones that you see in the city centre. So, it felt really different (red., from the Wiener Nimmerland tour). Also from what Maddie (red., Madeline) was saying - at least for me, the multiple narrators made it more difficult for me to connect on a personal basis, and it felt for me also a bit more scripted in that way. A bit more like a commercialized thing. 'You're the group, you come here, we give you the explanation, and then you have to pay for the service, in a way', no? That was really different for me from the emotions that the Martin tour produced upon me.

José Bucio: Even from the name, it felt a bit more morbid in a way. It's not their fault, of course, that's how they call it in the government, but it makes you kind of have these expectations or picture in your mind of how bad it is going to be - like Shellyn was saying - like a slum or a favela kind of thing, a really really difficult thing. And then you get there, and all your expectations are broken, because you get there, and it's a nice neighbourhood (laughs), and it has nice infrastructure. Then, when you really see this 'ghetto' thing, the actual segregation. It really stuck with me what they were commenting about schools, and how the school system really pushes them to be separated. It's this speciality aspect with the neighbourhood.

José Bucio: I don't know if you're trying to compare the cases from the cities, or the touring itself as a comparison between them?

Stouten: I'm not really comparing between the cities themselves but more the tours and the experience thereof from phenomenology. It's very vague, and I know I can't really use the word 'emancipatory' or 'transformatory', since that's so hard to measure, especially with experiential learning which takes place throughout your whole life, and with every new thing you experience, you reconfigure other things. But I was just wondering very existentially maybe 'Why are we doing this? Why do we want to encounter so totally different people? What do we get out of this?' Cause alternative tourism is often seen as 'Oh, it's authentic', and we're transforming ourselves by meeting the Other, and the Other gets new employability skills and recognition and stuff like that. So, it's very broad, but it's just 'What's happening in this relation?'

Soledad: Well, I think with these alternative tours it's really valuable. The access you get to interact with people that you normally wouldn't. I just thought of a bizarre comparison, like a dating app. Where you meet someone, especially in our mobile life, who's from a place where you're not from at all, and then you might have an excuse to have a conversation with them, and see where you're living in a completely different context. but I think, especially with Martin too, it's not many people who feel like they can sit down on a bench and have a conversation with him that means a lot to him. And that's not even from a place of

necessarily prejudice against him. It's just the situation, the circumstances, and everything. And this is very much a place to have that conversation, and hear - a definitely curated - but story. And the students too. Obviously the idea of it being called a 'ghetto tour', that's the term, did feel a bit sensationalized. And I feel like they probably do feel to a degree that they have to perform their marginalization to legitimize the tour, otherwise it is people being 'This is my life, this is where I live, this is where I go to school'. But, honestly, side note, what is wrong with that if we're thinking about people's individual lives in space, telling a story. In that, the critique would be like, 'You need to develop a better narrative around that', but I also think - not in a demeaning way - but they are teenagers, and as teenagers it's often hard to talk about your life or to feel like it's necessarily interesting to other people. You know, the quintessential 'What did you do today?' 'Nothing.' kind of thing. Which is why I think it's a really powerful exercise for them, I think, and it's less about the product perhaps here. It is like a social art project almost. Talking about the ghettos, you definitely hear about kids growing up in that environment, and migrant youth are not given a voice or are not accessible to a lot of people, and this was getting to hear them speak to some degree. That's what's so powerful about alternative tourism - or a tour like this. Cause, unlike a regular tour, it's not about who's giving the tour, it's about learning about the place. But these tours are so much about who's giving the tour.

10) Interview with Nikita, participant of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour (11/04/2025)

QUESTIONNAIRE

- Why did you decide to participate in this tour?
- How do you now look back on your experience?
- What did you like or appreciate about the tour?
- What did you NOT like or appreciate about the tour?
- What was lacking from the tour according to you?
- What would have improved the tour in your view?
- What exactly did you expect from the tour in advance?
- How were your expectations met?
- What surprised you about or in the tour? How did it surprise you exactly?
- What were your immediate reflections the first days or weeks after the tour?
- Have these reflections stayed with you in some way? If yes, how exactly?
- What did you learn from the tour?
- What specially did you learn about homelessness and addiction in Vienna / ghettoization in Copenhagen, in contrast to any other place?
- Did you relate it to other experiences or knowledge you already had prior to the tour, or have experienced afterwards? If yes, please explain how it relates exactly.
- Did it change your view on homelessness and addiction/ghettoization? If yes, in which way?
- Did it change your mindset on homelessness and addiction/ghettoization? If yes, in which way?

- Did it change your actions towards homeless and/or addicted persons / those living in a so-called 'ghetto'? If yes, in which way?
- Did it change your actions towards urban challenges related to homelessness and addiction / ghettoization? If yes, in which way?
- How did you see Martin / the youth from Ghetto Tours before commencement of the tour, and did this change during and/or after the tour?
- Do you recognise yourself in Martin/the youth from Ghetto Tours? How (not)?
- Would you define this tour as 'tourism'? Why (not)?
- What are the benefits of a learning format of going on a guided walking tour by someone who experienced the story itself?
- What are the disadvantages of a learning format of going on a guided walking tour by someone who experienced the story itself?
- How important is it to you that the guide tells their own story, and not that of someone else? Please explain your reasoning.
- What is the importance of the group context in your experience? Please explain your reasoning.
- To which audiences/populations specifically would you advise the tour? Why?
- To which audiences/populations specifically would you NOT advise the tour? Why?
- Did the guide provide enough opportunities for interaction according to you? If yes, what entails 'enough' or 'sufficient' interaction to you? Please describe your ideal scenario of interaction, and how it relates to the tour.
- What is your opinion on the TOPICS that were selected for the story?
- What is your opinion on the WAY the story was told?
- What is your opinion on the selection of sites visited? Would you choose, or present your choice of places differently? Why (not)?
- How did the experience of walking impact your experience of the tour, you think?
- How did the timing of the tour, namely in the afternoon/evening, impact your experience thereof, you think?
- Is there anything you want to share, or that I'm missing?

TRANSCRIPT

Stouten Elien: Looking back now, what is your impression of the tour, what stayed with you?

Nikita: I was constantly sort of (*red.*, not audible) insightful. Worst it, what are the implications of tours like this, you know. The fact that him showing these places around, does this make people who use these spaces in the way that he himself did at one point, make them more vulnerable, cause now people sort of know where are the areas. I felt like that constantly, but what made it okay, is that they weren't there when we went to the locations themselves. I kept going back to a memory. I watched a Bollywood movie a few years

ago, and they were doing this - it's based on a real life story. It's a rapper that is from the slums of India, and it's this safari thing - whatever you want to call it - where these foreigners are coming in to your house, and they're like 'Oh wow, this is where you sleep?'. I have never done anything like that before, so that was my coming back to. 'Is this what it is?' For me, already since coming to Europe - the way Paris and all these European cities are presented in the media -, you think that it's all paved with gold, and you know, super whatever. And then you see all these sights to a city, and that makes you realize that I've been on the receiving end of media branding of these cities, but they've got problems too. So, in that sense I was very drawn to the person giving the tour as well. I just thought it was a remarkable story of someone having survived all of that and now being able to present an alternative side of the city.

Stouten: I'm studying these tours, but my research question isn't that delineated. Indeed, there are a lot of ethical things like you say, and I'm just interested in why we are doing these tours, and what's happening in that relationship, so to say, so it's still very broad.

Nikita: When Aga and I were also in Nørrebro (*red.*, refers to the Migranttour that Nikita, fellow classmate Aga, and I went on together in Copenhagen) - for me, I get a completely different feeling when I go to Favoriten (*red.*, district of Vienna), then now when I live in other parts of the cities. When I'm here or in other parts of the cities, I really feel like 'I'm in Europe, and this is how things are done.' You have to cross the street before the light changes, because this is just the culture and how it is done. A friend of mine is at the Central European University, so when we hang out, we hang out in Favoriten: we go to the Turkish coffee shop, you know. I feel completely different when I go there. I'm not used to the glamour of Europe. That makes me uncomfortable. But I'm way more used to seeing poverty and seeing people sleeping on the streets. I also remember that I was really overcome by empathy after the stops, and I really had to hold myself back. After the tour, everybody was trying to talk to him and be super nice, and I also at the moment, but I had to step away a little bit, you know. It's a weird thing. And I'm so glad you said that you're trying to understand what we're doing here, cause I don't know either. But I do see a lot of that in these things, I would not necessarily cast them as poverty porn, especially for tourists. It really depends on who's giving these tours. If it would be another person that would've given us the tour, I would've been very sceptical and would've felt awful about it. What I would be curious about is him, versus other people that do not use the same space in the same way that he used to do. I would be curious about how these people would feel about that. I do not want to assume that people being vulnerable would be resentful to someone who has made it out, but how do they feel about using Karlsplatz, then they were moved to these places, evictions and all these things. So, how do they feel about walking through, stopping, being around. I think I would be more curious about that. Casting it as poverty porn does not really do justice to a certain extent. I also want to know the perspective of tourists. I'm not really talking about us, but other people who do these tours, are they willing to admit that there is some weird way of looking at things. There is a genuine curiosity towards how spaces are actually contested, and that's the thing. I talked about it with my sister as well. Before I came to Europe and I got accepted into this process, I thought that I would go all around Europe and be travelling all the time, cause when else am I

gonna have this opportunity. We're studying urban studies, and Mathieu's (*red.*, Urban Political Economy, as taken together in Brussels during the first semester of 4CITIES program) class, and when I talk about these things, I got really tired and stopped doing these things. All these monarchs, all these cathedrals are the same. When I look at a 15th century painting, I'm not gonna remember the name of the painter, I don't know the context of art history. I would rather be on a walking tour, because then I actually get how people use these spaces, being privatized, for workers, etc. Public spaces that you go and buy a 5 euro coffee and sit as a class performance of how you present yourself in a space, right? There is this element of voyeurism that I'm a bit uncomfortable with, and that's why I would be interested in how people see the walking tours?

Stouten: On that last point, were there any moments when you felt uncomfortable or that you really didn't like?

Nikita: I think the parts were I felt uncomfortable we were standing there, and people looking at us. Maybe a social organization that works with people, I'm comfortable with that, but I think it can become this commodified walking tour by this tourist agency. I almost had the feeling during the tour - sometimes when you're travelling to a relative, you go to the place and they kind of show you around - it augments the quality, and Martin was able to not make it so serious. I don't know what that means, maybe also the fact that he had to make a tour where people can have fun while looking at horrific stuff. The way he did it almost had a quality of 'showing around' and 'hey, this is my old stomping ground.' As tourists, it's also interesting that I go back to this experience rather than other experiences. It helps you with connections. Cause for me, when I was going on these walking tours, I was thinking about places in Kathmandu (*red.*, where Nikita is from), places that are used by people. My thesis research on women safety, thinking of those things, and how I myself would view. You have this great empathy for people that are trying to create a space for themselves, but when I was going to Praterstern that day at night, for example, and I see a group of people there standing and drinking, I still feel unsafe. How do you balance this empathy, and this social -, I don't know how to feel right now.

Stouten: I get that last part 'Is it really changing your views and actions?' Cause indeed, you will still feel unsafe when you see someone truly intoxicated in the street.

Nikita: And then I'm like 'Would I ever go and talk to someone?' Sitting on a bench, would I feel comfortable doing that. I feel like even that is not important. People with these walking tours, now all suddenly try to talk to these people and give them money or whatever, but I think, maybe it does something in the way people see the city. Like tourism, they come to visit and have this idea of what Vienna is like. I did this walking tour, and I haven't seen anything else. What I found out during the walking tour. I don't know what kind of impact it would have on people. For me, I definitely appreciated this, also the Pizzeria Anarchia and the 1000 or some cops that they had on stand by and showed up. These stories are interesting to me cause this is where you find out so many different things about the place where you are: how could these be deployed and delegated by the city, just having all these police on standby. And the story of the old money which was at risk of being evicted and still resisting. This gives you an idea of the things that are happening that you don't see on the billboard. But it's a question of (*red.*, not audible) what would I do, even, I don't know.

Stouten: If it would have been giving by someone living in these areas specifically, or if it would engage also with the people that are living there?

Nikita: People that are living in the areas. Yes, the tourists come, they do walking tours, and then they go back. If the walking tours would have been given to residents, maybe that would effect the way they use certain spaces, maybe it would change their perceptions of how they view safety. For my own thesis now, I try to look at the reproduction of fear, how women - a transgenerational sort of - (*red.*, not audible). How you navigate certain things. And a lot of the things that are coming out now, are like 'Women must just take risk.' I've been like 'Yeah, but why aren't they though? What are things that actually keep them from taking these risks?'. It's the same thing as being middle class residents being in certain neighbourhoods where certain presence can give them the feeling of being robbed. Would that change, with walking tours?

Stouten: Yeah, that's the questions. Cause I know a lot of local school children go on these tours, but I'm not sure if it really changes their actions indeed, or feelings, maybe. But when I interviewed them - it was also directly after the tour, so you can't really tell yet. It needs more time - no one was really like 'I don't think it will change anything and how I behave towards people on the street that are addicted or homeless.'

Nikita: Yeah. I think that you just start talking to these people. I have friends in my life that talk to these people, and I don't have the capacity, I just try to avoid. But once, with friends, a woman would come to us and ask for money, and she just started to talk to her. And I was so taken aback by that. Cause in my head, I have forever thought 'These are people you just have to avoid. We don't know where this will go. If you give some money, more money will be asked.' And then it took 20 minutes, it took a long time. The problem is also that the way that these sort of - housing, and all the segregated ways that we interact with each other, comes from a place of suspicion, right? That you're thinking of these people - when I say 'these people', I use it loosely, like begging, or people using public spaces whatever - I think they see you as someone who maybe can give you something. That is how we're conditioned. In the worst case scenario they will attack you and then will rob you, at night when they are drunk, you know. So, it could take a certain amount of time to be able to. In Praterstern I was still able to do it while feeling scared. In the moments, I tell myself that they're just enjoying the space. Yes, they're drinking and loud, but maybe they're just doing it among themselves and they don't even see me, and it actually has nothing to do with me, it could very well be the case. That actually helped me to walk across and get into the station. Also, this sensational aspect, when you're 'Oh, this person used to be a drug addict, and this is where he lived. Let's look at what they do.' It's not a place where empathy gets developed, but maybe it's more voyeuristic.

Stouten: Yeah, that's the thing that children can ask very voyeuristic questions, or they're really surging for the sensation and the spectacle. But then, the guide, Martin, he tries not to go into that too much with the children, on purpose.

Nikita: Yeah, exactly. For me, my experience, even going to Nørrebro, it maybe breaks this image of what I had in my mind of what a European city looks like. Europe really takes pride in how the society functions, and it functions because everybody follows the rules. And then, there is also a certain element of being able to

sympathize (?) with being an outcast in a certain way. 'Oh, they also have people that are not adhering to their concept of how you treat people.' It's really helpful to break this image of what a European city is. Cause, when I went to Paris, I was like 'What the fuck?' The metro was reeking of piss, I walked through lots of parts of the city, and all I could see was these American tourists with red lipsticks and red baret. I walked around the city the whole day, and when you start doing that, you come across these alleys and parks, and you're like 'What the hell? How is this European?'. For me, it makes me feel at home.

Stouten: It is a bit more 'real', so to say, instead of the 'sophisticated', 'cleaned' image that Paris and all the European cities often want to voice.

Nikita: When I'm in public spaces at home - even though it's always loud, and there's traffic and it's super unmanaged - what I see is liveliness. I feel this warmth. I live in the suburbs and I walk around the neighbourhood, and I go around and tell my friends: 'You see this corner? Here would be a tea shop. And you would see people sitting around and playing cards, if there was a place like this.' There is a certain element of people loosing place. In cities now, we use public spaces just in transit. You wait for something because you don't wanna sit on this bench that everybody sat on. You don't sit on the floor, cause what the hell; a respectable partner isn't going to just sit on the pavement and chat. These are just spaces you use in transit, but I'm much more comfortable with lingering. In that sense, it makes me feel right at home when I see people being loud, even drinking, and stuff like that. Of course, there's that element of safety. Everything is so clean and well-managed. Even if you want to sell something, you need to get a permit. You walk around sometimes in between these huge blocks in Vienna, and there's no one around you. In that sense, I feel way much more at home when I see public spaces used like that, but of course there's that element of fear for my own safety when I'm walking. During the process, I try to not be judgemental. I was reading about safety for women having this perception towards working class man. I'm sure there's data and it's not used delegated to working class men who are (*red.*, deemed) 'violent' and you know. There's this element - at least in Nørrebro - or in a city, you go to Chinatown, or even Favoriten. I'm so amazed by the extent of reclamation. The same rules apply to the rest of Vienna to a certain extent, but when I see supplies of a store overflowing on the pavement, and there's barely walking space on the pavement - in Kathmandu I complain about that 'Oh my god, pedestrians, nobody cares about that' - but the same thing here makes me so joyful.

Stouten: No, I also get that, there's some liveliness, something is going on, it can be 'unclean' so to say, it is allowed.

Nikita: Exactly. I once was walking on the street in Kathmandu, and I ran into my friend, and we were in such a place where there were no cafés or restaurants nearby, but we hadn't seen each other in such a long time that we started to talk for 2,5 or 3 hours. At some point on the pavement, with a path leading up to a shop, we just sat there. And people were walking by, looking down at us - we were also dressed in this, giving off very much middle class vibes -, so they were very confused as for why these two women who are dressed like they are not unhoused sitting on this dirty ass pavement and just talk. That experience was really like 'Wow,

people really don't want to linger.' and 'How will you be perceived by others?' If we were somewhere else, we would've gone to a café.

Stouten: Yeah indeed. All these social norms and that you need to consume, or otherwise you're social controlled in a way.

Nikita: Exactly. But I just remember at the end of the tour everyone going up to him and being like 'Thank you so much.' I also did that and I think I remember because I was so amused by the way he was talking about Nadine. He was making some jokes about here, and then like 'Oh, but she's the brightest person I know', and I was just 'Say hi to Nadine. It was really nice to hear about her from you.' And as I was engaging with him, I had this feeling that I was not gonna turn this into a thing now. Because I was overcome with empathy after this walking tour. I'm not gonna make this person now have to deal with this. There is a certain element of generosity, voyeurism, empathy. The joy for his story of having made it out of that. But then - we are in university, and these ideas are behind us. We will talk about the things that made is so that Martin grew up in these circumstances. What is the social reality that pushed him into this direction. But I feel, for a lot of people, they might see this as the story of an addict who turned his life around, but now he's making money and giving tours. This 'success story.' My concern would be that people do not see this as how we engage with public spaces, and if cleanliness and safety are really the best ways to appropriate spaces, but 'finally, look, other people do it too.'

Stouten: Yeah indeed, cause people who already have this perspective - there was also a school teacher who was really interested in Pizzeria Anarchia 'Oh in Vienna, my students - who have really rich parents - now they can understand gentrification and how it happens through the housing market. But my students will probably not understand now, since they often don't understand why people don't have a second vacation home, etc.' And other people also responded 'Oh, it's super nice that *he* (*red.*, emphasis added in intonation) made it out.'

Nikita: Exactly, exactly. Maybe they see it as the addicts that are in Praterstern, in public spaces, they do not do enough, and that's why they're failures. I'm worried that that's what's people are taking from this, and not necessarily leading to development of empathy. In my part of the world public institutions aren't functioning so well, but here, everything is supposed to be designed for the wholesome idea of a family person, like a wife and husband, or queer couple, with kids. It has to be sanitized, family-friendly, or safe for women. What does that say, really? What would be really helpful is to have really really curated walking tours. You really explicitly - and I'm not saying it's suddenly Martin's responsibility to do this -, but if walking tours are to have some purpose in this way of changing people's perspective, one potential that I see is maybe social organizations that work with people. I went to this classy thing in East Berlin two years ago. It was the prisoners themselves that gave the tour. I imagine a lot of them were traumatized, and then they were rehabilitated, and then this process became a way for them to deal with it. They give you a tour, *and then* (*red.*, emphasis added through intonation) you follow this up with conversation 'What did we see?' I

imagine people like my parents, who would not only be out of depth in Europe - because this is a completely different place -, but they are also coming from this very middle class mentality of what is right or wrong, and how you should behave. I imagine that kind of demographic, just sitting and talking about it afterwards, even if there were things that they didn't necessarily understand themselves, through other people talking about it, maybe it could be a way where they were 'Oh, interesting. I didn't know about this at all.' Even within our program - I'm not dropping any names or trying to be mean or anything - but just from interactions with some people, sometimes I walked away feeling like 'Wow, they have some condescending' ideas of what a successful, normal functioning individual looks like, you know. Even people from our program, who all set through Mathieu's class and also in other places learned to be critical, maybe they saw this as 'Martin made it out, and it's horrible, and that's why you shouldn't do drugs, kids.' He said it also, he waste 9 years or something from his life: those are the things that people take away.

Stouten: Yeah, really. Cause for the kids, the main message they get is 'You shouldn't do drugs.'

Nikita: and end up in public spaces drunk and fucked up, until you finally turn your life around. I feel like this would be the message. Every time I have to write something, transformative potential, I think there is a way for people to have conversations. Not just walking around together where one person is telling you what happened, and then you pay and you go home. It is a form of sightseeing. Walking tours could have the potential where - even in an ideal world, how we would resolve conflicts. Let's say there's a residential neighbourhood, and in Praterstern, it happens to be in a neighbourhood where there's a sight of people being seen as unwanted or undesirable. And, in an ideal world, I would imagine that these people, the residential folks that live there, and the people that use these spaces, there would be talks, negotiations. You wouldn't just see people who are there. Yeah, sure, they might be high and do drugs, but they're still individuals, have things to say and they still use the space, which is something to them. In an ideal world, both of their concerns would be valued or mediated. A walking tour would be the mediator between residents, people who use the spaces, and tourists, and whoever is interested.

Stouten: That's also why I was interested. Cause these tours can indeed be very badly, ethically, and indeed voyeuristic, where you just go, you pay and then you go away, not thinking about it or doing anything about it. But, this is also one of the only places - which I heard one of my interviewees say earlier - where it's legitimized and socially okay, and you feel safe, to meet someone you otherwise wouldn't engage with.

Nikita: Yeah, exactly. And, also, I imagine, if you have grown up in a culture where every kind of drug use is villainized, you really grow up having this idea that drug addicts are people who couldn't make it or there's a lack of will to work hard. Because there's nothing else. These interactions could happen in these kinds of spaces, and it could be beautiful, but my only concern is: what is been taken away? Maybe there's a misunderstanding behind the intentions, the representation. It just ends up being 'Oh yeah, we went on a walking tour with a drug addict, and we saw where he slept and did drugs, and whatever.' It does have a lot of potential, not in the way that tourists come and they do walking tours and then they just go away, but in

the sense of - let's say - government entities that design or regenerate public spaces. It's maybe a radical idea, but to engage with both sides and see how both sides use the spaces. A negotiation that happened.

Stouten: I know in the Netherlands, there's a case. Ronja, she's also a guide and she's also doing such tours, and she takes a lot of policymakers on her tours, and then they email her afterwards 'Oh, we changed this law or procedure.' So, there is some small change.

Nikita: Yeah, exactly. Not all tours have to be done with policymakers, but if we're looking at effectiveness. What and why should we only look at these things that we're created by wealthy monarchists, and people that we're professors, like cathedrals, museums, and churches. Why does it only have to be that? And just because people are interested in something else, it is remarkable, but it is also a matter of: how are they doing it though?

Stouten: Yeah, I get what you mean. Of course, other stories of Vienna also matter, that it's not only the grandiose, big, majestic buildings, so to say, but indeed: how is that story then being told, and how is it perceived or received?

Nikita: Did you find any insightful answers from the tourists that did these kinds of tours?

Stouten: Most tourists - indeed like you said - were like 'Oh, it was really interesting.' but they don't really see the structural causes necessarily. And there's also a lot of school children and local people, which has a lot of potential then - you would say -, but they just feel pity for him in a sense or they're proud that he made it out, but the real solidarity is missing in a sense. They don't see how they themselves are also involved in these structures of impoverishment, so to say.

Nikita: These are feelings - when you look at people who are doing worse than we are, the feeling is always 'Thank god. I am lucky.' Perhaps there's this play, where it ends up being this feel good thing, yeah pity for Martin but glad that he made it out, and then reaffirming you're own thing for your zest for you life. I don't have this, but at least I don't have it as bad as these people. And then - like you said - there's no real solidarity, because we are so programmed to distance ourselves from blessings or whatever, unfortunately. Because you told me about this walking tour with policymakers, in these spaces where there are different user groups and it's a contested space to some sorts, I'm content in the fact that the different demographics, the people that use these spaces and are living in the houses, come together and work or fight the state on the things that they want, and both of their demands can be met. People that want space can also go and collect what they want. There could be the potential that these are all met. But then, the middle class is so busy distancing ourselves from everything that is not too well put together.

Stouten: In a sense, people also mentally make their own safety borders so to say, that they dissociate themselves.

Nikita: I read the news, and sometimes I'm completely falling apart, when I talk to my friends who are much more high-functioning and are able to do things, I find it really interesting since it's an insight into how people think. If you're falling apart while reading the news, you can't function like that. You have to accept that there are certain things that you cannot change, and that you just have to do what you have to do. I started doing

therapy for the first time in my life, and there are times when I really struggle, cause I'm trying to talk about things, and then it's 'But these are things that do not help you.' and then I'm like 'What? But it could help me if something came out of it.' 'But you need to think about yourself now.' And the point that I'm trying to make is that, unfortunately, how we are able to survive under this system, is sort of distancing and dissociating. You cannot think about another group of people too much. You have to go to work, take care of a family, you have kids. You have to think about your own safety and environment, how are you gonna think about a bunch of drug addicts who are drinking and being out outside our building every night. 'Do I need to start having empathy for them? What the fuck.'

Stouten: No, I totally get what you mean. There's a lot of injustice in the world, but you can't care about it too much, cause otherwise.

Nikita: It's not just to feel, but also to do things about it. Also on these walking tours, there's a lot of feeling that's happening, but creating awareness, research, evidence-based policymaking, and negotiation. You can actually make something out of it, and it's a tangible impact as opposed to feelings. Yes, going on a walking tour might make you feel a certain type of way, but feeling alone also doesn't generate anything. Once in a while talking to a homeless person might do something, but it doesn't help.

Stouten: It's not only about feelings indeed, but also, what do you do with those. Sometimes, feeling uncomfortable to talk to someone who's homeless, but still, just doing it.

Nikita: The thing is, even if I became uncomfortable and I challenged myself, what would that do. It would just be a feel good thing for me, right? I can cross something from the bucket list 'Talk to a homeless person, I'm so kind.'

Stouten: Yeah, indeed, in the end, it is self-serving, because you want to be 'an altruistic person'.

Nikita: I've been doing something about it, which is as simple is, forming some sort of co-existent thing with everyone that uses the space in a neighbourhood where you haven't been in a while. If they don't have to own an apartment. If we did that, maybe I did not have to wonder so much at the train station if the men who are just drinking and having a good times among themselves, or if they are planning to rape and murder me. So you walk away with guilt, because for reasons of safety, you expect the worst out of people. If nothing happens you just feel like 'Damn, they were playful, teasing each other, and here I was.'

Stouten: No, indeed, we are conditioned in a sense - maybe also because of the safety feelings - to not engage too much or not expect the best, so to say.

Nikita: Do these kind of walking tours do anything to break these rigid notions that we have? To what extent does it break? When I'm discounting it earlier, I'm saying one person's consciousness, but let's assume that one person's conscious travels through a friend group and all of these things - but beyond that does it have any potential. These relationships you have with people, you're using the same spaces.

Stouten: Yeah, I'm also really curious. Cause, I don't know if you remember, but my grandparents were also on the tour, and they are the kind of people who indeed also have a strong bias of what is right and what is wrong, and how you should or shouldn't behave or dress, especially in public space. When doing the tour, I

wanted to translate for them, but they didn't want to get close enough for me to hear, because they were just so against him as a person when they saw him standing there and they had their preconceptions. And I'm really curious - I want to talk to them when I get home now for Easter in a bit - if it has changed them in a way. Cause afterwards I talked to them, and I explained the story a bit, and they were like 'Oh, I didn't know. I didn't hear that.'

Nikita: Sometimes you have this - in rural Nepal, for example, the view of people in villages as 'uneducated', 'illiterate', 'judgemental', whatever. But if they see someone, there is genuine curiosity to engage with them. I've had moments where I saw old men laughing - they don't understand each other's language - but they were able to engage, and there's a moment where they realise 'Oh, it's just another person. There are certain things they do that I'm not used to, having very different walks of life, from different parts of the world, but here's another human being.' That is beautiful in itself, but when I'm thinking of Martin's tour, it's a lot on him to how does he do these tours with students, sending a drug message. He's constantly trying to do a walking tour with people and humanizing yourself, knowing that not everyone will see you that way.

Stouten: It indeed puts a lot of responsibility on him. Cause in the end you pay for a service and go away, whatever your preconceptions were.

11) Interview with Koen and Patricia, participants of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour and Ronja's straatwandeling (22/04/2025)

QUESTIONNAIRE: missing

TRANSCRIPT (in Dutch)

Stouten Elien: 'Hoe kijken jullie terug op de tour? Wat is jullie bijgebleven?'

Patricia: 'Voor mij is bijgebleven dat iemand die in zo'n moeilijke omstandigheden alleen terechtkomt in een stad, na zo'n lange tijd toch het initiatief en de moed vindt om voor z'n eigen iets te gaan doen en van z'n levensverhaal gebruik te maken om misschien de toeristen of de inwoners van de stad iets mee te geven daarover.'

Koen: 'Dat hij toch het uiteindelijk heeft ingezien, ondanks hij zo diep zat. Je zou denken dat gaat hoe langer hoe erger, en hij gaat dood, maar hij heeft uiteindelijk toch iets gevonden om daaraan te werken en andere te motiveren en te stimuleren door z'n tours dat er ook nog wel licht aan het einde van de tunnel kan zijn.'

Patricia: 'Ook dankzij de mensen die hij onderweg is tegengekomen.'

Stouten: 'Wat aan de tour vonden jullie juist heel positief, en wat zouden jullie anders aanpakken, of vonden jullie negatief?'

Patricia: 'Ik vond het positief dat er verschillende plekken waren waaraan hij zijn levensverhaal kon linken.'
[vraagt om verduidelijking]

Koen: 'Ja, het was geen fijne ervaring, het was een verhaal zoals het is, uiteindelijk. Het was misschien geen fijn en positief verhaal, maar het eindigde positief. Dus, het is geen negatieve ervaring; je houdt daarvan, van zo'n indrukken op te doen, of niet.'

Patricia: 'Ja, het geeft u een ander beeld.'

Koen: 'Zoals moeke en pake, die vinden dat dan niet (red., refereert naar de ouders van Patricia en interviewers grootouders, die deelnamen aan dezelfde tour).'

Patricia: 'Het is geen fijne ervaring in de zin dat je het leuk vindt, maar het is wel positief om te ervaren hoe hard het leven kan zijn voor iemand in die omstandigheden.'

Koen: 'En het vooroordeel. Dat we eigenlijk snel vooroordelen hebben, maar als je dan toch het verhaal hoort, dat je denkt "Eigenlijk heeft hij het wel goed gedaan in zijn omstandigheden." Met zijn ouders, met zijn drinken al jong.'

Stouten: 'Wat hebben jullie eigenlijk over jezelf geleerd?'

Koen: 'Vooral niet te snel vooroordelen hebben over een situatie, en alleen op het zicht afgaan. Je moet eigenlijk het verhaal kennen om iets te kunnen kaderen. En hij heeft het gekaderd in die tour van enkele uren. Pake kon dat moeilijker kaderen - ik haal dat er wat bij om het verschil te tonen. Daar was het meer zwart of wit.'

Patricia: 'Je moet op voorhand ook bij jezelf beseffen dat je er voor open moet staan om te luisteren wat zo iemand te vertellen heeft zonder dat je met je eigen perceptie vertrekt en niet de bedoeling of wil hebt om er vanaf te wijken.'

Koen: 'Had hij geen rode haren, had hij dit, had hij dat.'

Stouten: 'Er wordt vaak gedacht dat die tours mensen hun perceptie kunnen veranderen, maar moet je dan misschien al een bepaalde mindset hebben of op een bepaalde manier denken voordat je daarvoor openstaat?'

Koen: 'Dat denk ik wel. We halen hier uw ma en pa aan, maar die mindset van uwe pa was al mis toen hij die man zag gewoon.'

Patricia: 'Mijn pa had zoiets van "Ja, hij had ook wat harder kunnen werken, of werk zoeken", terwijl hij zich niet kan inbeelden - volgens onze papa heeft hij het zelf vroeger heel moeilijk gehad, en heeft hij ook het risico gelopen om van de regen in de drop te vallen. Misschien had die gast op zijn jonge leeftijd ook andere initiatieven kunnen nemen waardoor hij niet aan de drugs zat.'

Koen: 'Maar je kan geen situaties met elkaar vergelijken, nooit, want je hoort maar een fractie. Van thuis uit kreeg die drank, dan is het al om zeep.'

Stouten: 'Jullie zijn nu meegekomen op de tour omdat ik jullie dat vroeg, maar zou je ooit uit jezelf meekomen? Waarom wel of niet?'

Koen: 'Wij zouden daar nooit aan hebben gedacht dat dat bestond, dus het moet dan wel kenbaarder gemaakt worden. Het was kenbaar omdat jij in je opleiding, in je interesseveld die zaken vindt, maar ik denk dat weinig mensen dat vinden. Ook al hebben zij het druk, als zij vijftig of honderd man hebben op de honderdduizend man die daar per dag rondlopen in Wenen, is dat niks.'

Patricia: 'De bekendmaking van dergelijke initiatieven wordt ook niet zo gemakkelijk ondersteund door een stad-'

Koen: 'Omdat het geen positief verhaal is.'

Patricia: 'Geen positief verhaal, en hoe breng je zo iets naar toeristen zonder dat het een veroordeling wordt. Je moet niet hebben dat mensen daarnaar toekomen en bevestiging komen zoeken in hun manier van denken, naar de vooroordelen die ze hebben.'

Stouten: 'Wat is dan eigenlijk het nut van zulke tours? Waarom zou je zo'n tour doen?'

Patricia: 'Vooral voor jongeren en scholen kan het positief zijn. In de lessen, de voorbespreking, de nabespreking, de maatschappij, ontwikkeling, kansen krijgen in de maatschappij, rekening houden met elkaar. Het inzicht in hoe het kan gaan, de kansen die je krijgt van thuis uit en waar dat je geboren bent en welke ondersteuning je krijgt: die kansen zijn er niet voor iedereen. Daarin speelt de leerkracht een grote rol.'

Stouten: 'In dit geval was de "leerkracht" Martin, de gids die het zelf had meegemaakt. Hoe belangrijk is het dat iemand het verhaal vertelt die het zelf heeft meegemaakt?'

Koen: 'Heel belangrijk, anders zou ik al geen interesse hebben.'

Patricia: 'Nee.'

Koen: 'Ik kan ook lezen over zulke verhalen, dus je moet het horen en beleven van degene. Anders is het, niet fake news, maar er zijn zoveel verhalen die ik kan opzoeken en vertellen.'

Stouten: 'Terugkomend naar Martin, hij krijgt een loon hieruit, maar wat wint hij hier buiten financieel gewin van?'

Patricia: 'Voldoening. Erkenning, waardering.'

Koen: 'Wat hij heeft bereikt en dat aan andere mensen laten tonen. Eigenlijk hetzelfde als een kunstenaar of artiest: je hebt iets bereikt.'

Patricia: 'Zelfrespect, omdat dat misschien één van de eerste keren is dat hij een initiatief neemt of wat hij doet waarvoor hij positieve waardering krijgt.'

Stouten: 'Zou dit soms kwetsbaar of nadelig voor hem kunnen zijn?'

Patricia: 'Ja, hij moet zich altijd kwetsbaar opstellen. Hij wordt daardoor altijd geconfronteerd met wat hij heeft meegemaakt.'

Koen: 'En hoe mensen dat oppakken. Stel dat pake Engels zou kunnen, die zou voor hetzelfde geld een reactie hebben gegeven. Zo zullen er ook wel mensen zijn.'

Stouten: 'Tijdens zo'n tour ga je in connectie met je publiek, wat op de één of andere manier verloopt inderdaad, maar heb je het gevoel dat er een band is gesmeed, een soort blijvende connectie?'

Koen: 'Nee, dat niet, maar er was ook geen afstand.'

Patricia: 'Op die korte tijd dat je de tour hebt gehad, ook bij het afsluiten was wel vriendelijk en fijn.'

Stouten: 'Hoe belangrijk is het dat dit een wandeltour is, en niet bijvoorbeeld dat hij een lezing komt geven?'

Koen: 'Heel belangrijk.'

Patricia: 'De ervaring ter plaatse doet heel veel. Als je dat zou zien op een PowerPoint is dat veel minder authentiek, realistisch.'

Koen: 'Je kan het je beter inbeelden. Vooral als het in het Engels is en je verstaat weinig Engels, en je bent op de plekken zelf en je verstaat een paar woorden, is het toch anders dan dat het allemaal theoretisch is.'

Koen: 'Zeker voor kinderen en jongeren komt dat toch anders binnen.'

Stouten: 'Je zei ook dat het meer "authentiek" is: wat bedoel je daarmee?'

Patricia: 'Je zit in de werkelijkheid waar hij geleefd heeft. Je ervaart waar hij geslapen heeft, waar hij zijn koffie kreeg, waar hij op een bankje iemand tegenkwam.'

Koen: 'Je voelt het bijna. Je proeft het, en je voelt het. Dat was zoals in Den Haag ook (red., refereert naar Ronja's straatwandeling, waaraan hij deelnam), je staat naast de winkel waar ze haar maandverband ging halen. Je kan je het op dat moment beter voorstellen dan dat je het op een foto ziet. Dat is anders.'

Stouten: 'Zijn je gedachtegangen of je acties verandert?'

Koen: 'Nee, ik had al geen echte vooroordelen. Ik weet dat er wel altijd ergens een oorzaak is.'

Patricia: 'Nee.'

12) Interview with Bert and Emilienne, participants of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour (26/04/2025)

QUESTIONNAIRE: missing

TRANSCRIPT (in Dutch)

Stouten Elien: Hoe kijken jullie erop terug?

Bert: In het begin was ik een beetje argwanend. Ik vond het niet zo *kunnen* (red., intonatie benadrukking). Maar nu ik alles zo uitgelegd krijg en de situatie hoe dat komt, dan begrijp ik dat wel dat dat zo kan gebeuren.

Emilienne: Dat de kinderen die zo terechtkomen van thuis uit, toch in allerlei dingen terechtkomen waarin ze niet thuishoren op een hele jonge leeftijd. Die hebben niet kind kunnen zijn. Die zijn voor hun tijd in het volwassen leven terechtgekomen, wat niet mag natuurlijk. Toen we het hem hoorden uitleggen en alles gezien hebben, krijg je daar meer begrip voor. We vonden het heel super om Christiania te zien (red., een vrijstaat in Kopenhagen waar drugsgebruik en -handel gedoogd worden). Die gaan er toch nooit meer vanaf, de meesten toch niet, en ze kunnen daar.

Bert: Dat ze daar samenzitten en een gedeelte kunnen doen wat ze graag doen. Die hebben niet de verplichtingen die wij hebben in de maatschappij, en daar geven die ook niks om. Die moeten niks aan hebben van kleren, dat interesseert de mensen heel weinig. Die hebben een ander genre, andere goesting.

Emilienne: Wij hebben dat fijn gevonden om die route mee te doen. In het begin was dat voor ons vreemd, maar je moet dat kunnen plaatsen hè.

Bert: Ook een beetje de achtergrond komen, hoe het zo ver kan komen in de maatschappij.

Emilienne: Gelijk pake altijd zegt, als er zoiets is 'Ja, werk maar.' Maar dat is niet altijd het geval, je moet ook weten waarom zoiets gebeurt.

Stouten: Maar ik begrijp ook, de taal zat niet mee, je moet dat ook kunnen horen.

Emilienne: Toen we daar op die wei (red., grasveld in het park) stonden, ik kreeg wel veel mee, maar ook niet alles; hij helemaal niet. Dus dat is moeilijk dan.

Stouten: Was het in het begin misschien ook moeilijk om je open te stellen, als je hem zo ziet: rood haar, ...?

Bert: Ja, daar had ik in het begin een beetje moeite mee. Dan denk ik 'Ja, die kleuren en die tattoos en die oorringen, dat is toch niet mijn *dada*.'

Stouten: Het is wel een heel ander beeld dan je gewend bent.

Emilienne: Maar als je hem dan hoort uitleggen wat hij aan de hand had gehad, en vanwaar hij kwam, en wat hij nu deed, dan krijg je daar toch een ander beeld over. We hebben het er daarna nog een paar keer over gehad, en voor ons was dat nieuw. We zien die wel ergens, maar dan denken we 'oh'.

Stouten: Ik vroeg me al af of jullie daar iets aan hadden gehad.

Bert: Ja, dat we ons wel afvragen hoe dat dan komt. En dat wij dat niet hebben met onze kinderen en kleinkinderen, we hebben ook het voorbeeld niet gegeven en anders geleefd of samengewoond.

Stouten: Als je van thuis uit inderdaad toch iets van ondersteuning krijgt of bepaalde waarden en normen. Jullie linken het dan ook terug aan Christiania in Kopenhagen: als er zulke momenten gebeuren, linken jullie dat wel aan elkaar?

Emilienne: Dan zeggen we 'Oh, we hebben dat daar ook gezien of meegemaakt, dat was daar ook zo.'

Bert: Ik vind dat goed dat die jongen daar met z'n stepke dat doet, maar ik vind het zeker goed in Christiania dat ze daar samenblijven en iets opbouwen wat leefbaar is. Niet zoals hem langs de straat lopen.

Stouten: Iets duurzaam?

Bert: Ja.

Emilienne: Dan komen ze nooit terecht hè.

Bert: En dan komen ze weer ander cliënteel tegen, denk ik dan, andere omgevingen: dat geeft altijd aanleiding tot drinken en tot drugs.

Emilienne: Maar het is *chapeau* dat hij zo lang in dat appartementje is binnengebleven omdat hij wist dat hij anders niet aan de verleiding kon weerstaan, op elke hoek van de straat is een café.

Bert: Hoe is het daar nu mee?

Stouten: [geeft uitleg dat ze het heel druk hebben, en vooral veel scholen rondleiden].

Emilienne: Dat is goed om daarmee geconfronteerd te worden. Ik vond dat goed om te zien, dat we daar die junkies - zal ik maar zeggen, of mag ik dat zo zeggen? - in Christiania gezien hebben. Die film, hoe het ontstaan is, hoe ze op dat domein terecht zijn gekomen.

Bert: Dat krijg je op die festivals ook hè, in Duitsland, dat die daar samenkomen.

Stouten: Een beetje Woodstock?

Bert: En Amsterdam, daar liepen ze ook met de spuiten in de binnenzakken.

Stouten: Is het nuttig om zulke wandeltours te doen?

Emilienne: Ik vind van wel. Ik zei gisteren nog, toen papa dat op Facebook zette dat we in Christiania waren geweest, zeiden mensen toch 'Ah, dat moet je zeker doen als je in Kopenhagen bent geweest.'

Bert: Mijn eerste reactie was 'Wat moeten we hier komen doen?', maar je weet het ook niet.

Stouten: Hebben jullie het gevoel dat jullie elkaar in elkaar konden terugzien, dat er een gedeelde menselijkheid is?

Emilienne: Ja, als je nu in andere steden komt, bijvoorbeeld Brussel, heb je daar meer begrip voor.

Stouten: Dat er veel redenen kunnen zijn, en niet per se 'Mensen zijn te lui.'

Bert: Gelijk we altijd zeggen 'Dat hij maar moet gaan werken', maar zo is het niet altijd. We moesten altijd gaan werken vroeger, maar we zijn er nooit mee in aanraking gekomen (*red.*, drugs). We vonden dat niet en we kregen het niet. Als ze je konden bereiken en iemand het aangeboden had, dan waren we misschien ook... - dat weet je niet.

Stouten: Nee inderdaad, want ook al was het vroeger hard werken, er was toch ondersteuning van broers en zussen...

Emilienne: Maar ik begrijp hem ook, dat hij in het begin anders tegenover zo'n dingen staat, omdat hij het op jonge leeftijd veel harder heeft gehad dan anderen. Hij zegt 'Ik was maar zeven jaar, ik heb het helemaal alleen moeten verwerken', en dan kijk je daar ook anders naar.

[...]

Emilienne: Ik wist niet dat hij van Oostenrijk was.

[...]

Emilienne: We waren er heel blij mee achteraf bekeken, maar je moet er in het begin echt eens mee geconfronteerd worden om te weten hoe het zover is gekomen en hoe het gebeurd is - hoe heet 'm?

Stouten: Martin

Emilienne: Martin

[...]

Bert: Ik was vroeger ook in de café op 13, 14 jaar

Emilienne: Angel en Bernard hebben toen veel naar u omgekeken.

Bert: En dan ga je werken, en dan verdien je.

Emilienne: Daarom is hij soms harder.

Bert: Vroeger hadden we de drugs niet. We kwamen daar niet aan, maar in die grote steden. Vanaf 12 jaar moest je met de sigaretten in uw zak rondlopen.

Stouten: Hebben jullie dan het gevoel dat jullie anders zijn gaan denken en handelen?

Emilienne: Ja, toch een andere opstelling ten opzichte van die mensen. Als je iemand ziet die ergens – langs straat ligt, zal ik maar zeggen – dan vraag je je toch af hoe dat is gekomen dat die man of die vrouw daar ligt.

Stouten: Zouden jullie je ook anders gedragen naar mensen die jullie op straat zien?

Bert: Ja, nu wel.

Emilienne: Maar dat hebben we altijd wel gehad van 'Kom, zullen we die mens niet iets geven?'

Bert: En hoe dat ook komt, dat die daar zo ligt.

[...]

Emilienne: Dan wordt het geld misschien voor dingen gebruikt die ze niet moeten...

C. CODEBOOK SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Code		Description
TOUR PARTICIPANT PROFILES		Which groups participate in poverty tours in European welfare state capitals?
	Policymakers and politicians	Policymakers (e.g., civil servants and administrators) and politicians, often employed at the level of the local municipality.
	Local residents	Local residents of the cities that are being toured.
	‘Socially engaged and educated’	People who are socially engaged and educated on themes of urban precarity, or “believe themselves to be so” (translation from interview with Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak, guide at Ronja’s straatwandeling).
	Professionals and practitioners	People who work with precarious people in any manner, and thus are assumed to (believe themselves to) be socially engaged and educated on themes of urban precarity (e.g., health, social and/or youth workers; judges; civil servants and administrators at local municipal reception desks).
	Those with “fixed opinions and views”	People who “have their fixed opinions and views [on us brown people] (adapted quote from interview with F, guide at Ghetto Tours). Tour participants have stereotypes regarding the guides and the populations that they represent that do not align with the guides’ self-image and the message that they try to convey.

	Youth	Legal minors – often between 11 and 16 years old – who are partaking in the tour within the framework of a school fieldtrip, accompanied by their teacher.
TOUR GOALS		What are the communicated goals of poverty tours in European welfare state capitals, according to guides and initiatives' public communication (e.g., website pages, social media posts)
	Prevention	Tours aim to prevent people, especially youth, from ending up in similar situations of urban precarity.
	Sociopolitical change	Tours aim to evoke sociopolitical change on how urban precarity in urban and public spaces is perceived and enacted, eventually hoping to prevent and reduce urban precarity all together.
	Combatting stereotypes	Harmful stereotypes (often related to individualized victim-blaming and stigmatization) on urban precarity and those impacted by it are combatted.
	Instigating action	Guides do not only aim to change <i>views</i> , but also inspire different <i>actions</i> vis-à-vis urban precarity and those impacted by it (e.g., discourage judgement, instigate more effective measures and practices among professionals and practitioners; contribute to (local) policy change).
	Raising awareness	Challenges of urban precarity are visibilized, thus raising awareness on what urban precarity means and what it can look like.
	'Taking back space'	Guides are able to represent themselves and those impacted by urban precarity, thus 'taking back space' in the debate on what cities and urban co-living should be like (e.g., consumer-oriented or not).

	Tensions between prevention, sociopolitical change and entertainment		When tours combine goals of prevention and sociopolitical change – which require different ways of educating – within the context of the tourism industry – which calls for a certain degree of entertainment to attract potential tour participants or ‘customers’ –, these goals can be conflictive, thus preventing one another from materializing.
TOUR PARTICIPANT REACTIONS			How do tour participants experience the tour? What feelings are evoked among tour participants by these tour experiences? According to tour participants’ communicated or observed reactions.
	EXPERIENCE		How do tour participants experience the tour?
		Confronting	What is being told is confronting.
		Dramatic, extreme	The story is dramatic and extreme.
		Unrealistic	As such, it seems a bit ‘too dramatic’ sometimes, thus unbelievable: did it really happen like the guide is telling you?
			Foreign
		Inappropriate	The tour is inappropriate: it should not occur.
		Pointless	The tour is experienced as pointless: it is not going to invoke any systemic or durable change for the guides themselves, nor for others in urban precarity.
		Real(istic)	The tour is real(istic): it is believable and understandable. It gives you a more nuanced side of societally dominant discourses on urban precarity that is instinctively known to be true.

		Shocking		What is being told is ‘shocking’, although not always ‘surprising’ or ‘unforeseeable’. Especially the manners in which ‘the system’ works and maintains itself are astonishing.
			Breaking ‘picture perfect’	The imaginaries of European cities as being very ‘liveable’ (i.e., operationalized by interviewees as: clean, no visible precarity in public space, and a relatively high level of living quality and personal wellbeing for all urban residents) are disrupted.
				The migrant stereotype
		Vulnerable		The tour, especially the stance of the guide, is experienced as being ‘vulnerable’.
			Open	‘Vulnerability’ refers to being open and transparent: all types of questions can be asked and will be answered without perceived restriction.
			Personal	‘Vulnerability’ refers to being personal: the story is tied to the person of the guide, thus the experience of the tour would be different if given by another guide.
	FEELINGS			

		Ethical discomfort		Ethical discomfort arises when something is perceived to be voyeuristic (e.g., involuntary ‘human zoo’ situations in public space) or power imbalances are felt (e.g., giving money from above to seated guide while standing up)
		Feeling empathetic		The guide is recognized as a fellow human being, and your own role in creating and maintaining urban precarity, as well as shaping urban and public space is acknowledged.
			Vs. feeling sympathetic	The guide is either pitied or idolized, but is not recognized as a multifaceted and similar-to-your-own human being beyond its identity as ‘(formerly) precarious’
			Hats off	The guide is idolized and praised for being able to overcome ‘individual’ hardships (not recognizing the systemic grounds for these hardships) on his own (not recognizing the social relations that enabled this). Sometimes, the precarious life itself (e.g., non-materialist life) is partly romanticized as being more ‘pure’, ‘natural’ and/or ‘better’ than your own.
			I’m lucky	Participants consider themselves lucky for not being or having been in the same precarious situation, and appreciate their own privileges more (without contemplating on the interconnected-to-urban-precarity grounds of these privileges).
		Feeling hopeless and powerless		Participants are left feeling hopeless and powerless after the tour, especially in the face of systemic factors creating and maintaining urban precarity. They don’t believe that their own actions will change after the tour, nor that changed actions themselves would transform urban precarity.

		Feeling touched, 'moved'	Participants feel touched and 'moved' by the tour: its experience evoked emotions that have impacted and stirred them.
		Overloaded	Participants are overloaded by the number and gravity of the information received during the tour, and feel a need for decompression and reflection.
GROUNDS FOR AUTHENTICITY			On what grounds is 'authenticity' experienced in poverty tours in European welfare state capitals? In other words, how do 'authentic experiences' in poverty tourism take shape in these contexts?
	A 'grounded' perspective		These tours offer a unique and realistic – i.e., an <i>authentic</i> – 'grounded' perspective 'from below', in opposition to the official 'top-down' imaginaries communicated via policy frameworks, marketing and (social) media that tourists are often presented.
		Ambiguous knowledge	In showcasing how urban precarity actually plays out in lived urban spaces, ambiguities or nuances are revealed in 'top-down' imaginaries of the cities being toured and urban precarity taking place therein.
		'Hidden' knowledge	Tours give access to knowledge that is often invisible/ized and obstructed – whether or not intentionally (e.g., street knowledge).
		'Local' knowledge	Tours offer access to a 'local' perspective of the city: participants interact with those places and knowledge that enable them to perceive and interpret a glimpse of residents' everyday life in the city, including that of the most precarious residents.
		Stories of everyday life	Stories of everyday (co-)living are being told, in opposition to top-down urban imaginaries.

				Playing with stereotypes	Guides employ stereotypes to attract audiences and cater to their expectations of urban precarity, as well as to offer a starting point for later disruption thereof by showcasing oppositional scenes of everyday life as ‘realistic’ instead.
				Embodied direct knowledge	The embodied presence on guided walking tours allows for a more sensory and affective – thus more direct or <i>authentic</i> – engagement with participants’ surroundings and the stories being told.
				Different way of learning	Embodied learning is a different or more unique – thereby more memorable – way of learning than dominant approaches grounded in theoretical or one-directional learning (e.g., documentaries, books, lectures).
				Experiential expert	The guide as teacher experiences or has experienced urban precarity themselves. They are deemed to be speaking from a more truthful or <i>authentic</i> position than those who cannot fully know, having neither felt nor lived urban precarity themselves. Since experiences are unique to each person, the particular person of the guides ‘makes’ or ‘breaks’ a tour experience.
				Authority of lived experience	The lived experience is considered to be more insightful than sensorily-detached or theoretical knowledge, similar to the appreciation of embodied direct learning by participants (supra).
				Question of representation	Knowledge on <i>experiences</i> of urban precarity can never be fully conveyed or translated, thus calling into question the ability of theoretical experts or ‘armchair’ intellectuals to speak about urban precarity – as well as the ability of tour participants to understand. At the same time, every experience is

				unique to a person; consequently, a guide's perspective cannot be generalized to the whole population of urban precarious.
			The person	The guide can render their perspective more legitimate or believable as an <i>authentic</i> experiential expert by strengthening their symbolic knowledge authority.
			Building trust	A guide's symbolic knowledge authority can be increased by building trust between guide and tour participants.
			Interaction with bystanders	Tour participants can become (dis)trustful of guides and the legitimacy of their position to speak of urban precarity by seeing them interact with fellow members of the same group of urban precarious during the tour.
			Greetings and recognition	When other precarious greet the guide and seem to recognize the guide, this showcases that the guide is well-integrated into the community as a legitimate representative or spokesperson thereof.
			Vs. arguments and interruptions	When other precarious interrupt and argue with the guide on their touring activities or the legitimacy of their stories' content, this harms the symbolic authority of the guide as being or having been part of 'the urban poor'.
			Referrals among participants	Referrals among participants (e.g., colleagues, friends, family members), more precisely the trust and valued judgement that exists among participants, can reflect unto the judgement of the tour and its guide.
			Time	Trust can be built over the duration of the tour.
			Charisma	A charismatic guide is able to get people immersed in their story.

			Presentation style		How a guide presents themselves and their story in accordance with the expectations of tour participants will reflect on their symbolic knowledge authority.
				Middle-class, white self-presentation	Tour participants are often middle-class and white. In order to build rapport and be 'familiar' – i.e., be in accordance with tour participants' life worlds and their ways of being, knowing and doing – guides present themselves as middle-class and culturally 'white' through manners of speaking, dress and bodily composure; this can be untrue or <i>inauthentic</i> to their own being.
				Structured narration	Tour guides provide a structured and often chronological narration, thereby displaying their communicative skills (in accordance with class-based norms and values of communication).
				Tailored content	Guides slightly adapt their stories' content or scripts to different audiences, more precisely to different audience expectations of what they (<i>do not</i>) want to hear about urban precarity.
		Meeting the Other			Tour participants embark on poverty tours to meet a 'radically Other' from their own lifeworlds. In doing so, they reflect back upon themselves and obtain <i>existential authenticity</i> .
		Meeting the person beyond the Other			Tour participants can only truly meet themselves through the Other, once they start seeing the guide as a fellow person with whom they share a human essence and social context (i.e., humanization). This requires a move beyond perceiving the guide as '(formerly) precarious' towards acknowledging their multifaceted being.

		Vs. ambiguous guide role and belonging		However, guides are caught up in ambiguous roles and belonging that hinder their humanization, at times attempting to present themselves as part of ‘the urban poor’, at other times trying to establish belonging with tour participants by imagining themselves as ‘one of the good ones [of the urban poor]’.
		Vs. feeling sympathetic		The guide is either pitied or idolized, but is not recognized as a multifaceted and similar-to-your-own human being beyond its identity as ‘(formerly) precarious’
			Hats off	The guide is idolized and praised for being able to overcome ‘individual’ hardships (not recognizing the systemic grounds for these hardships) on his own (not recognizing the social relations that enabled this). Sometimes, the precarious life itself (e.g., non-materialist life) is partly romanticized as being more ‘pure’, ‘natural’ and/or ‘better’ than your own.
			I’m lucky	Participants consider themselves lucky for not being or having been in the same precarious situation, and appreciate their own privileges more (without contemplating on the interconnected-to-urban-precarity grounds of these privileges).
		Requirements		Two requirements must be fulfilled to allow for a genuine encounter with the Other.
			Being on the same level	Power imbalances between tour participants and guides must be equal in their shared dialogue and tour experience.

					Mutual vulnerability	This, in turn, requires a mutual vulnerability from both guides and tour participants: both must share personal information and showcase genuine emotions in order to allow for <i>mutual</i> recognition of a shared humanness.
					Vs. emotional and existential danger	Vulnerability also implies the risk of getting hurt in any way (e.g., being misrecognized, which applies to both guides and tour participants; feeling guilty about recognized social involvement in creating and sustaining urban precarity).
					Need for discussion and reflection	Discussion and reflection on the tour and its experiences can offer a safe environment for decompression and mutual dialogue, thereby facilitating learning through mutual vulnerability.
					Need for distance	Guides and tour participants can evoke emotional distance or dissociation to lessen the intrusive and personally disruptive impact of the tour, thereby hindering the emergence of mutual vulnerability, and personal and social transformation. Some strategies therefor are given infra.
					Returning to familiar 'place'	Participants return to a familiar 'place', either physically (i.e., return to their home town or neighbourhood after the tour), symbolically (i.e., the ritual of 'grabbing a coffee' in a middle-class aesthetics environment) or emotionally (i.e., withdrawing into themselves).
					Being 'professional'	Guides respond composed (i.e., without any negative emotions of agitation, hurt or discomfort) and politely to any intrusive or disrespectful questions and actions.

						Build-up, incl. 'happy ending' Guides build up the tour's intensity and extreme content, and scale this back again towards the end of the tour into a resolved 'happy ending' to prevent being too confronting and thereby disrupting tour participants' emotional and existential state of being.
						Having guard up Guides and tour participants have their guards up, not showcasing 'their true selves' (e.g., crying; asking a controversial question; behaving 'goofy') in fear of rejection and social sanctioning thereof.
						Holding onto own positionality Guides and/or tour participants refuse to understand the Other by withdrawing into their own positionality and projecting their social circumstances, values and norms onto others – either relating to guide vs. participants, or guide vs. 'the bad urban poor'. I believe that this stems from an experience of being misrecognized themselves.
						Personal vs. vulnerable Guides only share personal experiences that have been emotionally processed in advance (e.g., traumatic experiences), thus not being truly vulnerable.
						Social belonging and control The group context of poverty tours allows participants to withdraw into a safe sense of social belonging among 'similar-minded' or 'equals'. At the same time, the group context exercises social control on the participants' behaviour, discouraging 'inappropriate' behaviour towards the guide.
					Need for humour	Guides employ humour to soften the blow of intercultural conflicts, thereby weakening the disruptive power of their story but rendering it more 'digestible' or 'processable' to tour participants.

		Legitimizing tourism context	The tourism context of the poverty tours legitimizes social boundary transgressions between sociocultural groups, thereby giving access to the Other.
	Vs. 'poverty tourism'		Tours identify themselves in opposition to what they are NOT. 'Anti-commercialist' – i.e., profit-focused, fake and generic – and 'unethical' values and norms – i.e., sensationalized, voyeuristic and morbid – are represented through and attributed to the concept of 'poverty tourism'. Instead, tours and those involved herein define themselves in terms of 'ethical', 'responsible' and 'social tourism'. Although tours themselves are part of a commercialized and staged tourism sector, the terms 'commercial' and 'sensational' appear to have different meanings and values in relation to authentic experiences.
	Place-based authenticity		<i>Authenticity</i> or truth value is derived from touring the actual places in which urban precarity occurs or has occurred, visibilized through narrated signs thereof.
		Reference to real-life events	In these places, reference is being made to real-life occurrences that can be 'fact checked' through memory (e.g., hearing about the eviction of Pizzeria Anarchia in Vienna) or reliable external sources (e.g., newspaper and scientific articles)
	Shared norms and values		Guides and tour participants can deem each other reliable or <i>authentic</i> on the basis of shared norms and values about being, knowing and doing.
		Middle-class 'openness'	Guides and tour participants presuppose an 'openness' or 'tolerance' for difference (e.g., being willing to listen to <i>their</i> story), often found among

			'progressive' middle-class cultures. At the same time, the 'openness' of such cultures can be questioned when participants only deem 'similar-minded' as equal interlocutors and dialogue partners. Often, tour participants who have conflictive opinions and views to the guide's story are looked down upon by both guide and tour participants.
CONSEQUENCES OF AUTHENTICITY			What are the consequences of 'authentic experiences' in poverty tours in European welfare state capitals? In other words, what do 'authentic experiences' do in and through poverty tourism in these contexts, especially in relation to transformative learning for mutual humanization and solidarity towards more ethical tourist/urban encounters?
	Credibility		Guides and the stories that they tell are deemed credible or believable; in other words, symbolic knowledge authority is harnessed on the basis of perceived and experienced <i>authenticity</i> of both guides and their narrations in particular places.
		Vs. middle-class, white self-presentation	Tour participants are often middle-class and white. In order to build rapport and be 'familiar' – i.e., be in accordance with tour participants' life worlds and their ways of being, knowing and doing – guides present themselves as middle-class and culturally 'white' through manners of speaking, dress and bodily composure; this can be untrue or <i>inauthentic</i> to their own being.
		Vs. question of representation	Knowledge on <i>experiences</i> of urban precarity can never be fully conveyed or translated, thus calling into question the ability of theoretical experts or 'armchair' intellectuals to speak about urban precarity – as well as the ability

			of tour participants to understand. At the same time, every experience is unique to a person; consequently, a guide's perspective cannot be generalized to the whole population of urban precarious.
		Intra-group stigmatisation	The guide could be perceived as 'one of the good ones' who made it out vs. 'the bad ones' who did not, thereby attributing to intra-group stigmatisation instead of solidarity among those impacted by urban precarity.
		Pressure of 'spokesperson'	The guide's experience is generalized as representative to the whole population of urban precarious to which they belong, thus invoking a sense of pressure within guides to transmit a 'perfect' or 'positive' image of themselves.
		Vs. self-sensationalization	In contrast to pursuing an middle-class and 'white' self-presentation, guides can intentionally stage lower class and non-white norms and values in order to evoke 'sellable' – since this is more 'unique' or unfamiliar to tour participants – stereotypical imaginaries of 'the urban poor'.
		Self-affirmation, identification	Experiences are deemed <i>authentic</i> when they are in accordance with a person's identity or image of Self, as such offering grounds for (continued) self-affirmation or identification.
		Middle-class 'openness'	Guides and tour participants presuppose an 'openness' or 'tolerance' for difference (e.g., being willing to listen to <i>their</i> story), often found among 'progressive' middle-class cultures. At the same time, the 'openness' of such cultures can be questioned when participants only deem 'similar-minded' as equal interlocutors and dialogue partners. Often, tour participants who have

			conflictive opinions and views to the guide's story are looked down upon by both guide and tour participants.
		'We' vs. 'they' reproduction	Moral and symbolic boundaries between sociocultural groups are (re)produced, such as between tour participants and guides (e.g., when pitying guide; when encountering an 'intolerant' tour participant), guides and 'urban poor' (when idolizing guide vis-à-vis those who 'didn't make it out'), and tour participants vis-à-vis those engaged in other kinds of tourism (e.g., being 'educated' and feeling morally superior to "traditional" tourists)
	Transformative learning		<i>Existential authenticity</i> can evoke personal and social transformative learning for guides, tour participants, those impacted by urban precarity, and urban life. This occurs through different learning processes, given infra.
		Affective learning	Experience of both positive (e.g., generosity) and negative (e.g., guilt, ethical discomfort) emotions can instigate learning.
		Associative learning	Stories and sights of urban precarity are being associated with other encounters with urban precarity occurring in different places and through different media or formats, as such allowing for the steady creation of a decontextualized body of knowledge on (lived) urban precarity through constant analytical comparison.
		Collaborative learning	Learning occurs together with the guide, tour participants, the places being toured and the occurrences and passerby taking place therein, as well as with other events, narratives and people who are not directly present at the tour (e.g., child participants talk about their field trip to their parents at the dinner

			table; the narrative of a documentary on homelessness ‘runs along’ in your perception and interpretation of the tour).
		Critical learning	Urban precarity’s precursors and manifestations become understood as being inherently entangled with systemic factors ‘playing out’ in everyday urban and public spaces.
		Reimagining urban precarity	Urban precarity becomes differently understood and conceptualized through alternative frameworks and sensory/spatial methodologies, allowing for a different engagement with urban precarity.
		Systemic view	Urban precarity is unveiled as a systemic problem.
		Vs. individual responsibility and social circumstances	A systemic view on urban precarity is hindered by narratives of urban precarity that focus on individual responsibility, either as individual ‘success stories’ (e.g., the guide ‘made it out’) or victim-blaming (e.g., the guide was being ‘stupid’ and made ‘bad choices’). Although agentic power is acknowledged, this only adheres to overcoming <i>personal</i> social circumstances instead of wider <i>systemic</i> elements.
		Empathy and solidarity	Guide and tour participants develop empathy and solidarity on the basis of a recognized shared human essence and social context, which expands itself to a recognition of the challenge of urban precarity being tied up with how cities and urban (co-)living is imagined and enacted.
		Reimagining public and urban space	Public and urban spaces – and social life taking place therein – are reimagined on the basis of alternative values and norms than those ushered forward by profit-seeking and consumerist narratives of the city.

			Tension between empathy and fear	The emergence of empathy is hindered by fear for the Other. Namely, in encountering the Other, mutual vulnerability is required, which evokes a 'liminal space' (see Turner's concept of liminality, 1991) balancing between opportunities for personal and social transformation (i.e., through development of empathy) and risks of emotional and existential disruption.
			Vs. own positionality	Guides and/or tour participants refuse to understand the Other by withdrawing into their own positionality and projecting their social circumstances, values and norms onto others – either relating to guide vs. participants, or guide vs. 'the bad urban poor'. I believe that this stems from an experience of being misrecognized themselves.
		Hopeful learning		Participants acknowledge their own agentic power in shaping urban precarity in interaction with urban and public spaces, as such instigating hope for (local) change and encouraging action.
		Mutual learning		Both guides and tour participants reap benefits from touring together.
			Developing skills	Guides develop communicative and presentation skills, as well as 'people skills' in interaction with tour participants.
			Recognition	Guides receive recognition through processes of mutual learning: their knowledge and experience of the world are being heard, socially legitimized and valued.
		Prolonged learning		Learning occurs beyond the timeframe of the tour: with each new experience, insight, association, reflection, talk, etc. new mental and interpretative frameworks on urban precarity are taking shape.

		Reflexive learning	The own patterns of behaviour – and their underlying norms and values – are being questioned as ‘desirable’ or ‘aspirable’, thereby acknowledging the own role in creating and maintaining urban precarity, as well as recognizing the own agentic power for inducing transformative change.
		Sensory and spatial learning	Tour participants learn to perceive and interpret or ‘read’ traces or signs of lived urban precarity through sensory engagements in space (e.g., feeling ‘too many handles’ on ‘public’ benches to enable sleeping thereon)

D. FIELDNOTES

a) Participatory observations of six *Wiener Nimmerland*-tours (31/05/2024-07/06/2024)

1) Combined tour with three groups of private individuals; seven persons in total (31/05/2024)

Circumstances: rain

Station 1

Martin uses humour. For example, he hints at and calls the clash between police and Pizzeria Anarchia a 'schlacht'. He introduces the topic and Karlsplatz, asking if people already know the place. People are standing closely and look very involved; however, there's still a feeling that they're free to do whatever during the tour (e.g. such as being on their phone). The story seems to be a bit differently structured or paced than the tour that I experienced myself on 02/04/2024 in English with some of my classmates. People are asking questions, interrupting: the tour seems very organic and dialogical. Martin tells his story with 'fun' or 'light' notes, for example, when mentioning that the 'opera toilet' displays classical music. He asks people 'What would you do?'. He critically deconstructs existing policies and associates more implicit links, for example when talking about the supposed 'true purpose' of the alcohol ban on Karlsplatz or 'cleaning for "cleanliness"'.

His personal story comes out later, after talking about the transformation and meaning of the place of Karlsplatz. During some personal stories, Martin looks down: is this a coincidence, or does he feel uncomfortable? Doesn't he know where to look? There are changes in intonation, he uses hand gestures, etc.: he tells his story in a very engaged and engaging way. People are nodding affirmatively. There are bystanders walking around Karlsplatz and there's loud music, which can be distracting (in future tours, I saw Martin at times interrupting his story, when the noise became too loud to go on). Participants already predict what he's talking about, pointing to the nearby police station across when Martin mentions the high percentage of 'pure drugs' (and thus 'healthier' drugs, since there are less unknown substances mixed together) and the heavier legal punishments of dealing 'pure drugs'. Participants do raise their eyebrows, nod, when they 'agree with' the cynical news about Substitol in Austria. Martin says: "Substitol is a ridiculous substitute of heroine. *Kurszichtig Wien Drogen politik*", and people are laughing along with Martin when he emphasizes its ridiculousness.

Participants ask Martin questions in between stations, talk to each and reflect together.

Station 2

It's busy at the metro; lot's of people walking by. There's a question about the concept and the services offered by Gruf/UHelf. When Martin tells about the requirement to have a postal address to receive state help for homeless, participants laugh at this. They lean in and hold their head a bit to the side, seemingly expressing interest. Bystanders are walking past in the background; a group of presumably school children is talking loudly and disrupts the tour: the words and questions get lost in the noise. Martin needs to speak louder; one participant asks another what has been said. Passerby sometimes look unbothered, other times curious, judging/frowning (once, a passerby asked me what was happening, and he took a picture of my shirt

of Wiener Nimmerland to look it up later). Martin says: “Imagine if you’ve slept outside.” Again, on our way to the other station, people come by to ask him questions. He answers them openly. (on such an occasion, in between stations, I asked Martin if he adapts his story to different audiences. He responded that he doesn’t tell school kids that everyone who has been homeless has been raped.)

Station 3

It rains, so we stand underneath a passage way to remain dry. There are loud cars driving past now and then. Martin says he used to work at Libro; someone asks for clarification, so he explains it’s a bookstore. His rural accent, being from Burgenland, is hard to understand, according to a Dutch girl and her aunt living in Vienna (i.e. Lilian: see interview). Lilian always saw the tour at Karlsplatz and was curious: both had a prior professional interest in addiction treatment, either through interviews as a psychology student or as a doctor. They like the personal story instead of mere facts about addiction.

Martin explains that Neubaugasse in the 9th district used to be a punk place, before its reconfiguration. He used to beg for 14 hours a day at Neubaugasse to have half a gram of drugs at night and half a gram of drugs in the morning: “*Niemand’s macht das gerne*”. Eventually, he was able to get an apartment through the parents of his partner, Nadine (but they paid for the apartment themselves), so he could self-isolate. After all “drugs and alcohol are everywhere”, which provoked affirmative “hmm”s and noddings from participants.

Martin uses lots of intonation to stress that he lost 11 years of his life to addiction. Someone asks how long Wiener Nimmerland exists: 2 years. Martin has a fast walking speed.

Station 4

Martin describes certain recognition points of Vienna, since – in contrast to the audience of my classmates and I – he assumes that they do know Vienna already to some extent. Some participants are smoking. Martin brought pictures of the eviction of Pizzeria Anarchia (see folder): before and after pictures, and ‘atmosphere’ pictures. Pizzeria Anarchia offered similar services to official community centres, such as providing space for birthday parties and child care. The logo is fun and has a double meaning. The ‘pizza-punks’ tried to offer the police coffee and cookies when they were being evicted, but “we didn’t anticipate 1,700 people”, he jokes. People are laughing, chuckling or smiling, and have high-raised eyebrows, seemingly expressing disbelief by the enormous police force and absurdity of the situation. The media expressed solidarity to Pizzeria Anarchia and described the eviction negatively, emphasizing the “*Woningsnoot*”, which is only possible in this “*Pressefreiheit*”. Now, this historic happening is sedimented into an opera, performance art, a videogame, etc.: in short, a collective, place-based memory.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW: When asking a participant why they chose this tour, they responded that they work with addicted and saw Wiener Nimmerland on the Instagram-page of a friend. When asked what/how they like it, they responded that they like the personal story: not anyone can know this. It’s meaningful and sticks with you. It perhaps changes your perceptions, but not your behaviour.

Station 5

Martin says that his name is on this bench, while pointing to a bench in a park that used to be his 'living room'. It's a figurative saying, although some people look for his name at first glance. There's a relaxed atmosphere, a participant walks over to a bin. Martin asks, after the tour, if a participant goes to eat something at Mariahilferstrasse, and gives some recommendations.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW: Martin tells his story poetically and engaged. He doesn't see himself as a victim.

AFTER TOUR: COMMENT BY MARTIN: he says that what people do with his story, that's his reward. It brings him to cool and unforeseen places, such as a speech at the Freud Institute in a few months. He says that private adult participants are often social workers or similar, who already share a mindset, and potentially join for self-confirmation of their views. Kids are his true reward, since it takes on a more preventive role in that case and can potentially instigate behavioural change.

2) Tour with local judges (03/06/2024)

Circumstances: dry, grey at the beginning, very rainy at the end

Station 1

There is a bit of 'tension' among audience members and the guide regarding the reasons for the eviction of Karlsplatz: according to some participants, not those on social benefit, but those stealing goods were evicted. Martin – and Nadine via email – told me in advance that he was nervous regarding this audience, he didn't know what to expect. I notice it in how he talks (but maybe I'm biased, because I knew in advance), in comparison to his former tours: he tells the story differently, is more tempered, careful to speak about the police, speaks more about the Praterstern measures of hostile architecture, he doesn't (need to) explain the different kinds of drugs to an audience of judges.

When telling his personal story, he delves into the 'cliché': it's only 'natural' that he went down this path. An audience member snorts, and asks where he grew up (answer: Burgenland), and when he started with heroin. The audience is more formally dressed and some cross their arms. The audience also seems more attentive to me than other audiences: they sometimes look behind to me, they close the circle without including me. I notice a tension in my role, stuck between building rapport with the audience and giving support to Martin.

Martin adapts his story to the audience, when asking if the purity and dosage of drugs dealt with aligns with the penalty you get. Martin also talks about Substitol, to which some people don't seem to agree or be in disbelief about (e.g. looking away, nodding 'no' or tilting their head, "Yes, but no").

Station 2

When Martin talks about the centralization of aid provisions, he says "und Sie wisst was passiert ist." He goes into more detail than he would do otherwise. He also explains other examples of people who were

abandoned by the system. He says that there are too little sleeping places in the public shelters, that the statistics underestimate the number of homeless, already mentions Pizzeria Anarchia (this is known in Vienna), he tells about the 'storage rooms' behind the metro station's mirrors. Martin makes less jokes (or the audience laughs less?). A participant asks where the homeless are now.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW: The judges say that they have no prior experience with criminal law; this excursion is part of a retirement celebration for the president of the *civil* law court. They like Martin's raw and unfiltered reactions and perspective, which is more insightful than a rapport or a document.

Station 3

Martin tells about his experiences in an orphanage or *Heimkind* and his labour training at Libro. The atmosphere seems to be more relaxed now. Apparently, when Martin mentions a manufactory he worked at, a participant knows this, to which Martin responds excitedly. A participant asks who has financed the first apartment of Martin and Nadine. Now, Martin is 40 years old and he has been off the streets for 17 years. When he was 18 years old, he returned from Spain and he has self-isolated himself in the apartment for 4 consecutive years.

Station 4

In 2014, Pizzeria Anarchia was evicted. An audience member wants to know years and dates, also relating to his personal life (maybe it's their professional bias, I think with a smile). Martin tells about the judge who handled the eviction, who gave the pizza punks plenty of time to exit the building, since he was a visitor of Pizzeria Anarchia himself.

Station 5

The rain suddenly starts pouring, so we take cover and go into a café for the last station. The setting is more cozy to ask questions.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW: Q:What will stay with you? -> A:I don't know yet, depends on what I will think about in a few days. Q:What's the benefit of this in comparison to a book or a documentary? -> A:You are socially forced to listen. Q:Can this change perceptions? -> A:I don't know. → This interview taught me as an interviewer that I need to ask less vague or open questions, and maybe my limited German skills are a barrier.

3) Tour with school group of 13-14 years old pupils (03/06/2024)

Circumstances: rain and thunder

Station 1

Martin gives an introduction, opening with a joke "Do you understand my accent?", and teases the eviction of Pizzeria Anarchia (presumably making it sensational to catch their attention more). There is laughter, participants seem to think it's cool. Martin talks with energy and fast-paced. He engages kids with questions:

“Would you go for option A or B? What would you choose?” He exemplifies anti-homeless architecture by bringing in narrations of Praterstern (instead of just mentioning the terminology of hostile architecture). He starts his personal story, saying how frustrated kids search others like them. A pigeon flies by, which evokes a fun short intermezzo. Kids seem to be interested: there’s no phone, no talking (did their teacher tell them to do so or are they interested themselves?).

According to Martin, there are 3 rules on the street: drugs are bloody (you don’t just ‘get it’, like on parties as a teenager), you transport them in your mouth (some kids react that it’s filthy, to which Martin responds “Yes, yes”, with a chuckle), and you can’t trust dealers who say they have ‘pure drugs’ (after all, the penalty for dealing pure drugs is more grave). Martin stresses that you can’t get rid easily of a drug addiction, including being addicted to pharmaceuticals. Participants ask what Substitol is, and if you can get it without prescription.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER: a colleague had already walked the tour, and advised it.

Station 2

Kids go to bathroom, others gather around Martin and ask questions. “*Spritzentaus ‘ware’ das wichtigste Dienst*”, he says. He explains how he prepared his drugs in a can, which is “Stupid, unhygienic and full of toxic substances.” There were 20 of UHelp stations, but then they were centralized into one for all addicts, in the middle of a residential area with a school. In a week, the ambulance, police and negative press releases were piling up, Martin jokes.

A group of tourists walk by, seemingly oblivious to the tour talking loudly. Martin stops. It’s a fun short intermezzo for the kids. Another example of ‘stupid policy’ is 25 persons sleeping together in 1 shelter room, including women. During the talk, girls are pulling boys’ hair. Martin explains the understatement of the number of homeless in Vienna.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW: “It’s nice to hear it from him. At my school, there are 2 ‘problem kids’ who do it secretly. This can show them what it does, this can help.” Her sister studies Cultural Studies in Vienna, so she looks at homeless people as being human beings that need recognition too, and empathy (thus, already having a prior empathetic mindset to homeless people). She is shocked and sad that this is the way it is, but it’s cool that he does these tours.

Station 3

Short intermezzos: the teacher suddenly gets a call, and the students try to eavesdrop. The light under the passageway keeps on flickering, a little boy walks by, an umbrella is closed almost in someone’s face.

Martin asks if they know what ‘punks’ are, and he says the stereotype of “*Freiheit, Liebe und Gesellschaft*” *richtig* is. A girl shows a photo of a ‘punk’, searched on her phone, to her classmates. The kids get closer to each other (because of the cold, or it’s more interesting to them?) when Martin talks about how he used to beg for 14 hours in a row in order to be high for 4 hours. There are exclamations of astonishment (e.g. “Ah”,

“Oh”, “Wass?”). Martin has used drugs for 5 years, was vomiting and sleeping for 2 years (i.e. drug withdrawal), and self-isolated with his x-box for 4 years. He lost 11 “fucking” years of his live, he stresses by repetition and emphasizing the years, thereby presumably trying to discourage the kids from drug usage.

Station 4

At station 4, the attention span suddenly drops – apparently, the *Reisebüro* had already made a full-booked day for the kids.

Station 5

After the tour, Martin also says that the attention span of the group was difficult to handle, but he can understand.

4) Tour with school group of 15 years old pupils (04/06/2024)

Circumstances: dry and grey

Station 1

Intermezzos: there’s a kid with a headache, so Martin asks if he needs some water (= practice of care). There are small kids passing-by talking loudly.

There are a lot of questions. To one of those, Martin responds “*Warum fragt man das?*” (I didn’t catch the question fully, but I think it referred to a presumed link between drinking and depression on the countryside), to which the teacher responds “*Was haben Sie gefragt?*” Martin seems a bit uncomfortable or agitated by the question.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER AND PUPIL: Teacher and a pupil know SHADES TOURS.

Station 2

Intermezzo: passerby wonder if they can walk by. There is a question, to which Martin responds that you find a lot of food in the bin.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW: She thinks the tour is realistic and she can ask Martin everything. It’s different and more *wichtig* in comparison to a course. “When you see someone on the street and here this..., I can’t describe it.” It’s bad to hear that it happens like that, for example the understatement in the statistics. It’s unjust.

OWN REMARK: I personally think this Gymnasium group is more attentive than the vocational educational group of yesterday. I notice a bias towards female participants when searching for potential interviewees in the group.

Station 3

Intermezzos: There's an insect on the table, there's a duck in the distance, which both draw attention of the pupils.

Martin starts by picking up a random alcopad from the soil and showing how it works, how you fold it. Martin tells about the time when he was allowed by the owner of a building to sleep in therein with a few others during winter, but the police came and crashed in the windows, thereby declaring it uninhabitable (I always learn something new, since Martin tells his story differently, includes slightly other anecdotes and information each time, again and again. He told me he does this to make it exciting for himself as well).

Martin focuses more on the female homeless experience, probably because 70 percent of the pupils are female (e.g. rape in shelter). He engages kids by saying "If you would be in this situation, you would..."

Kids are sometimes glancing at me and my booklet (sometimes, I 'catch' them and they look away. Yesterday, a kid asked me what I was writing down, so maybe I haven't explained the research comprehensibly at the start of the tour, thus not requiring truly informed consent from the kids).

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW WITH FRENCH GIRL ON LANGUAGE EXCHANGE: Her dad works for an organisation where homeless people and students eat breakfast together. The tour makes her uncomfortable, an internalised injustice perhaps? Why him and not me? She says that it's good to know all this in order to understand homelessness 'works' and how to behave towards homeless people: you need to know someone's personal story, and each story is different, to know what it's really like, in order to change perceptions. She likes the dialogue, the fact that you can ask anything.

Station 4

Martin shows a videoclip of Pizzeria Anarchia and all kids gather around him (not everyone can see it, though). Some kids ask where's it's located, to which Martin gives the address, and another responds "I live there", to which Martin excitedly proclaims "Oh, cool."

Someone asks if he read the newspaper articles that he presents, to which Martin responds that media is not something for him, evoking laughter among the audience.

Martin shows the picture of the eviction: "At June 18, I arrive, and I see this", while turning the picture towards the audience for dramatic effect. The teacher shakes his head in presumed shock/disbelief. The eviction had a cost of 1,827 euros (e.g. employment of tanks and a helicopter, cutting off electricity in the building, etc.). However, the concept of Pizzeria Anarchia went viral (e.g. news outlets from Germany and France covered it).

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS WITH THREE BOYS (partly in French): The personal, the fact that you can ask him yourself, makes it very different from a course by the teacher. That changes perceptions, but "I don't know" if my behaviour towards homeless would change. You often see them from a distance, but you don't really make any contact. However, being from a school in Vienna, it definitely makes you look different at Vienna. It's an open, informal atmosphere, you can ask anything. One boy asks where my notes/data will be

published, again, making me wonder about the 'informed' character of my priorly taken informed consent measures.

Station 5

Intermezzo: there's construction work going on at the boulder place.

A participant asks Martin if he is still in touch with his family; he responds that he is with his sister and sufficiently with his father. There is laughter when Martin describes what he would have looked like, when arriving in this park after a techno party. The small things are big: Martin stresses the importance of asking "How are you?", besides from giving money to a beggar. Martin has lived 6 years on the streets, of which 1 in Spain.

AFTER TOUR: TALK WITH MARTIN: Martin thought it's a nice group, and he also notices the difference with the school from yesterday when I ask him about this: "They [vocational trained students] just can't sit still for that long period of time?" The goodbye was a little weird to me: he wanted to give me a handshake – which he's never done before – to which I responded a bit confused, after which he went for a hug instead. He did not invite me at his home as usual, but asked me which tours I would accompany him to this week; Nadine and I have communicated thereon and organised this prior (Martin does not deal with administration, thus does not know when I accompany him or not).

5) Tour with school group of 15 years old pupils (06/06/2024)

Circumstances: dry, sunny

Station 1

Between 8h15 and midnight, the drug scene at Karlsplatz was active. It started at 5h15, since that was the time when the pharmacy opened: "*Wien hat kein Drugsproblem, aber ein Pharmaproblem.*" At the 'opera toilet', young men prostituted themselves in order to be able to buy drugs. In 2008, Karlsplatz was evicted for the European Football games. When dealers are caught, they get 500 days of community service or a 500 euros fee; most chose the former so they were not financially restricted in buying drugs and could prevent withdrawal symptoms.

Martin himself is from a small village in Burgenland. At 11 years old, he drank for the first time, at 15 years old, he had an alcohol problem, at 16 years old, he had a social worker who decided that "because you're a problem kid, you need to go to a *Heim*." At 17 years old, he departed to Spain, at 18 years old, he returned to Vienna, where he got addicted and 'found' heroin on arrival at the train station. Martin emphasizes that your body doesn't function anymore after being addicted. On the street, it's learning by doing (see 3 'lessons of the street' in prior participatory observation excerpt). Having drugs to be 'pure' is rare: normally, you have 20 percent of drugs, his dealer got 67 percent, for which he got 17 years of prison (i.e., most don't sell 'purer drugs', since it implies heavier penalties and less profit). You never get rid off your addiction; you simply became addicted to pharmaceutical drugs as a substitute (i.e. Substitol).

Intermezzos: a kid almost fainted (Martin says to me that this happens all the time: “Kids don’t know how to stand anymore.”); in the meantime – while the teachers and some classmates are caring for the kid in question –, Martin shows the kids a photo of him and his dog, shared by an influencer. He also finds a random part of a Substitol package on the ground and shows it to the kids (it’s been a decade since the trade happened here).

Station 2

Martin says good morning to the cleaning personnel in the metro station. Martin says how begging is dehumanizing and takes a lot of energy (see also scholarly work on moral boundary drawing, dignity and recognition by Michèle Lamont).

Intermezzo: an old man walks by and shouts something while holding his fist up (seemingly encouraging/approving of Wiener Nimmerland).

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW WITH TWO GIRLS: It’s sad that it goes like this. Pupils in Vienna know these places, but did not know, for example, about the influence of the pharma industry. They look to these places differently now. It provokes lots of thoughts that linger. It also provokes empathy: it can happen to anyone, and now you know the story behind how you can end up in such *Scheize*.

Station 3

Intermezzo: a kindergarten group of children passes by -> Martin laughs and wishes them a good day.

Once, 30 homeless people could stay in an empty building, the owner told them, but the police threw in the windows (see prior participatory observation excerpt). Martin tells about his self-confinement to his apartment, which was needed since alcohol is everywhere (he emphasizes each syllable of “everywhere” in German). He stresses how it ruins your body and how it would’ve been better if he had slept for 11 years instead of ruining his body for 11 years.

He tells the ‘success story’ of meeting Nadine, who seemed ‘stupid’ to him due to the drugs but actually proved to be very smart.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW OF GIRL: It makes her feel sad, and she can’t voice her thoughts, needs time to order them. She feels sorry for Martin (pity instead of empathy?). She doesn’t know Vienna that well, but she didn’t know about the alcohol, drugs and homelessness here and how it ‘plays out’. She will definitely change her behaviour in relation to drugs and alcohol due to this tour, she tells me.

OWN ETHNOGRAPHY: I feel the soft, humid soil beneath my shoes and wonder how often someone doesn’t have any warm tiles underneath their bare feet. It makes me uncomfortable to have this thought, while Martin tells about his past experiences of having a frozen mattress when waking up in the morning.

Station 4

Martin paints a bigger picture about gentrification by tying his story with Nada and Pizzeria Anarchia into broader urban government policies that enable rich people to push poor people out in order to gain more money themselves.

Martin and his punks knew beforehand that they would be evicted on a specific day, so they tried to call as many media as possible as witnesses and documentation. The police operation did cost a lot of money. The audience comes closer and looks amazed. Audience members smile when he shows the photos of the 'Pressekonferenz': he and his fellow punks are wearing sunglasses to look 'incognito'. Martin makes jokes about a videogame that was based on Pizzeria Anarchia's eviction, which the youth "can't know" due to their young age/being from a different generation. Martin says "*Hallo*" to passerby during his tour.

Station 5

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER: the teacher has done such a tour before with a class at SHADES TOURS. He deliberately chose an experiential expert to explain this. He will hold a reflection moment afterwards, and/or homework task ("*Ja, Natürlich*", when I ask him about it. "Otherwise, it doesn't have any meaning"). He likes the way Martin tells the story, and is open to any questions.

OWN ETHNOGRAPHY: I feel a bit uncomfortable when we walk past a jazz bar, which corresponds more to 'my' class-based tastes and aesthetics. Maybe 'hip and trendy' Maria hilferstrasse and Neubaugasse came to be so due to the punks who turned it into an 'alternative place' a decade ago. Now, these punks are being pushed out of the neighbourhood. SHADES TOURS are also standing here with 2 groups; one of the guides waves to Martin while he's doing his tour next to a homeless man sleeping on a bench. According to Martin, SHADES TOURS has recently send him an email to stop working and cancel his company and join them, while accusing him of stealing their employees (however, I don't want to be biased without hearing SHADES TOURS' side of the story). On our way back, Martin tells about a sponsor deal that he is concluding with newspaper Augustine (see autoethnographic fieldnotes). At Martin's house, it's a bit uncomfortable since he's arguing with Nadine and cursing in German. I don't say anything to anyone's defence, I don't interfere in what I deem to be 'not my business'.

6) Tour with school group of 15 years old pupils (07/06/2024)

Circumstances: sunny, dry

Station 1

Intermezzo: there's again a kid that fainted.

The word '*schlim*' or grave is used a lot, also by participants. Martin speaks of 'suicide *Schmerzen*' when he mentions the addiction-induced headaches that he has. He narrates how the drugs are transported by mouth between dealers and users, evoking reactions of disgust.

He speaks about a friend that died at 27 years old, evoking silence. He speaks softly and in a low register. He says that you die in your sleep, when you don't get enough air. Drugs mess with your blood circulation, as well as oxygen intake and reception. Martin reacts to a girl's body language: *"Ja, ja, du verstehts richtig, ich verstehe das auch nicht."* Only 7 out of 100 addicts to Substitol get rid of it. (the same prescription is produced in Austria under another brand name, Martin says).

Station 2

When walking to the next station, Martin tells me that one of the kids is "a real piece of work", probably "having ADHD" and "exploding with energy." By now, Martin is used to it: as long as 4 people are listening, he'll do it for them. In case of little attention, he often tells more 'sensational' stuff in a more energetic way, but it shouldn't look like an action movie. He has to scare children with the horror of the reality to be preventive. Middle school kids often want the dark, juicy details (a kid was eavesdropping behind us, and asking what 'juicy' means (Martin is surprised by his English knowledge). While Martin tries to censor his content more with regard to kids, he shocks adults by going into detail (e.g. "you won't get off the streets without once being raped.").

Intermezzo: a blind woman passes by and Martin makes room for her. A loudly talking group of people passes by, so Martin goes silent and looks at them. This, they notice and, in turn, they become silent too. A kid asks for clarification when Martin explains that glass fragments get mixed in drugs. Kids do look at me writing sometimes (maybe Martin explained my research too vaguely at the beginning of the tour, or the teacher did not inform them beforehand of my presence?).

Station 3

The teacher asks how many homeless persons are in Vienna. Martin says that the *official* understatement is 20,000 persons. Some boys want to ask more about the kinds of natural drugs, but Martin says he doesn't want to talk more about that, and he emphasizes how bad they are by saying everyone he knows 'went bad' on it.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW: I try to ask a boy what he thinks, but he doesn't really respond and a girl next to him starts laughing. The teacher says that she has already done a similar tour about the experience of a homeless mom with a child, at SHADES TOURS. That was more interesting, since it's closer to her life world, she says. She thinks it's a shame that the theme of addiction is not opened up to phone addiction as well, which would be closer to the kids' life worlds (especially Muslim kids who don't have any tendency towards alcohol or other drug usage).

Station 4

There seems to be some tension between 2 kids, namely the kid 'exploding with energy' and a 'Niko' -> the teacher interferes to deescalate the situation. Kids run and are pestering each other a bit in the back -> the

teacher tells them they should pay attention. There's a homeless person sleeping on a bench, but Martin deliberately walks a bit further to tell his story, so the person is out of sight. The energetic kid appears to be attentive, when he asks Martin a question about drugs being a poison to which you build resistance. (*"Genan! Du bist der Erste die das sagt, ganz richtig!"*, Martin replies). Martin mentions the app that Nadine used to train her concentration span again after drug usage, and he jokingly recommends it for those with concentration problems. He also teases the number and cost of the police eviction of Pizzeria Anarchia.

Martin says that all news papers responded in a solidary manner to the eviction of Pizzeria Anarchia, besides from the conservative news paper Der Kronen. Some kids look away when Martin shows the paper: *"Wir *heart* Nada"*. One kid responds that his mom's name is also Nada, to which Martin replies that he only knows *"cool Nada's"*. A boy's mouth falls open when he sees the photo of the many cops and tank, gathered before Pizzeria Anarchia's building. Another recognizes Martin with his sunglasses on in the photo of the *Pressekonferenz*.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW WITH GIRL: She is sad that it happens like this in Vienna. She did not know all places, even though her school is located in Vienna.

Some boys don't let me pass, or mimic my laugh, seemingly mockingly. The teacher needs to interfere two times – *"Nicht provozieren"* – among the boys. The 'yellow car'-game (i.e., slapping your fellow pupil when you see a yellow car) is being played during the tour. In short, lots is going on 'in the background' while doing the tour.

Station 5

Intermezzo: When Martin says we need to be kind and respectful to homeless persons, a homeless Ukrainian man interrupts him, saying that he sleeps in this park and has seen Martin many times when he is giving his tour. Martin says that he will speak with the man afterwards, and ask him after the tour if he would like to be tested as a potential guide for Wiener Nimmerland. Unfortunately, they don't exchange any contact information, and Martin does not run into the man at the same park anymore.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW WITH BOY: Authentic, different than during course, can change behaviour and perception of places and themes.

AFTER TOUR: COMMENT BY MARTIN: Martin liked the kids, they were fun.

b) Autoethnography of two SHADES TOURS-tours (08/06/2024, 09/06/2024)

1) Tour ‚Armut & Obdachlosigkeit‘ (08/06/2024)

Station 1

There are 20,000 homeless in Austria, of which most are in Vienna. There are three types of homelessness, namely voluntary, involuntary and 'hidden' (e.g. women who prostitute themselves for finding a sleeping place). In 2012, 4,000 women have registered themselves at social services. There are emergency sleeping places, the most famous is Gruf (built in a former Gymnasium). There is a day centre of 450 square meters.

Some day centres in Vienna are open all day and have the possibility to register your postal address, shower, wash your clothes. There is also a cultural participation card to go to museums and concerts (see station 4 infra). As a homeless, you'll encounter a social worker and a street worker with a backpack full of information flyers for addicted. They start their route at Bahnhof. However, it's difficult to build rapport with homeless due to their traumas, mental illnesses, etc., so it's important to go every day. Once a month they bring a psychiatrist and they have translators for eastern European languages. Furthermore, there is Caritas and a second Gruf for those who don't speak German.

Woninglös is not the same as dachlös, since the former means that you're in transition. In That case you rent a room for 300-400 euros for max. 2 years. You'll share a communal kitchen, a washing room, lockers, and you get a cleaning aid in your room. You can cook yourself or get 4 meals a day for 6 euros in total. You have this right, and others (e.g. a sleeping place for 2 euros a night), when you work and pay taxes ('Stauer'). OWN REMARK: The guide is less expressive in her way of talking than Martin of Wiener Nimmerland. She is a woman, I estimate in her late 50s. No one talks to her on her way to station 2 – in contrast to Wiener Nimmerland-tours –, and she has visible difficulty walking in the summer heat.

Station 2

We arrive at a platform up some stairs, after walking through Kumpfgasse. On this square, homeless people used set up their 'camp'. The guide delves into the foundation of SHADES TOURS by Perrine Schrober: Perrine studied tourism and was inspired by similar tours in London, Amsterdam, Prague to, eventually, establish SHADES TOURS as the first of its kind on the Viennese market.

The reasons for becoming homeless are multiple and various. It is often tied to job loss, but can also be fostered by addiction (e.g. she herself had a shopping and medicine addiction), thus not being able to pay the bills anymore. The guide received 170 euros for a monthly budget, after she could not pay the bills anymore due to her addictions, which was a step back from the luxury she knew. She asks: Can everyone become homeless? Yes, also someone with a good job, but she herself was too dependent on medicines. Furthermore, you can become homeless due to physical or psychological illness and not having any access to social insurance. There are also involuntary homeless, those that are homeless due to natural catastrophes (e.g. floodings in South-Germany in June, 2024).

Personally, the guide became psychologically ill at 27 years old. In 2018, she could not pay her rent anymore and thought that medicine would help her against her disease. She was evicted and found an emergency sleeping place on her 11th day of being homeless (during the day, she was on the streets). She went to her old mother, but there, she was put on the streets again. She went to a youth hostel in Vienna, and later to one in Hamburg. Afterwards, she slept on the streets under mild weather for 7 nights in a village near Hamburg. Here, the police arrested her and brought her to a psychiatric centre. However, she could not pay for this, so she was brought back to a psychiatric centre in Vienna. Later, she got a transition home ('Übergangswohnung') in 'Haus Merriam' for women only by Caritas on her 18th day of being homeless. She

got a Doppelzimmer, since she'd need to pay more for an Einzelzimmer. At the wohnung, she had access to a computer, yoga and a psychiatric and psychological visit once a week. She also received a new social worker who made sure she got a wohnung in a Gemeindebau, where there was a technician, a washing kitchen, a doctor, a social worker, psychologists and psychiatrists, and communal parties.

Station 3

Walking through Grümangergasse, Franziskanergasse (station 3 was supposed to be at Franziskanerkloster), Ballgasse.

At Franziskanerkloster, food is distributed. The monastery is financed by a Rotary club and voluntary spending. 'In Wien kan man nicht verhungeren.' The Evangelische Gustaf Adolfkirche also distributes food and does so in various eastern European languages. Hey are financed by the German Church. Also, Caritas' Canisbus distributes food.

Station 4

There are some typical Kranken to homeless: skin problems due to an inability to wash yourself regularly, diabetes (which is related to alcohol and drugs use. There is a Caritas van for pflegen with medicine, but there are also small 'hospitals' in buildings, such as Herzliche Brüder, which is catholic and for those who don't have insurance). In this street is a Katzencafé, a concept from Japan; the guide mentions this random fact as a 'narrative bridge' towards the importance of Tieren for homeless: normally, your animal needs to go to an animal shelter when homeless, but many want to keep their companion. There are some emergency shelters and transition homes that let you keep your animal, and there's a free vet.

Station 5

Walking through Rauhensteingasse, Himmelpfortgasse, Kärtnerstrasse; when passing a bin ('Mistkübel'), she shows the small opening, i.e. hostile architecture (originated in Brazil). People don't seem to know exactly what she's pointing at, looking around a bit in vain and asking each other if they know what is intended; in the meantime, she has already continued on her way to the next station (I guess the word 'Mistkübel' isn't very well-known outside of Vienna). We go to Johannesgasse, and here, she explains more about hostile architecture.

When you have tuberculosis (which you can get from eating things from the bin, thus, again, using something – in this case, the bin – as a 'narrative bridge'), you can get other people sick in a communal emergency center; that's why you need to undergo a test when you stay for longer. Some 'normal' people 'protest' hostile architecture by placing food and drinks next to the bin. Benches are also designed according to hostile architecture.

'Do you think that homeless have a lot of spare time?' No, they eat, need to find a toilet and food. You have more free time when you are in a day shelter. In Vienna, you get a cultural pass to go to the Kino for free

or cheaply, provided by the local government. This card is valid for 1 year (similar to the concept of the sport's card, which you also get). For Stadt Wien, it's important that everyone can participate in a 'normal' manner to daily life; another social organisation provides the same services and food for 5 euros per month (here, people eat together and friendships are created).

Station 6 (combined with station 7 due to heat)

She walks further through the same street and shows a Gemeindebau, which was typically built around 1950s after the war, when lots of people came to Vienna and needed housing. She mentions Karl Marx Hof as an example. In the 1980s, there was Wohnungsnoot for labourers. The presence of 35,000 homeless people instigated Stadt Wien to build 200,000 Gemeindebau at the turn of the 21st century. The politician of Wiener Wohnen now wants to build new housing for youth each year.

At the same time, loud Vienna pride music is going on, but the guide doesn't say anything about that and continues her script.

Station 7

Intended to end at Stadtpark, the guide remains standing at station 6 and tells about how tourists/backpackers used to camp in Stadtpark. However, in 2015, the police evicted it, including the homeless people. Now, you can get a fine of 280 euros for camping there.

The Bologna reform in higher education led to a combined squat by students and homeless in winter, thereby bringing the theme of homelessness in the media and putting pressure on Stadt Wien to provide more day centres and beds that have longer opening hours. Furthermore, it also instigated a platform where you can report seeing a homeless in winter.

OWN REMARK: On SHADES TOURS' website, they ask you to give the Trinkgeld in an envelope, but to me, when I see this happening at the end of the tour, it appears to be more noticeable and thus uncomfortable than a money note, folded in your hand. The tour did already end at 15h30 instead of the promised 16h00 ('What if I wanted more time for my money, as promised, but are such tours really about the money?' I think to myself). The guide was more clearly understandable with her more 'neutral' German accent than Martin's of Wiener Nimmerland. The tour is more informative in general instead of personal, and it narrates which services exist, echoing an official narrative, instead of deconstructing this critically like Wiener Nimmerland's tour. SHADES TOURS and Wiener Nimmerland simply serve different goals, being both educational in various manners. I don't want to make a value statement thereon: both goals speak to different audiences (for me, someone who's already pretty knowledgeable on homelessness in Vienna and has a more critical approach, this was pretty boring. Some participants also seemed bored. However, on SHADES TOURS' website, one of the goals stated is 'changing perceptions': I wonder if they can truly deem themselves 'transformative' by offering narratives that matter-of-factly inform about current policies, services and infrastructures in Vienna while only minimally focusing on the person behind the official statistics and listings.

2) Tour ‚Sucht & Drogen‘ (09/06/2024)

Station 1

We are at Haus des Meeres, where the guide starts with an explanation about 1) SHADES TOURS and the different kinds of tours that they offer, 2) what we understand under Sucht und Drogen (‘Droge’ etymology: Dutch ‘trekken’ uit de plant), and 3) the different contexts in which intoxication exists (e.g. native American rituals; Berberian dancing; dolphins ‘using’ pufferfish; insects and birds using ‘trees’; elephants ‘using’ fruits). He asks which kinds of intoxication do exist and which drugs can make you addicted. Regarding the latter, he says that no drug can make you addicted from the first usage (which, I think, would’ve been nice information in a Wiener Nimmerland-tour). The reasons to get addicted are physicality, pre history, social environment, etc. There are many reasons and triggers often coexist.

The guide was addicted to cigarettes (he began smoking at 8-9 years old, when he was in a Heim/orphanage). He had lots of problems with his parents and got addicted to cannabis. His attempts to seek connection with his dad were rejected. At 14-15 years old, he used alcohol, xtc and amphetamine at parties. At 17 years old, he was put on the streets after drinking too much; there – or while couch surfing at friends’ places –, he became addicted to synthetic drugs and cannabis until the age of 18 years. He got sober in his own Wohnung, but he got addicted to videogames. At 19 years old, he lost his house. At 23 years old, he got a transition home. In 2022, he divorced his wife, lost custody of his kid and he couldn’t get a diploma: his life seemed meaningless. He used heroin and Substitol (the same as Martin narrates in Wiener Nimmerland-tours). He got headaches, so he used medicines. When he got home in 2022, he went bad. In 2023, he went worse on Substitol (both too little and too much Substitol is bad: you can become blind and sleep deprived). He told himself “If no one can hep me, I go back to heroin.” However, he recovered. In July 2023, a dentist fixed his teeth, and now he’s back with his wife and kid. In 2022, he was employed by SHADES TOURS via friends.

You can get rid off addiction by changing the object of getting dopamine, and you need to be willing to change. Question from the audience: “What do you do when your son is 14 years old?”, the guide responded that he will explain honestly why something is bad. The guide speaks very easily, makes eye contact, speaks more rapidly than the guide from yesterday (or am I biased towards male speakers as being ‘better’?). He also emphasizes his personal story more. Drugs take over your life: you first buy drugs, then food (when he says so, he turns himself towards the younger participants intentionally).

Station 2

We walk through the nearby park, and the guide asks which kinds of addictions and legal drugs do exist, mentioning coffee and showing an overview of all illegal drugs. He talks about the illegal kinds of drugs and how you use them, he shares which ones he has used (smoked, swallowed, ..., cause on the streets, you take everything).

Speed remains in your system for 2-3 days and elevates your heart beat. Having 27% of pure drugs is especially high/rare. 1 drop of hash equals 1 joint. There is also LSD. You can get psychosis, schizophrenia, black limbs and aggression from drug usage: you become sick in your imagination, your self-confidence grows too big and you become separated from society. You want something to use, but you don't have any, so you become aggressive and nervous (emphasis through intonation). He was once followed by mafia on the train, so he jumped on and fled across the tracks, which is dangerous. Using drugs makes you dangerous: you can jump out off a window, because you 'belief' you're going for a swim. Your organs deteriorate, especially the brains for young people, and you get poisoning symptoms. Furthermore, there's crystal meth (being 'crystal'-shaped), methamphetamine versus amphetamine. Crack is the boiled version of cocaine, which makes you aggressive and is very bad for your body and psyche.

Legal drugs are coffee (too much can give you palpitations, not sleeping, etc., aka poisoning symptoms), cigarettes (kids can die when they take a cigarette, found on the playground, into their mouths), alcohol (it gives you courage to do something you wouldn't do otherwise, some need it to function, but your body won't work correctly anymore (I think about a deceased loved one, and her alcohol addiction)).

He asks the audience which drugs are legal or forbidden, to which they respond that every state determines this for themselves (e.g. levying of taxes on cigarettes). Sometimes, consumption is directly allowed, but indirectly forbidden by shutting down its trade (except from usage in hospitals). The penalties for drug usage can be light (i.e., fee), mild (i.e., when you are caught a 2nd or 3rd time: fee or/and 4 month guidance), or heavy (i.e., orientated towards dealers: prison). There are also therapeutic 'penalties': you can go into therapy for a certain period or immediately, depending on the drugs you use (your stay is always less than half a year). A participant asks if the same penalties apply for 14-15 years olds, the guide replies 'Immer'.

OWN REMARK: The guide doesn't seem to make any eye contact with me anymore – maybe it's because I'm the only one writing everything down what he says, without explaining myself? Maybe I make him nervous. An employee my age of SHADES TOURS accompanies the guide and asks if she can take pictures for their social media.

Station 3

We walk through Gumpendorferstrasse to Bienengasse. Here, we encounter a pharmacy to talk about drug substitutes, to which you can also become addicted. The heaviest medicines are Benzahidrin and Substitol. In the 1970s-1980s, there were lots of heroin users, addicted, prostitutes, prisoners in Vienna, ushering forward the invention of Substitol, now being sold in 800 pharmacies in Vienna. Substitol is very strong, and everyone is perceived to be individually responsible: most people switch from one addiction to Substitol addiction.

The guide was ashamed of his drug dependency, but he was regularly controlled at that time. Now, with Substitol, he functions 'normally' (but without this, he would have 'erge Schwmerzen': he tried to do so for 3-4 months, but it was hell (going to the toilet, sleeping, drinking yourself unconscious to 'sleep')). He pays

18 euros for a package of Substitol. (I think this part, where he says he's still addicted, but now to legal/allowed drugs, does truly change the perceptions regarding drug usage – in comparison to yesterday's tour on homelessness and poverty (supra))

A consumption room was opened for few months in 1970s' Germany and 1980s' Vienna, in order to have more control on illegal drugs. However, it was closed soon, and it's not known why.

Sometimes, the guide is talking fast or incoherently. He takes shallow breaths and seems to be in a hurry (mimicking the stereotypical image of a drugs user, I think to myself). His German is less easy to follow than yesterday's guide's.

Station 4

Check-it at Gumpendorferstrasse (now we get very close to Wiener Nimmerland's 'territory'; a classmate and I walked past a few days prior, not knowing what it was and being curious).

There's information regarding Xanax and its content on the windows displayed (which is scary, since I know people who use that). There is no explanation at station 3, we get the time to look at it, and he will continue his script at station 5.

Station 5

We walk to the Getreidemacht in the direction of Karlsplatz. We cross the Naschmarkt in the direction of Rechte Wienzeile, more specifically Bärenmühldurchgang, Resselgasse, Wiedner Hauptstrasse and Karlsplatz. Here, the guide explains Check-it. Afterwards, he delves into the history of Karlsplatz as the old drug scene. People used drugs at the public toilets, which wasn't appreciated by the school-going community here. The police station nearby provided services for help. However, this was detrimental to the city's image, so the addicts were evicted to the Bahnhof and Praterstern (where there's now an alcohol ban). Addiction is often accompanied by homelessness. (this corresponds to Martin's story on Wiener Nimmerland-tours).

After the tour, there's no applause: everyone stands a bit 'awkwardly', while the guide waits for Trinkgeld. I get the same business card as on yesterday's tour (supra), and the guide asks me if I'm making a task for school, pointing at my booklet and pen. I had informed SHADES TOURS beforehand that I'd like to go on one of their tours as a master's student researching this initiative, but they simply referred me to the booking site. Thus, I assumed it was not needed to inform the guide, especially since I felt he had no agency or knowledge regarding telling me more about the organization, getting me into touch with other participants, and so on. The presence of the other employee also made it more difficult to establish rapport, since I didn't know to which regard the employee was here to surveil him.

The information that I got in this tour, again, served another goal than Wiener Nimmerland's tour, although I would've liked some general information in Wiener Nimmerland's tour as contextualization (not everyone is knowledgeable on current drug usage and services in Vienna before doing a tour). I took some pictures of Karlsplatz after the tour, while being on my own, and it looked 'lively' (I wondered if it was in the process of

becoming a new hotspot for addicts and/or homeless again). I also noticed that both SHADES TOURS and Wiener Nimmerland-tours (almost) walk past a touristic and artsy museum (i.e. Secession), which could be cynical regarding the presence of homeless nearby.

OWN REMARK: When walking to the end station at Karlplatz, through the Bärenmühldurchgang, there's a beggar, but I walk past without making any eye contact. Still, I feel bad, so I turn around and give him the only cash I have – only 45 euro cents: 'Entschuldigung, das ist alles was ich habe', I say, to which he responds with a smile 'Keine Probleem.' I wish him a Schönen Tag, and he does the same to me. I hurry to cross on the green light and follow the group. When I turn around he looks down again – seemingly 'defeated' or because of the heat? Afterwards, I apparently had 1 euro left in my bag, which makes me feel bad about not giving it to him. At the same time, I have no Trinkgeld left to give to the guide, but honestly, I don't mind, since I think the beggar needed it more and it's not up to me to provide the guides with a decent wage. I am a bit astonished that everyone on the tour just walks past the beggar, including the tour guide who experienced the same and the employee (Martin of Wiener Nimmerland would have said hello, I think).

C) Autoethnography of *Gadens Stemmer*-tour (02/11/2024)

Before start tour

A man went into the trash can right next to me, I didn't dare to even look at him, out of respect or fear?

Station 1

We are standing at the train station cause Julie moved to Aalborg (Jutland) at 18 years old without a clear plan. She grew up in normal family with a younger sister, and went to a vocational school to become secretary of Niels, a friend of her father, at 15 years old.

Currently, there are 17 guides employed at Voices of the Street. Julie makes clear that questions are always welcome after each station; there are no stupid or too personal questions.

Station 2

Julie got an apartment and job at home depot, living with her boyfriend "Jimmy" (pseudonym) in Aalborg. After going to a house party together – where someone suddenly freely began to hand out heroine brownies around midnight (heroine, cocaine and fetamylne are the hardest drugs that exist, Julie adds. The feeling of heroine is 'indescribable'.), Jimmy and she decided to buy a small amount, but ended up with five grammes at home. When they got up the day after, their first thought was to smoke heroin. From then onwards, they smoked three times a day for five consecutive weeks, namely before work, after work and before going to bed. They tried to stop, but got withdrawal symptoms after eight to nine days (e.g., cramps, hot and cold, nausea and constant vomiting, spasms (also heart spasms)), so they decided to continue their heroine usage, "taking less and less drugs without withdrawal symptoms, so you can keep working and won't lose job." Smoking heroine – in opposition to injecting it – is less noticeable (only in the pupils), thus enabled them both to continue working without being 'discovered'. On our way to the next station, we walked past H17, a centre

for safe drug usage, whereas less than a decennia ago, drug addicts in Copenhagen used to take drugs in public space.

Station 3

We stand at a memorial plaque for deceased drug addicts. Here, Julie continues her personal story. After five years of living in Aalborg without drug usage, they started living and working in Aalborg while being addicted. This continued for two and a half years. They isolated from friends and family (instead of visiting her family every month as usual, she only went three to four times a year during this period). After all, there's a taboo on drug usage in Denmark, and she was ashamed to tell her family that she had wasted their good upbringing on her. One time, when her father and Julie met and hugged each other, her father pulled up her sleeve – suspecting her to be a drug user –, but she always 'shot' in her legs, cause the veins are bigger there. Especially if your non-medically trained, you damage your veins after injecting drugs for a long time, which adds to a bad blood circulation. Thus, her father did not find out about her addiction.

Jimmy and Julie did petty theft (although still bad, she emphasised, but you can't think clearly when addicted): going 'fishing' (i.e., dropping a half litre cola bottle, tied to a rope, again and again in a waste collection point (which enabled them to gain 400 dkk after 20 minutes); stealing from stores; selling stuff from deceased and deserted people's homes

Julie also stole 1500 dkk from her work at the counter, which was discovered after two weeks. When she returned home that same evening of the theft, she already suspected to be sacked eventually. However, this did not 'really' happen: when she explained to her boss why she stole the money, and that she was addicted, her boss showed empathy and cried, enabling her to say on paper that she 'quitted' the job instead of getting sacked, thereby preserving her chances on the labour market. Jimmy got sacked from his job, after showcasing too many withdrawal symptoms (shooting heroine only works for four to five hours, so the last days of your work day will be unproductive and require you to call in sick numerous times).

Jimmy and Julie transitioned to shooting instead of smoking heroine, since they know took 'yellow heroine' instead of 'brown heroine'. After all, although yellow heroine was more 'pure' and expensive than brown heroine, it would require less grammes to function as a human being during the day.

Station 4

We walk past a homeless shelter. There are a lot of noises, seemingly coming from a drunk lady. In the background, I hear the sounds of breaking glass. This was distracting, but none of the participants turned their heads towards the source thereof; 'Maybe not to stigmatise those involved therein?', I thought to myself, similar to the fast walking pace of the whole participant group when going past building H17, i.e., a centre for safe drug usage with clearly intoxicated people standing on its balconies. Istedgade, the street wherein we're standing, is notorious for being the street for selling and buying drugs, and being Copenhagen's 'red light district'. I didn't feel safe when biking there on kulturnatten, a few weeks ago: when I parked my

bicycle at a church a bit further, a few male youth started to pee right next to me against the church outer wall, without any acknowledgement or respect for me being there. When walking away from station 4, a woman was cleaning up pieces of broken glass from the street.

Julie continues her story. Jimmy and she couldn't pay the rent and the bills were stacking up, so they couch surfed at 'friends' places – although you can't really call other addicted 'your friends', cause they will betray your trust and steal from you to get money for drugs. Jimmy and she applied for a shelter, where the rent is only a few hundred dkk per month. Within two months, they got the offer for a room in another city in Jutland, where they stayed until they turned 28, respectively 32 years old. They couldn't leave their stuff in their room due to other people forcing the door open in an attempt for theft. So, when they decided to buy bigger amounts of drugs and sell part thereof to others – thus becoming dealers – they kept their storage of drugs and the profit of a million dkk buried in the woods, at the outskirts of the city. However, their pusher began to threaten them and told them that they owed him money, which wasn't the case. She walked out, not hearing the latter part - stupidly, she adds ('Perhaps, a dramatic effect for storytelling?' I think to myself). While she waited for another pusher to show up at 'Under the Brigde' (where the drug trade takes place) – Jimmy did the same at another drug scene across the city – two guys came up to her from behind, saying 'Hi Julie'. She responded, not knowing them. They said that she owed her prior pusher money, which she declined again ("Hey friend, no, I don't own him anything, so he doesn't get anything", she responded. She said that she plays 'the game', showcasing that she's not a pushover who will agree to higher returns to her pusher in the future after being 'tested'). The guys responded that she shouldn't have been so stupid, and they took her on a shoulder - a small girl (also because of the heroine addiction: you don't feel hungry, often eat less than a meal a day. She lost 12 kg, and eventually weighed around 45 kg). She shouted and protested physically, but people only watched and didn't want to get involved. The trunk of the car was open, the driver wanted to go due to the attention. Just before the trunk (dramatic effect?), she saw a girl of similar height, got loose and grabbed her "Don't let them take me". She said "Are you the police?" and added that she'll call the police if they don't go away. The guys went away and both girls looked at each other for a time, silently and in shock. A guy in the parking lot who had seen everything behind his wheel offered them a ride to the police station, which they took. There, Julie told her whole story for the second time, after confessing her addiction to her former employer at the home depot. Her phone and some money was taken by the two guys. The police accompanied Julie and Jimmy to the train station and a train ride all the way to Copenhagen, and meanwhile called Julie's father to explain EVERYTHING (emphasis in intonation added by Julie).

Station 5

Julie explained everything to her parents that day, and they reacted differently to what she expected: while her father was disappointed, her mother took everything out of their hands and took care of them). They could live at their cottage of two bedrooms, on the condition that they would register themselves at the job centre and don't do drugs in the cottage. However, the police told her father that they were wanted in

Denmark, apparently due to three missed court sessions. On advice of their lawyer, they went to a rehabilitation centre (and registered themselves at the job centre anyway). They got seventeen charges for theft and other crimes, including heavy charges, such as internal drugs trafficking to Germany-Denmark (the gang of their pusher is active in Poland-Germany-Denmark). Nine charges thereof were dropped due to the competent lawyer. However, when she heard, "Sentenced to four years of...", she didn't register anything anymore and thought the worse. However, it was only a probational period instead of a jail sentence. Jimmy and Julie broke up after evaluating the last two and a half years of their relationship: they only stayed together for the drugs, while trying to combat the loneliness that drug usage implies. At the moment, they are still talking as friends.

When Julie first entered the rehabilitation shelter, she got 400 ml of morphine as a replacement for heroine, which is a lot for her size. Now, she only takes 120 ml of morphine, and she has accepted that she probably won't ever get rid of this. At the rehabilitation centre, she heard about Voices of the Street. Every guide gets a fixed loan at Voices of the Street, complemented by subsidies to fill in the gaps of calmer periods, like the winter months.

E. REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DIARY (06/2022-05/2025)

Time and place	Observation	Interpretation
06/2022: an alleyway in Leuven	When my friend and I walk through an alleyway in Leuven to get some food, we encounter a black man laying half unconscious on concrete slabs. We try to talk to him, but he doesn't respond to us. He's intoxicated; he was the same man that was shouting at the city park an hour earlier, when we were there. An elderly neighbour opens the window, and shouts that he has been laying here for a while, and that the neighbour is willing to call the police. We respond that isn't necessary, and continue our way to get some food for ourselves and water for the man. When we return, the man is still laying there, but he's very unresponsive. I want to call the ambulance, but at that moment, delivery guys – apparently friends of his – arrive and throw water over him and rub his body in order to wake him up. They thank us for being there, but tell us that they've "got it", and that we can't call an ambulance due to the guy not having any health insurance. We leave and go back to the city park to eat our food.	- I presume that the man in question is an illegal migrant. Initially, I did not feel like I could help in any of this, like this was my 'problem', and I was more inclined to leave it up for official helpers (i.e., the ambulance). At the same time, I feel guilty about having this initial thought, since it shows my willingness to be a mere bystander, regardless of the consequences for the man in question. I wonder what I would have (not) done, if his friends had not showed up, and if my response and sense of empathy would have been different if he was a male or female white colleague student like me. - At the same time, I feel morally superior to the neighbour, who was inclined to call the police while the man was clearly in need of medical assistance instead of 'removal from public space' for the neighbour's 'wellbeing' – the police would have presumably served the latter. However, can I truly deem myself morally superior to the neighbour, or did I simply cloak my similar apathy to the man's state of being better – and what does this 'cloaking' say about me as a person in relation to Others? My friend, who proposed to get the man water, was the most empathetic.

2023: an exit of the central train station in Brussels	When exiting the central train station of Brussels, I see a man sitting on a mattress and asking for money. I give him 2 euros, and he asks for more. When I speak French, English, Dutch or German, he responds to me in Spanish and another language unknown to me. However, due to his gestures, I am able to get a grasp of what he means. When I say I can't give him more money, he almost starts crying and says that he needs 10 euros. Although I deny initially and tell him that he can ask other passerby for more money, eventually, I end up giving him more and more until a total of 10 euros. Then, he smiles and takes out a leaflet from his inner jacket pocket. He seems to tell me that he wants to take a bus with his family.	My initial feeling when walking away from the exit is feeling 'cheated': by fake crying – I realise now – he has managed to manipulate my feelings of guilt and unease with visible inequality, reflected back on my own position of socio-economic privilege, and the knowledge that my wealth is always dependent on the existence of another's poverty. In doing so, he was able to get 10 euros from me – which is a lot for a student like me, and something that I actually was unwilling to give. Moreover, he seems to want to use this money for non-primary needs like food and housing, which is his right to do so, but makes me feel annoyed. In a sense, I feel like I have been 'played': class-based power dynamics have been reverted on me. When walking away, I have become a bit more distrustful of beggars (especially in light of rumours of gangs that occupy and put people on strategic places in Brussels as 'beggars' to collect money for their operations – notwithstanding the vulnerability of those 'beggars', who are fully dependent on and being exploited by the gangs), and I muse about not carrying that much cash in the future to prevent similar situations from happening. At the same time, reflection on this thought horrifies me: how can I generalize this experience to all beggars and become so begrudged in the face of poverty and inequality as a presumably socially engaged person?
2023: an alleyway in Liège	After a leisurely visit to the city centre of Liège, my parents and I walk back to our parked car by traversing an alleyway. Here, my parents and I pass two intoxicated persons sitting on	Instead of helping our fellow persons, we walk right past. Fear of what the Other might do to us – becoming violent towards us, following us, or simply 'bothering' (in other words, disrupting <i>our</i> peace of mind) us – is stronger

	a matrass next to a wall. Syringes are laying besides them. My mom tells me not to look. There is a sour smell, like vomit.	than the potential for empathy. This is not ‘our problem’; or is it? And if it is not ours, than whose is it? Perhaps, in trying to avoid any existential confrontation (i.e., the recognition of solidarity in our shared human states of being), tendencies of dehumanization and othering can be explained for.
08/2023: visit to The Ruimtevaart, a social organisation in Leuven that cooks free/cheap meals and does home-visits to help people navigate Belgian regulations and electricity, gas, etc. contracts	I visit The Ruimtevaart to get some more information on becoming a potential volunteer. The Ruimtevaart is located in ‘The Vaartkom’, an area which I have visited before when going the ‘OPEK’, an arts centre where I followed dance and creative writing classes. It is a recently redeveloped industrial area that is known for being hip and trendy, offering high-class gastronomy and penthouse residences. Behind the seemingly ‘normal’ façade of a residential house, The Ruimtevaart is located.	This is the first time that I encounter visible poverty in my university city of Leuven. I always thought that there was no poverty within the city centre of Leuven; that all socio-economically deprived people were ‘pushed out’ of the city centre due to high housing prices, or clustered inside two social housing estates within the city centre. This visit made me rethink what poverty could look like, and how it can be experienced; in other words, what are the meanings of poverty?
06/11/2024: columns at the buildings of Odissee’s and KU Leuven’s shared campus in Brussels	For fieldwork within the framework of courses in 4CITIES, I observe the shared campus of Odissee and KU Leuven in Brussels. When looking at the outside columns, I recall an earlier time at night when I walked past and saw mattresses between the columns of the campus. During the day, however, students seem to flood these places and there is no sign of homelessness or rough sleeping anywhere; all mattresses are removed – perhaps by the homeless	This observation is cynical to me. At higher education, students are prepared to become responsible citizens, caring not only for themselves, but adding to the greater benefit of society – as posited in Odissee’s and KU Leuven’s mission statements. Here, however, I don’t see any of that. Instead, the socio-economically deprived cannot co-exist in the same space, cannot be visible in order to preserve a ‘fun’ and ‘untainted’ campus life without any feelings of unease. At the same time, when walking and living in Brussels, students will definitely have encountered poverty before, so why does it need to be

	themselves, the higher education institutions, or the authorities.	filtered out in this specific context – who determines this on which grounds to what goals?
01/2024: main hall of central train station in Brussels	When waiting for the train back home at the central train station in Brussels, a presumably homeless person asks my grandparents and me in Dutch for money to use the toilet. He looks visibly unwell, hopping from one leg to the other. I don't have any cash with me. My grandparents and I don't say anything. The person mutters something and walks away, seemingly frustrated. Another passerby sees the situation happen, and offers to help him, going into a store with him to buy something. When they have both left, I say to my grandparents that these situations are always uncomfortable, and I express pity for him. My grandparents agree, and they say that we can't give money to everyone and we don't know what he'll do with it. Maybe he's going to buy drugs, they say.	Although my grandparents did not give anything to the man, I could still have said something to him, instead of not responding to him, diverting my gaze and letting the silence set in until he would leave. Whereas I often see myself as morally superior to my grandparents, being socialized into a leftist university culture that is more accepting and understanding of difference and socio-economically deprived persons, my actions here show the opposite: in contrast to my grandparents, I don't act upon my solidaristic worldview and presumed empathetic values and norms, which renders me a hypocrite (see also article on social class-based 'authenticity' and homogenization into a culture of 'being open towards Others' (Michael, 2013)).
02/2024: square at Stephansdom in Vienna	It is my first day since arriving in Vienna for 4CITIES' second semester, and I decide to visit the city centre. When taking the electric stairs from the metro up to Stephansdom, I see beggars sitting against the windows of the brand stores. I walk past to Stephansdom itself, and walk around the church. There, I see a disabled man, presumably homeless, sitting in a shopping cart. He seems to be lacking his legs, but I do not	I wonder why I diverted my gaze, why I did not want him to know that I was looking at him. Did I do this to offer <i>him</i> some privacy in the public space, to prevent him from feeling objectified and exoticized under my gaze as a disabled person, sitting in a shopping cart – an unusual sight? Or did I divert my gaze and refrain from conversing with the man <i>for myself</i> , wanting to keep a comfortable distance between myself and him, wanting to observe the sensation of Otherness and conflict between the man and the City Wien

	dare to look too intensively, and divert my gaze on purpose when he turns around so our eyes do not meet. He is going through some sort of trash bin and tries to attach his shopping cart with his stuff therein to something next to Stephansdom. A person, wearing the uniform of a City Wien employee, screams at him in a presumably angry way – although I cannot hear what he says over the noise of tourists talking and bustling. The man seems to ignore him, and after the City Wien employee has left, I approach the man, say ‘Sir, excuse me’ in English, and give him 10 euros when he turns around. I don’t make any conversation. He smiles, takes the money and doesn’t make any conversation too.	employee, without intervening or being involved myself in the ‘messiness’ of genuine interpersonal contact? What would he have felt, when I gave him 10 euros out of nowhere, and what did his smile and silence truly mean?
03/2024: sitting on the tram in Josefstadt (Vienna), looking out the window + a few weeks later, getting off a tram in Josefstadt	I see a presumably homeless man with a yellow rain poncho sitting in a tram booth through the window of a tram riding by. A few weeks later, I see the same man in a different tram booth, close to the prior one, while standing on another tram and looking out into Josefstadt. I get off the tram spontaneously in an attempt to approach him. He is shredding paper and putting it in a big reusable shopping bag. I think to myself ‘Maybe that is how he earns money?’ When I try to approach him in order to offer him 10 euros, he sees me coming and makes sounds that seem to express annoyance.	At first, I cannot comprehend why he would not take my money, since – to me –, he seems to be visibly struggling, presumably sleeping on the streets and shredding paper to earn money. I feel a bit rejected and ridiculed that he did not accept my well-intended offer and even seemed annoyed at me, especially since there was an ‘audience’ (i.e., the silent woman) to witness me being refused: again, similar to a prior experience at a train station exit in Brussels (supra), class-based power dynamics have been reverted on me, and I do not like the feeling. When my charity – and chance of reaffirming my own self-image as ‘a good person’ – gets rejected, in first instance, I project this upon the homeless person in question, deeming them ‘ungrateful’, while

	He also points at the tram, indicating me to get on again and leave him be. We do not speak the same languages, so instigating any conversation feels fruitless, and I indeed get on a tram and take my leave. A woman waiting nearby for another tram looks at me in silence. On the tram, I wonder why he rejected my money: is it because of his honour, or something else. Back home, I search for information on homelessness in Vienna on the Internet: apparently, homeless persons have been viciously attacked and murdered in Vienna recently. ‘Maybe that explains his reaction?’	there could be many reasons for not wanting to take my money (in this way). This reaction of deeming the Other ‘ungrateful’ could be a way of preserving my own self-identity and sense of self-authenticity, instead of questioning the morally good character of my actions: perhaps, well-intended actions are not morally good from themselves (i.e., virtue ethics), but are dependent on how they are perceived and valued by those towards which they are intended (i.e., consequentialism). Morals, in other words, are interpersonally and constantly (re)negotiated in interaction; and, at times, moral contest and learning inevitably result in my feelings and view of Self getting disrupted.
04/2024: Wiener Nimmerland-tour in Vienna with classmates, parents and grandparents	I booked a tour at Wiener Nimmerland within the framework of a course in 4CITIES, and I invited my parents and grandparents along while they were visiting me in Vienna. I did not tell my grandparents in advance what we would be doing; I only told them to gather at Karlsplatz. The tour was booked in English to allow my classmates to understand the tour; however, my grandfather does not understand English, and my grandmother understands it minimally. At the first station, my grandparents were standing at the back. I offered them to move a little bit closer, so I could hear the guide, Martin, explaining, and I could translate for them. My grandfather responded: “I can already see from his red hair	For me, my grandparents exemplify the challenge of fulfilling my personal and professional aspirations, namely creating a truly inclusive society in which people do not co-exist next to each other, but alongside each other; accepting and celebrating different ways of being, instead of merely tolerating it. Various sociocultural groups feel wronged and misrecognized in society – and those feelings are legitimate; however, in expressing this, Others/ed are being wronged and misrecognized <i>as well</i>, which aggravates socio-economic, cultural and political tensions, and draws social and moral boundaries (see also the scholarly work of sociologist Michèle Lamont on boundary-making). People like my grandparents have grown up poor and slowly made their way to a lower middle class status; they feel that their contributions and knowledge to society is undervalued, especially in light of

	what kind of person he is. I don't need to hear that." (translated from Dutch). They lingered behind the group for the rest of the tour. After the tour, my mom and I set down with them in the apartment that we stayed at, asking them why they did not engage with the tour. My grandparents seemed defensive, responding the following. Grandmother: "You need to understand, granddad has not always had it easy himself. We have had to endure many changes [in/of society] already." (translated from Dutch), and grandfather: 'Why should I listen to <i>his</i> story and give him <i>my</i> money? No one helped <i>me</i> when I was young.' My mom and I narrated some parts of the tour to them, emphasizing the circumstances that contributed to Martin becoming homeless and addicted. My grandfather reacted: "I did not know that at the time [of the tour]. I could not understand his English." My grandmother added that they were both happy that I wanted to help socially marginalized people, but that they were afraid that I would want to work directly with "<i>these people</i>", exemplifying her argument by telling the story of an acquaintance, who worked with and eventually married an ex-homeless person and was presumably removed from her own house by this person. During my time in Vienna, I have met up multiple	new societal paradigms. This is understandable. At the same time, any form of change and embodiment of difference (such as migrants and their descendants, unemployed persons, etc.) are used as a scapegoat for the excesses of modern globalized capitalism (e.g., income inequality and poverty; power imbalances in knowledge- and decision-making processes) under current societal and political populist and polarizing discourses. This, in turn, installs feelings of being wronged and misrecognized <i>as well</i> among migrants and their descendants, unemployed persons, etc., who can never truly become part of society, regardless of if they remain true or 'authentic' to their own way of being. After all, 'they' embody – and thus, 'are' – difference/Otherness in predominantly white, Western, able-bodied, work-based, etc. welfare states and societies in Europe. I hoped that tourism, more precisely the Wiener Nimmerland-tour, could offer a site or setting for genuine encounter between different societal groups, but preexisting grievances and associated assumptions seemed to be too influential to allow therefor, <i>at first</i>. Later on – <i>after shared reflection</i> with my mom and me – my grandparents expressed more tolerance and understanding for the social circumstances that lead to different ways of being (see also post tour interview transcript with my grandparents – April 2025). However, they do not see themselves as being connected to "<i>these people</i>" (i.e., those that embody difference from them), as sharing similar
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	times with Martin and Nadine at their home, which I deliberately did not tell my grandparents.	hardships or a universal human way of being under modern capitalist excesses in a truly solidaristic manner, as exemplified by their word choice and positioning (e.g., employing 'they' and 'we' as a strategy of footing) in a post interview on their tour experience.
04/2024: waiting for the tram in Josefstadt (Vienna)	There is a beggar in front of my usual tram stop, close to my home. Since I am in a hurry, I purposively prevent any interaction, and thus make no eye contact. My fellow inhabitants of Josefstadt – a 'hipster' district for wealthy knowledge workers and expats – seem to do the same, namely diverting their gaze or looking right through the man. Afterwards, I do not see the man again at 'my' tram stop.	I did not want to be 'stopped in my tracks'; I only choose to engage with beggars when and where it suits <i>me</i> . Perhaps, I – and other socio-economically privileged persons – can afford to do so without the risk of social disapproval by our fellow "socially engaged" neighbours (as exemplified by the popularity of fair trade shops, second-hand clothing, etc., in the district) due to a hypocrite 'authentic' cultural middle-class culture that does not oblige us to act upon presumably progressive and tolerant values and norms (see also article Michael, 2013)
04/2024: metro and tram station Ring/Volkstheater (Vienna)	I give a friendly smile to people who are begging in the station. When they notice this, they ask me for money. I divert my gaze and walk past them.	Perhaps, I cannot expect to have encounters <i>on my terms only</i> . I wanted to give them a smile, some eye contact instead of walking by like they were simply air, to recognize them as human persons or beings (i.e., subjectification). But I cannot expect them to not act upon this recognition and 'make use' of the situation, even though or especially when this annoys me for treating me as a mere 'piggy bank' (i.e., objectification). This continuous balance act between subjectification and (the risk of self-)objectification is part of human encounter.

04/2024: metro and tram station Ring/Volkstheater (Vienna)	I crunch down to the ground to get something from inside my backpack, when a man approaches me and asks for some coins. I give the man some money, and he turns seemingly triumphantly to the nearby bakery 'Ströck' with his hands in the air and a smile on his face, walking away from me to get some food.	I feel threatened when a stranger approaches me while I am physically lowered to them; my parents have warned me multiple times for the possibility of someone hitting you and stealing your stuff, when giving money to a beggar in a crunched position. At the same time, I do not want fear and mistrust to define my encounters with fellow humans, but this tension is inherently still present. This was a 'positive' encounter, but I have also had encounters with beggars and homeless people that left me feeling scared and/or disrespected, which influence my future perceptions, interpretations and behaviours.
04/2024: metro and tram station Ring/Volkstheater (Vienna)	My brother, who is visiting me, and I are at the tram stop, when we see a beggar. It is the same person to whom I gave 10 euros last week, I tell my brother, to which he responds: "Why would you do that? So much money. That could be a coffee." I answer him: "Yes, for me it's just a coffee, but for them it maybe makes a difference that day."	I am also conflicted about giving money to individuals. Having a coffee for myself is a privilege compared to what some can afford, but at the same time I truly enjoy being able to give this to myself at times, and I do not want to feel guilty about that. It would be easier, to ease my mind, if the welfare state or any other societal order was more effective in and took up all responsibility in reducing socio-economic inequality and poverty (while being realistic about the impossibility of total eradication thereof). However, I do feel responsible for beggars, since my wealth is dependent on another's poverty and undervaluation in society. I wonder when and where true solidarity (i.e., acting upon these feelings of mutual responsibility) is possible for myself and society as a whole; and if poverty tourism truly offers a setting or site therefor.

05/2024: tram station Ring/Volkstheater (Vienna)	When I exit the metro station via the electronic stairs to the tram station, I see a man sitting on blankets just across the electronic stairs. I smile to him. Apparently, he is intoxicated, and shouts angrily at me in German “Nicht lachen. Du bist eine Hure, eine Hure.” He keeps repeating this. Other people at the tram station hear it and divert their gaze. I hastily walk past, divert my gaze as well and stand far away at the end of the tram station. I wait for the shouting to stop, and observe him subtly in case he would decide to come over to me. He stops shouting, and I don’t dare to look back to him. After some minutes, the tram arrives and I get on. At home, I look at my smile in the mirror: maybe he thought I was mocking him, laughing at him?	I smiled at the man to make him feel ‘seen’ (i.e., subjectification), but instead, he objectified me (i.e., by calling me “eine Hure”) and made me feel scared. I was also shocked and felt let down by the observation that no one engaged, came to talk to me, or even made eye contact with me – in other words, recognized me. In the city, surrounded by a crowd of people, I felt alone. Cynically, I thought to myself ‘No one is going to give this man any money, if he keeps shouting like that (in other words, if he does not present himself in a more socially enjoyable manner)’. At the same time, I also could not blame the man or be angry at him: he will for sure have his reasons for being intoxicated, feeling let down by society as well, perhaps, and when intoxicated, people can be unpredictable. Back home, when looking at and practising my smile in the mirror, I was filled with doubt: how to behave towards beggars and homeless persons in the future – is smiling still okay, or am I giving off ‘wrong’ signals? –, and, am I truly the ‘right’ person to conduct research on poverty tourism as a middle-class, white, privileged person? Can I truly capture and understand all experiences of poverty tourism, including those who are narrating and – indirectly – being narrated as a group of ‘vulnerable people’ in Vienna, Copenhagen and The Hague?
05/2024: sitting on a bench at Stubentor park (Vienna)	A classmate and I are talking, while sitting on a bench, when a presumably homeless man tries to lie down on the bench next to us. On purpose, I don’t look to the man, and I also don’t mention the noticeable stench of sweat which blows	I assume that the man left because he felt to ‘seen’ or ‘judged’ by other people on the benches – that is why I diverted my gaze. There is a difference between being seen and recognized as a ‘human’ (i.e., subjectification), and

	our way. Benches are positioned in a row and opposite each other, and many people are seated thereon. After a few minutes of trying to lay down, the man takes his leave.	being 'labelled' or 'categorized' as a 'homeless person' only (i.e., objectification).
05/2024: sitting on a bus to Josefstadt (Vienna) in the evening	A drunk man enters the bus, sits in the seats across me, and spills his drink multiple times on the floor throughout the bus ride, with every turn that the bus makes. He tries to clean it up with tissues. The other passengers look away. He asks me if I can tell him when his stop comes up in German; I respond that I will do that, after which he goes to sleep. When his stop comes up, apparently a friend had been accompanying him and tells him that it is time to go. The man wakes up from his daze, genuinely seems to thank me for telling him – even though I did nothing – and exits the bus with his friend. I smile to myself while looking out the window.	The more I encounter and observe encounters with 'vulnerable' city dwellers, be it homeless persons or intoxicated persons, the more I see a pattern of diverted gazes. I think that people try to protect themselves, and I can understand that since encounters can evoke negative emotions and become physically unsafe. At the same time, I wonder how we can truly co-exist with one another, if we choose to not engage at all and open up the possibility of <i>mutual vulnerability</i> (i.e., not only the intoxicated person is vulnerable, but those who engage with him as well). Especially when feeling uneasy and uncertain, people have the opportunity to dissect those feelings and use them as a vehicle towards questioning existent ways of being, knowing and doing towards alternative, truly solidaristic co-existence.
05/05/2024: sitting on a bench in Ottakring (Vienna)	Within the framework of a course in 4CITIES, I ask a woman what she thinks about the recent redevelopment of the street that we are at. She invites me to sit down on the bench besides her, and she starts explaining in German about the sight of young people, sleeping on the newly installed benches at night. The rising housing prices, the politicians that are detached from the reality in the city, the fact that she can't give anything to beggars since she herself doesn't have the	I did not expect her to draw such a broad, structural picture of vulnerability in Vienna, but I was pleasantly surprised, also of her understanding and empathy towards politicians and their lack of adequate decision-making due to their positionality. But, when walking back home and closing this little glimpse into 'how the other half lives', it left a 'sour taste': I get to engage now, and afterwards I can go home and enjoy my coffee and other pleasant privileges that others don't have, without any repercussions whatsoever. But,

	money to buy new clothes or a coffee for herself: she narrates it all. When I walk back to my home in Josefstadt, the stark demarcation of the Gürtel or the metro, delineating both districts (i.e., Josefstadt is a richer district in comparison to the historical industrial labour and foreign migrant district of Ottakring), stands out to me. Although I was planning to buy and enjoy a coffee, I do not feel like it anymore after our talk (see also reference thereto in self-made song 'Wien is a must' about homelessness and poverty in Vienna in framework of course in 4CITIES).	can these feelings of guilt and unease also become productive in a struggle for another, more just society?
05/2024: visit to Budapest (Hungary); walking alongside the waterfront	I see a lot of hostile architecture, as well as statues that portray themes of solidarity and community (e.g., a dog and a child playing; a postman), at Budapest's waterfront.	The contrast of <i>displaying</i> community and solidarity values through these statues, and the simultaneous presence of hostile architecture that implicitly delineates and <i>acts upon</i> who is deemed 'deserving' or 'worthy' of being part of this community and who is not, is cynical to me.
05/2024: visit to Budapest; walking in the city centre	I decide to keep some Hungarian currency as a souvenir. When walking past beggars, I feel guilty for keeping the money as a 'mere' souvenir, while it could enable them to buy food or a place at a shelter. However, I still keep the money and walk past without making eye contact.	In order to 'deal' (in other words, try to ignore) with my feelings of guilt, I do not make any eye contact.
06/2024: written feedback from Joshua (Josh) Grigsby via	Feedback suggested to focus more on those actors in poverty tourism who can actually evoke change for those currently affected by urban precarity (e.g., policymakers). I followed up	- City departments do not seem to have a clear view on what poverty tourism is, or how they contribute to shaping its format and enabling its existence. Also, I wonder if the socio-political and critical narratives of

email on current master's thesis research proposal within framework of course in 4CITIES (Vienna)	on this advice, but city departments of Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen are unresponsive (after initial email contact), or send me fruitlessly back and forth within the city administration.	some poverty tours towards the urban, regional and/or national governments deters some politicians and civil servants from speaking on the topic publicly in a master's thesis. In May, 2025, I decided to delineate my master's thesis topic further and suggest an engagement with policy frameworks for future research (see 'conclusion and discussion' section in master's thesis). - However, I am very sceptical of the potential of measuring 'impact' of poverty tourism on reducing or preventing poverty in the cities or specific places that are being toured. After all, experiential learning through poverty tours entails a long-term reflective process and actions are not always congruent to newly adopted worldviews and knowledge. Additionally, multiple factors beyond poverty tourism may instigate policy change while policy change in itself is not necessarily sufficient for and translated into more effective engagements with the urban challenge of poverty on a micro scale.
06/2024: walking to Karlsplatz metro station with guide Martin of Wiener Nimmerland after his tour (Vienna)	After accompanying Martin on one of his tours as a participatory observant, I walk back with him to the metro station. He tells me about his current sponsor deal with Augustin, a local newspaper about homelessness. Meanwhile, we pass by one of the sellers of this newspaper, who is often standing there when Martin is doing his tour. Martin says the man recognizes him and always asks him for money, but he	I am surprised that expressing gratefulness (which is not the same as 'being' grateful) is important to Martin, since he told me himself once how dehumanizing the experience of begging is, that you cannot muster a smile or be grateful when you feel like you need to cower and lower yourself hours on end to fulfil your needs. Perhaps, Martin tries to distinguish himself in a moral manner, indicating that he was not 'such' a beggar. Although he well-intendedly advocates for a better life for those affected by urban precarity

	doesn't like the man since "He is either ungrateful when you give him money or he acts like he's wronged when you don't".	through his tours and related activities, his narrations subconsciously and implicitly install divisions of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' within the group of 'urban poor', either through the content or format of his story.
06/2024: walking back to Martin's home from Praterstern metro station with him after his tour (Vienna)	After accompanying Martin on one of his tours as a participatory observant, he invites me to hang out at his place and I tag along. When walking back from Praterstern metro station to his home, Martin tells me how some teachers seem to idolise him as 'a good guy', presumably because they recognize some "lost rebellious youth" in Martin's past and current life style as a punk on the streets, but also because doing the tours themselves is commendable. Martin does not like it; they are being 'too' nice and do not recognize that Martin has done bad things in his life which do not make up for him presumably 'being' a good guy. And, Martin remarks, the teachers probably would not have behaved towards him in such a way if they would see him passed out from drugs laying on the streets. When walking past some architecture at Praterstern, Martin tells me that it is recently installed hostile architecture.	Martin recognizes that he <i>now</i> gains respect because he is one of 'the good guys' who made it out of urban precarity, while others did not 'manage' to do so, thus individualizing and victim-blaming the social challenge of urban precarity. This can, unintentionally, be counterproductive to his aim, namely repoliticizing the challenge of urban precarity as a shared social problem <i>by all</i> . At the same time, Martin is partly exoticized or objectified as living a 'pure' life as a punk on the streets, while this life is also far from romantic at times, as his tour shows. Thus, in a sense, Martin is still not put on an equal footing to his visitors, who are often from a socio-economically more privileged class background but seek his tour out to gain a glimpse of a more postmodern 'authentic' life, which is lost in the haste and rush of applying to measures of 'success' in modernity (e.g., having a stable and well-paid job, being 'busy' and 'productive' in all domains of life, 'excelling' at hobbies).
06/2024: at Martin's home with Martin and	Martin and I arrive at Martin's and Nadine's place after one of Martin's tours, on which I joined as a participatory observant. I have been here two or three times in total, and I have always	- I feel uncomfortable being here, and witnessing their argument – which, in my view, should be private without a relative stranger like me being present. Although I do not want to label Martin as 'vulnerable', thereby

Nadine after his tour (Vienna)	communicated with Nadine via email about my master's thesis and its progression. After the tour, Martin unwinds by smoking weed, and Nadine remarks that the amount that he is smoking is bad for his brain and probably responsible for his short-term memory losses. Martin shouts at her angrily. I stay silent, seated on the couch.	denying his agency in a sense, in fact, I realise that this is the case at certain times, in certain places. Martin's continued dependency on pharmaceutical drugs and weed (as stressed during many poverty tours that I went on: you can never fully become 'clean' after addiction), and lasting symptoms thereof (e.g., Martin told me that his joints and nerves, as well as his head hurts during summer heat due to his regulatory system being destroyed by drug usage), as well as his nervousity and associated nausea before certain tours (i.e., especially when changemakers, such as judges, join his tour) and need to decompress at home after tours, render him vulnerable. Nadine is vulnerable too: she is a university student – thus, she is very successful under current societal norms –, but she can also be shouted at in the presence of a stranger, regardless of all the effort that she puts into managing Wiener Nimmerland administratively and financially. - This is not to say that I – like any person (including tour participants and bystanders in public space) – am not vulnerable as well in certain situations, at times requiring Nadine's and/or Martin's help and support (e.g., when getting access to interviewees (Nadine), when taking care of a tour participant that fainted or moving beyond the usual station on his tour to offer a nearby homeless person some privacy (Martin)). However, in conducting this master's thesis research, I should be aware of potential vulnerabilities, and not impose my research agenda and my way of being,
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		knowing and doing on them. Instead, I should try to understand and adapt myself and my research towards their feelings (e.g., stress), schedules and timeframes, as well as modalities and styles of communication (e.g., communicating via Instagram, writing shorter and more informal emails), always favouring their wellbeing above scientific discovery.
24/06/2024: walking at the outskirts of Stadtpark (Vienna)	An elderly woman with a trolley, being clothed in rags and presumably homeless, is walking in front of me. She turns around and says “entschuldigung”, making eye contact with me. I meet her eyes, but I pass her by without saying anything and hurry to the tram stop across the street that I was initially walking towards.	- I am tired. I have spent a few days touring my visiting friends from Belgium around the city, and I have just said goodbye to them at the nearby train station. I do not have any energy to engage with someone, who probably – I presume – ‘wants something’ from me. But what if the woman did not want any money from me? What if she simply wanted to ask directions, or engage in a conversation? I did not hear her out, but immediately jumped to conclusions. - I know my reaction is very rude and unfriendly, but since we are in a touristic site where not everyone speaks German, I hope I could ‘play’ the act of being an ignorant tourist, and at the same time, I don’t owe anything to anyone, I think to myself to ease my guilt and preserve my self-image as a ‘good person’.
25/06/2024: walking in Josefstadt (Vienna)	When walking through the streets of Josefstadt, a young couple stops me in my steps, asking for the directions in limited English. I respond in German, and look the address up for them on my mobile phone, slightly wondering why they	- I feel ‘tricked’, thinking to myself that I am no ‘piggy bank’, and thus, do not want to be treated that way (i.e., objectification). I am indignant that they used this ‘tactic’ of being presumably lost and asking for directions to ‘lure’ me in and deceive me into engaging with them, so they could

	can't look the address up themselves, when they show it to me on their phone and it is located three houses from our position in the same street. They thank me, and ask me for a euro for 'eating', they gesture. I say "entschuldigung", and wish them a nice day while I walk further.	ask me for money eventually. Could they not have <i>acted</i> a bit more 'subtle'? However, would a more passive or implicit tactic (e.g., sitting on the street and begging) have even allowed them to engage with me in the first place? - Perhaps, I should look or act less approachable, I think to myself, so I do not get 'taken advantage of' in the future. At the same time, I was able to simply say "entschuldigung" and get out of the situation; I was not 'obliged' to give them any money, and they did not make me feel like I was. In the end, I feel confused and disoriented by these power <i>plays</i> in <i>acts</i> of engagement, in which I am complicit as well by simply walking away.
06/2024: walking to a coffee shop outside my university campus, close to Schottentor metro/tram station (Vienna)	When going for coffee in between lectures with some classmates, a man who is distributing pamphlets stops me and points to a kebab place. He does not speak German, and tries to engage with me. After I repeat multiple times that I can't understand him – although I can get the gist that he wants something from me that I am unwilling to give at that moment – he lets me enter the coffee shop that I wanted to enter in the first place. My classmates are watching me in silence without interfering.	I feel embarrassed that my classmates witnessed me trying to brush the man off: it does not align with 'the socially engaged' person that I portray myself as. I do not feel any guilt, pity or empathy for the man in question, but I am annoyed that he had to engage with me, of all people on the street. When reflecting on this thought, I am shocked at how insensitive I can be towards others, but at the same time, it does not surprise me: I know that I am a morally inconsistent person, and I believe that human existence is plagued by contradictions that we try to legitimise towards ourselves first and foremost. While I am aware of the self-illusional tendencies in subjectification and authentication processes, I choose not to act thereupon towards living a truly existentially 'authentic' life in line with my socially

		engaged values and norms. I wonder how many people are aware of their hypocrisy, and why this awareness in itself is insufficient to provoke agentic change (for instance, inspired by the experience of poverty tourism).
12/06/2024: at a tram stop and shop near my home in Josefstadt (Vienna)	When I exited the tram near my home, I saw a man selling Augustin news papers for 5 euros a piece (see supra: Martin's sponsor deal with Augustin). I gave him 10 euros, knowing that only part of the 5 euros would go to the seller. The man asked me if I wanted to buy baby milk for him. I agreed and we went to buy some in the nearby Bipa store together. Meanwhile, he told me in broken German that his rent is 250 euros a month, and he has a wife and 5 kids; thus, his expenses are too much, he explained. When standing together in the aisle of baby products, he asked me if I could also buy diapers, to which I responded in German "I think that the milk suffices". I paid for the milk by card. The man wished me a nice day and departed in the opposite direction of me by foot.	The man did not seem disappointed or angry at me for not buying him any additional diapers. Instead, he expressed 'gratefulness' for the milk, and thus, made sure that I had a pleasant experience interacting with him. In other words, I did not feel obliged to give him anything, and chose to buy him something, departing from my own feelings and wishes – instead of being 'forced' by guilt or unease.
06/2024: walking the streets of Vienna	My friends and I walked the streets of Vienna, when a beggar stopped us in our tracks, asking for money. I gave him 5 euros, after which he asked for more. We walked further. One of my friends stated that asking for more money was ungrateful. When we ran into a beggar, the person asked for more than	The topic of expressing 'gratefulness' in a socially acceptable or legitimized manner is important, as exemplified throughout this reflexive analysis.

	the 5 euros that I gave him. My friends afterwards said that it was ungrateful of him to react in such a way.	
06/2024: walking back from a second-hand store to my home in Josefstadt (Vienna)	I had bought two pieces of second-hand clothing, and exited the store to walk home. A teenage boy stopped me in my tracks, asking me if I speak English. I made eye contact and responded that I do speak English. In response, he asked me for money to buy food for him and his mother. I walked by, saying that I cannot help him. He followed me for a bit, but eventually stopped walking when I continued to ignore him. I do not turn around.	I feel guilty for not giving him any money after I have bought two unnecessary pieces of clothing. However, after reflecting on my past experiences of feeling guilt and unease when encountering beggars, I think that offering someone money, help or support should come from a place of genuine willingness, instead of mere pity, guilt or fear of being followed home by a stranger. Otherwise, you do not recognize the person asking for support as an equal being to your own person: either, 'they' are the object of pity, or 'they' are 'the Other' who manipulates your feelings and 'forces' you to do something that is 'inauthentic' to your will, thus being a danger to fulfilling your 'authentic life project' (see Heidegger). At the same time, the awareness and experience of injustice and your own benefit therefrom, troubles and discourages genuine encounter on equal footing.
06/2024: lyrics and chords of self-made song 'Wien is a must', i.e., a personal reflection on homeless and poverty in Vienna within the framework	Verses (Am7, G, F, E7) - Got up from the metro, and I saw you sitting there. At an ungodly hour, when City Wien didn't care. People passed you by, turned away, they said "Be aware." But I couldn't act like you were just a breeze of air. - First day in Vienna and I went to Stephansdom. I couldn't believe what I saw, it was so horrible. 'Surprisingly' at the most tourist site of 'em all.	

of course in 4CITIES (Vienna)	You were there on the street, in plural, not on your own. Refrain (Am7, C7, D7, E7): Marketing's not all. How do we truly live in this urban sprawl? 'The most liveable city of all', ah, come on! Do you truly know what we wish upon? <i>Stadterneuerung</i> is fun and swell, instead of structural solutions for all who dwell. Ignorance is bliss, what can't be seen, well, that can be missed. You're allowed anywhere, as long as you will declare that 'Wien is a must', especially for those who have money to entrust. 3. In the 16th district (i.e., Ottakring), you told me that you despair. How the divide between rich and poor simply isn't fair. How you save every euro, don't have anything to spare. On my way to the 8th [district, i.e., Josefstadt] I didn't dare get coffee anywhere. 4. The sun went down when I strolled through Bélvédère. At the end of its gates, I saw you reappear. The next-door park housed your blanket and footwear. Your presence was only allowed at that far-end frontier. Refrain 5. On paper you were reduced to an embellished figure. I couldn't find the women, the addicts, and all who shiver. Cause they'd rather stay outside than wither. In a communal shelter due to rape or something sicker. 6. When you were gifted a building to overwinter. The police, they didn't get it, and they came to you bitter.
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	They threw in the windows, while hearing you whimper. Putting you bank on the streets, “you unlawful sinner”. Refrain (x2)	
10/08/2024: during Ronja’s straatwandeling (The Hague)	On Ronja’s straatwandeling, a tour in The Hague that narrates her past experiences of being homeless in The Hague as a woman, I started crying when she told me about her father being killed by police violence. He had been homeless himself, and refused to get up from a bench and keep on walking when a policy agent told him to do so. After physical contact and further refusal, the man was put in a headlock and died from suffocation. Ronja, as a young girl, narrated how she saw her father’s death repeatedly being broadcasted on TV. When asked if I needed to stop and go away for a moment by Ronja, I waved a ‘no’ and remained silent, diverting my gaze.	- I was overcome by emotion; my crying came out of nowhere for myself. I thought about the injustice of it all, linking it back to the judicial court case of George Floyd’s death and the social movements that it instigated, as well as to Ronja’s past of becoming homeless and distrustful of police and other ‘officials’ herself; the latter should be helping homeless persons, and observing the opposite made me angry and hopeless for systematic change. - However, I was not allowing myself to be totally vulnerable and be on an equal footing with Ronja, dismissing her with a ‘waving’ gesture and diverting my gaze when I got ‘too’ emotional. Instead, I could have let my guards down and returned some of her generosity in being vulnerable, but I did not.
09/2024: walking in the city centre of Copenhagen	It has been a few days since I arrived in Copenhagen for my third semester within the framework of 4CITIES, and I do notice way less homeless people than in Brussels or Vienna. I wonder why that is, and start searching on the Internet for possible reasons: apparently, ‘camping’ is forbidden in the city centre. According to some authors, this is an implicit way to keep homeless out of the city centre. A few months later, I see	I have never perceived Scandinavia as being without any problems, but I always assumed that Scandinavian cities were better at ‘hiding’ challenges of urban precarity under a ‘cloak’ of universally <i>designed</i> (but how does it express itself in an <i>operationalized</i> manner?) care. This seems especially pressing in light of recent neo liberalized restructurings of welfare states in Europe; Copenhagen itself is characterized by a large presence of multinational corporations and investors, including their advertisements in

	homeless people in the municipality of Frederiksberg, an autonomous commune within the Copenhagen urban region.	public space, which looks quite 'neoliberal' to me. At the same time, I do not want to jump to any unnuanced conclusions: the extensive welfare states of Scandinavian countries <i>does</i> reduce urban precarity significantly, thereby rendering it more implicit as well.
10/2024: volunteer work at Grace Kbh , a café where homeless people receive breakfast and lunch for free in the aesthetics of a 'normal' café (Copenhagen)	During my volunteer shift at Grace Kbh, I prepare breakfast and serve it from the counter to 'the clients'. Before the café opens up, and the two other volunteers and I are preparing the breakfast, multiple people sit against the window outside and knock thereon, waiting to be let in. The head volunteer signals that it is not time yet, and that they should wait. When the café opens up, people keep coming in and out for hours on end; there is no 'quiet moment'. Most 'clients' – often speaking English instead of Danish to communicate with each other and the volunteers – try to make a friendly conversation, asking my name and where I am from. One 'client' gruffs at me and seems annoyed when I insist on putting his food on his plate myself – as I was ordered to by the head volunteer. When seeing this, the head volunteer takes over, stating that the client in question can be 'difficult'. At the end of the shift, the head volunteer tells me that approximately 150 clients came by.	- The head volunteer and the clients enabled me to have a comfortable and friendly encounter with urban precarity. When potential tensions presented themselves (i.e., one of the 'clients' gruffs at me), the head volunteer removed me from that situation. However, I did feel uncomfortable when 'clients' were left waiting in the cold before 'opening times', with only a thin glass separating us from each other, while our mutual sight of each other was constantly present. - It was interesting to see the urban precarity of Copenhagen, which is otherwise not explicitly visible, at least, in public space. I learned that it is mostly non-Danish speakers that are precarious in Copenhagen, thus making me wonder about racist immigration and welfare state policies, especially in light of the Ghetto Tours (i.e., a 'poverty tour' in Copenhagen, dealing with themes of state-led racism) that I went on with some of my classmates and teachers.

10/2024: sitting on a bus that drives from Frederiksberg to Østerbro (Copenhagen)	I look out the bus window and see a mattress in front of a shop window. Two people are laying on the mattress, and one of them seems to wave to me. I smile.	I don't know if the wave was intended towards me, but I feel like they could be one of 'the clients' at Grace Kbh (see supra observation) who potentially recognizes me and greets me. It fills me with warm feelings.
11/2024: walking through Strøget (Copenhagen)	When walking in the city centre or sitting down on a bench, I always notice people going through the public bins, searching for pant in order to collect pant money. This time, I'm walking through Strøget, the main – and heavily touristified – shopping street of Copenhagen centre, while explaining my current master's thesis topic to my aunt, who is visiting me.	/
12/11/2024: meet-up with Julie, guide of Gadens Stemmer, at café in Copenhagen	After going on a Gadens Stemmer tour, I asked Julie, the guide, if I could contact her afterwards within the framework of my master's thesis. She agreed to this, and I arranged to meet up for an interview. At a local café that she proposed, we talked. However, there was too much noise to audio record the conversation, and I also prioritized building rapport first instead of letting her sign an informed consent sheet and delving into interview questions immediately. Thus, infra, I paraphrased some elements of our conversation. - A lot of schools go on Gadens Stemmer tours, which makes Julie feel hopeful: she could potentially play a role	- I interviewed Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak (see supra 'poverty tour') digitally, and due to my short stay in The Hague within the framework of a three-day visit, I did not feel like we had established a relationship. This made me feel uncomfortable, since interviewing became a mere activity of extraction of information, instead of benefitting Ronja equally. Thus, in Copenhagen and Vienna, I focused on building rapport first. However, I do feel a continued tension between academic ethical standards (e.g., the signage of informed consent sheets at first contact) and building genuine human relations that do serve research conduct and findings in the long run (i.e., the more trust, the more (profound) insights participants are willing to share).

	in preventing future addictions. The children, in contrast to the adults, also surprise her with certain questions, thereby disrupting what is 'normal' or 'obvious': for example, when remarking that burning aluminium foil for drug usage is toxic. - Julie has made the tour herself with the help of the organisation of Gadens Stemmer. She gets a fixed annual monthly pay, regardless of having many tours per month (i.e. in summer) or not. - During the tour itself, it was important to mention for Julie that 'even' someone like her, coming from a 'good family', could get addicted. When I mentioned the role of Danish drinking culture in social peer pressure and thus getting kids addicted – thereby going beyond individualized factors –, Julie said that she had not thought about this prior.	- The educational role of 'poverty tourism' is highlighted, but here, it seems to serve prevention instead of offering a socio-political, questioning narrative of current social orders (e.g., existing policy-making regarding addiction, drinking culture). The one is not worth 'less' than the other, but they merely serve different goals. At the same time, the tour participants themselves can bring in a more questioning function of Gadens Stemmer tours. - In contrast to the rumours that I heard about SHADES TOURS (unfortunately, I could not confirm, nor deny any of these, since SHADES TOURS was not reachable for an interview due to a busy schedule), Gadens Stemmer seems to pay their employees in such a way that they are able to have a consistent level of personal welfare for decent human living, irrespective of the number of tours that they lead each month.
12/2024: buying an exemplar of Hus Forbi near the Nørrebro train/metro station	I bought an exemplar of Hus Forbi, a local newspaper about homelessness in Copenhagen, from three sellers (a woman and two men) standing outside a Netto supermarket near Nørrebro metro/train station. The woman was employed by Hus Forbi, and one of the guys was visibly intoxicated. I initiated conversation and explained that my interest was	Perhaps, the intoxicated man tried to 'play' a power game with me, by asking me for change when I had just sold an exemplar of Hus Forbi for double the price, and by offering me his hand after spitting in it. Up until now, I still do not know how to interpret it, or how to feel about it. In contrast to other 'games' of manipulating my feelings (e.g., by starting to fake cry, asking supposedly for directions to engage with me and open up an opportunity to

	sparked after seeing sellers of Hus Forbi on multiple occasions, and that I was an exchange student from Belgium in Denmark. The woman responded that the newspaper is unfortunately only in Danish, but I stressed that I still wanted to buy an exemplar, and that I would translate it via Internet. I gave them 100 dkk for the paper, while it only costs 50 dkk. One of the men offered me change, but he did not have the exact amount, to which I responded that he could keep the total amount. Then, the intoxicated man asked me for change, to which the other man responded that he should not ask for change after I had just bought a newspaper from them. At the end of the conversation, we introduced ourselves and said our names, to which the intoxicated man offered me his hand to shake it. My friends, who were standing nearby and observing it, told me afterwards that he had spit in his hand beforehand. I did not notice, and shook his hand. Afterwards, when walking away with my friends, I disinfected my hand.	ask for money), I do not feel as personally wronged. I wonder why that is the case. Perhaps, he did not 'lie' about the existence of power dynamics, but acknowledged it and acted on it in a very explicit, visibly 'cheeky' manner, which made me appreciate him.
02/2025: on the metro in Madrid	Multiple times now, I have encountered people 'begging' in the metro. They enter the wagons, and go around with lollipops for sale. Street musicians as well go into the wagons and blast their music through speakers, expecting you to pay afterwards.	I am annoyed at this practice. Inside the metro wagon, you cannot get away from 'them'; the only thing you can do to avoid confrontation is diverting your gaze, increasing the volume on your earbuds, and gluing your attention to your phone or staring off into the distance. To me, it is rude that you do not allow people to engage in their own time and place, but at the same time,

		sitting 'passively' at the side of a street – which is the most usual way of begging – also does not seem effective in getting any money.
04/2025: at supermarket 'Lidl' in Fuencarral-El Pardo neighbourhood of Madrid	I walk around the neighbourhood of Fuencarral-El Pardo, at the outskirts of Madrid, and see a woman with a trolley in front of me. She stops before the Lidl. I enter the Lidl, and do my grocery shopping. When I go outside, the woman is sitting on the floor next to the entrance/exit of Lidl, saying "ola" to me. I say "ola" back, and return home with my groceries. The week after, I go back to the Lidl, and she is sitting there on her knees, moving her body back and forward when someone enters or exits the store. I walk past quickly and don't make any eye contact both when entering and exiting the store to avoid interaction.	I am annoyed and slightly repulsed at the sight of her sitting there, and putting up 'an act' of suffering (i.e., moving back and forth and sitting on her knees, instead of taking on a more comfortable position; I saw beggars in Brussels doing this too) towards grocery shoppers in a relatively quiet and family-oriented neighbourhood of Madrid: beggars 'shouldn't' be <i>here</i> , but in the touristic city centre. I don't expect to be confronted and emotionally manipulated when doing my weekly, mundane grocery shopping. I don't want to be reminded of the inequality and injustice of which I am a part in 'my own time'.
02/05/2025: reflection while sitting at a table on a restaurant's terrace, located at a pedestrianized intersection in Alicante	"I'm in Alicante, eating a relatively cheap – and, perhaps inevitably, plainly-tasting - pasta ragù alla bolognese. Seated at a table for one in the middle of a busy pedestrianized crossroads, I observe those who pass me by, stop, turn, and call for one another, and, eventually, continue along their way. I'm in a place where I don't want to be, wondering what I am doing here, to what matters. The day before, I slept in a four-star hotel; this morning, I threw my towels together on a heap on the floor, for the cleaning – persons or personnel – to be picked up. While I'm sitting here – listening in on a conversation in English about nearby places to visit and Spain being "locked in time" –, an 'I'm sorry, excuse me' reaches my ears. I look up, meeting the eyes of a young man my age. He is carrying a reusable shopping bag around his right shoulder and holds out his hand. I'm lowering my gaze to look at what he's holding. 'Do you have-', 'No, I'm sorry', I interrupt him, and I	

abruptly shift my gaze and attention back to my plate. I signal the conversation has ended, so he unsuccessfully attempts his attempt again with my fellow diners on the terrace, closing his fingers around the eurocents in his palm before taking his leave.

I'm a bit annoyed at his rudeness, at his breach of the implicit "contract". 'How dare he ask me this while I'm eating?' / have not asked for any disturbance, not here, not now.

While I'm writing this, another man – middle-aged, this time – wanders around the outskirts of the tables, looking a little lost while trying to capture one of our gazes. I meet his and repeat the same hollow words with the same apologetic smile plastered on my face. Then, I pay for my meal, and I take my leave as well into the streets of Alicante."

F. INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION⁹⁰

Written informed consent (IC) for participatory observations during Wiener Nimmerland-tours, acquired from those who booked the tours⁹¹



INFORMATION LETTER AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: The creation of meanings through guided walking tours on themes of precarity

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH STUDY:

Between April 2024 and May 2025, this research¹ explores the practice of guided walking tours on themes of precarity, i.e. persistent insecurity or uncertainty such as homelessness and addiction, and the meanings that take shape therein in the context of Vienna and Copenhagen. Tours on these topics and research regarding their emergence in Europe are relatively recent. Moreover, tours that focus on precarity are expected to create a different perspective on Vienna and Copenhagen – both known as substantial welfare state capitals – than a 'typical' touristic activity usually does – here, 'touristic' refers to anyone, including locals, who visits places in a different way than they 'normally' would. This alternative story emerges in interaction between the tour and its audience.

Before your tour took place, you were asked via the email address of Wiener Nimmerland's office if I could accompany you, while observing and conducting small interviews with you and your group members. You responded confirmatively to this, however, I would like to validate it via the form on the next page.

One-on-one informal interviews between the stations dealt with the thoughts and feelings that the tour invoked. Observations do not refer to any individual persons, but were conducted on a group-level basis in interaction with the guide and the tour. Names or any personal information – both in a written or (audio)visual manner – were not gathered. The written data of observations and interviews that I collected in my notebook are anonymized and will only serve the purpose of the master's thesis. This notebook will be safely kept in a locked or hidden drawer that is only accessible to me during and after completion of the research. The master's thesis will be submitted in May 2025; you can withdraw your consent at any time without any consequences before the submission deadline. Other public output besides from the master's thesis is not planned; if this would become discussable, this will happen in dialogue with you and only after a new informed consent is given by you.

If you are a teacher, you 'speak' on behalf of your pupils, either giving or not giving informed consent for both you and your pupils by filling out the following form. This decision should be taken with the knowledge of and in dialogue with your pupils, with the best intentions on behalf of your pupils.

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⁹⁰ Every participant has received an information letter, either verbally and/or written. This information letter has been adapted in accordance with 1) the type of data collected (e.g., interviews, participatory observations), 2) in case of legal minors and their adult representative(s) (e.g., school groups as tour participants), 3) changing research objectives and questions throughout the research process, and 4) the local university that I attended at the time (e.g., mentioning of University of Vienna in case of Wiener Nimmerland- and SHADES TOURS-tours; mentioning of University of Copenhagen in case of Ghetto Tours- and Gadens Stemmer-tours) to enable trust building with local guides and tour participants.

⁹¹ In addition to a passive informed consent, obtained through an information 'letter' (formatted into an email message) sent via the official email address of *Wiener Nimmerland*. A self-introductory moment at commencement of each tour also offered opportunities for informed consent, although I noticed discrepancies with regard to legal minors as tour participants (see supra research limitations).

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM:

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read 'Explanation of research study' and have had details of the study explained to me. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study until its completion in May 2025 without giving a reason for my withdrawal or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 4. I agree to provide information to the researcher under the condition that nor personal information (e.g. name, contact information), neither pictures or (audio)visual material of me will be used in the study itself. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in 'Explanation of research study'. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 6. I consent to the information collected, namely observations and interviews during the tour, for the purposes of this research study only. | ☒ | ☐ |

Chiara Schobesberger

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: 26.6.24

Participant's Name: Chiara Schobesberger

Researcher's Name: Stouten Elien

Researcher's Signature:

Elien Stouten

Researcher's contact details:

Email address: elienstouten@hotmail.be

Mobile telephone number: 0032 489 20 72 84

INFORMATION LETTER AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: The creation of meanings through guided walking tours on themes of precarity

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH STUDY:

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Before your tour took place, you were asked via the email address of Wiener Nimmerland's office if I could accompany you, while observing and conducting small interviews with you and your group members. Afterwards, you were invited in the same manner for a reflective post interview. You responded confirmatively to both the observations and small interviews during the tour, as well as a post interview after the tour, however, I would like to validate this via the form on the next page.

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The post interview differs from the above data processing and management description: an audio recording will be made and transcribed for research purposes only. This recording will be deleted after submission of the master's thesis in May 2025. You can be mentioned by name or anonymized in the master's thesis, depending on your personal preference stated and recorded at the beginning of the interview.

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Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

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| 1. I have read 'Explanation of research study' and have had details of the study explained to me. | ☒ | ☐ |
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| 5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in 'Explanation of research study'. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 6. I consent to the information collected, namely observations and interviews during the tour, and a reflective interview after the tour, for the purposes of this research study only. | ☒ | ☐ |

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: 27.6.2024

Participant's Name: _____

Franz Günter Frouder

Researcher's Name: Stouten Elien

Researcher's Signature: _____

Elien Stouten

Researcher's contact details:

Email address: elienstouten@hotmail.be

Mobile telephone number: 0032 489 20 72 84

INFORMATION LETTER AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: The creation of meanings through guided walking tours on themes of precarity

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH STUDY:

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Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Participant's Name: _____

Researcher's Name: Stouten Elien

Researcher's Signature:

Elien Stouten

Researcher's contact details:

Email address: elienstouten@hotmail.be

Mobile telephone number: 0032 489 20 72 84

INFORMATION LETTER AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: The creation of meanings through guided walking tours on themes of precarity

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH STUDY:

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Participant's Signature: Manuel Roth Date: 03/07/24

Participant's Name: Manuel Roth

Researcher's Name: Stouten Elien

Researcher's Signature:

Elie Stouten

Researcher's contact details:

Email address: elienstouten@hotmail.be

Mobile telephone number: 0032 489 20 72 84



INFORMATION LETTER AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: The creation of meanings through guided walking tours on themes of precarity

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH STUDY:

Between April 2024 and May 2025, this research¹ explores the practice of guided walking tours on themes of precarity, i.e. persistent insecurity or uncertainty such as homelessness and addiction, and the meanings that take shape therein in the context of Vienna and Copenhagen. Tours on these topics and research regarding their emergence in Europe are relatively recent. Moreover, tours that focus on precarity are expected to create a different perspective on Vienna and Copenhagen – both known as substantial welfare state capitals – than a 'typical' touristic activity usually does – here, 'touristic' refers to anyone, including locals, who visits places in a different way than they 'normally' would. This alternative story emerges in interaction between the tour and its audience.

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PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM:

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- | | YES | NO |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
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| 5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in 'Explanation of research study'. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 6. I consent to the information collected, namely observations and interviews during the tour, and a reflective interview after the tour, for the purposes of this research study only. | ☒ | ☐ |

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Participant's Name: _____

Researcher's Name: Stouten Elien

Researcher's Signature: _____

Elieen Stouten

Researcher's contact details:

Email address: elienstouten@hotmail.be

Mobile telephone number: 0032 489 20 72 84

Audio recorded verbal informed consent for interview with Lilian, participant of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour (11/07/2024)



IC_Lillian_11072024.
mp3

Written informed consent for interview with Ronja Bruijns-Shoblak, guide at Ronja's straatwandeling (30/08/2024)



INFORMATION LETTER AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: The socio-political educational potential of guided walking tours on themes of precarity

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH STUDY:

Between April 2024 and May 2025, this research¹ explores the practice of guided walking tours on themes of precarity, i.e. persistent insecurity or uncertainty such as homelessness, and the meanings that take shape therein in the context of Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen. Tours on these topics and research regarding their emergence in welfare states of Europe are relatively recent. Moreover, tours that focus on precarity are expected to create a different perspective on Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen – all are known as substantial welfare state capitals –, and the precarity that takes place therein than a 'typical' touristic activity usually does – here, 'touristic' refers to anyone, including locals, who visits places in a different way than they 'normally' would. As such, these tours could function as an educational practice that contributes to an alternative social and political narrative regarding precarity (in these places or beyond). This alternative story emerges in interaction between the tour and its audience.

Your interview contributes to this research. An audio recording will be made and transcribed for research purposes only. This recording and transcription will be kept in a safe digital folder and deleted after oral defence of the master's thesis in July 2025. You can be mentioned by name or anonymized in the master's thesis, depending on your personal preference stated and recorded at the beginning of the interview.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM:

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

- | | YES | NO |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read 'Explanation of research study' and have had details of the study explained to me. | ☒ | ☐ |
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| 4. I agree to provide information to the researcher under the condition that nor personal information (e.g. name, contact information), neither pictures or (audio)visual material of me will be used in the study itself, although an audio recording of the interview will be made – and afterwards deleted – for research purposes only and I can be mentioned by name as an interviewee depending on my personal preference regarding anonymization, as stated during the interview. | ☒ | ☐ |

¹ This master's thesis is conducted as a legally full-degree student in Urban Studies at the Universität Wien, within the framework of an Erasmus Mundus Joint master, called [4CITIES](#).

5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in 'Explanation of research study'. ☒ ☐

6. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study only. ☒ ☐

Participant's Signature:



Date: _02-09-2024_____

Participant's Name: Ronja Bruijns

Researcher's Name: Stouten Elien

Researcher's Signature:



Researcher's contact details:

Email address: elienstouten@hotmail.be

Mobile telephone number: 0032 489 20 72 84



INFORMATION LETTER AND INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: The creation of meanings through guided walking tours on themes of precarity

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH STUDY:

Between April 2024 and May 2025, this research¹ explores the practice of guided walking tours on themes of precarity, i.e. persistent insecurity or uncertainty that is often stigmatized (e.g. socio-spatial precarity being termed a 'ghetto'), and the meanings that take shape therein in the context of Vienna (Austria), The Hague (The Netherlands) and Copenhagen (Denmark). Tours on these topics and research regarding their emergence in welfare states of Europe are relatively recent. Moreover, tours that focus on precarity are expected to create a different perspective on Vienna, The Hague and Copenhagen – all are known as substantial welfare state capitals –, and the precarity that takes place therein than a 'typical' touristic activity usually does – here, 'touristic' refers to anyone, including locals, who visits places in a different way than they 'normally' would. As such, these tours could function as an educational practice that contributes to an alternative social and political narrative regarding precarity (in these places or beyond).

This alternative story emerges in interaction between the tour and its audience. Your interview contributes to this research. An audio recording will be made and transcribed for research purposes only. This recording and transcription will be kept in a safe digital folder and deleted after oral defence of the master's thesis in July 2025. You can be mentioned by name or anonymized in the master's thesis, depending on your personal preference stated and recorded at the beginning of the interview.

INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM:

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

- | | YES | NO |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read 'Explanation of research study' and have had details of the study explained to me. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point. | ☒ | ☐ |
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¹ This master's thesis is conducted as a legally full-degree student in Urban Studies, within the framework of a two-year Erasmus Mundus Joint master, called 4CITIES. From September 2024 until January 2025, this master's programme takes place at the University of Copenhagen.

study itself, although an audio recording of the interview will be made – and afterwards deleted – for research purposes only and I can be mentioned by name as an interviewee depending on my personal preference regarding anonymization, as stated during the interview.

5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in 'Explanation of research study'. ☒ ☐
6. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study only. ☒ ☐

Interviewee's Signature: _____

Date: 12/11/2024

Interviewee's Name: _____

Researcher's Name: Stouten Elien

Researcher's Signature: _____

Researcher's contact details:

Email address: elienstouten@hotmail.be

Mobile telephone number: 0032 489 20 72 84

Audio recorded verbal informed consent for interview with Julie, guide at Gadens Stemmer (24/03/2025)



IC_Julie Gadens
Stemmer_24032025-

Written (by José Bucio) and audio recorded verbal informed consent for focus group discussion with Adriana, José Bucio, Madeline, Rozalia Sos, Shellyn Fortuna and Soledad, participants of a Wiener Nimmerland- and Ghetto Tours-tour (31/03/2025)



INFORMATION LETTER AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: Seeking out poverty in places of affluence. Understanding the rise and particular expressions of guided walking tours on urban precarity in European welfare state capitals.

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH STUDY:

Between February 2024 and August 2025, this research study¹ explores the recent emergence and particular expressions of guided walking tours on themes of urban precarity or persistent uncertainty related to urban challenges – such as homelessness, addiction, housing insecurity and inadequacy, squalor and street violence – in three distinct European welfare state 'capitals' of Vienna (AT), The Hague (i.e. the political but not official capital of the Netherlands), and Copenhagen (DK). These guided walking tours can be framed as part of 'poverty tourism', or tourism focusing on themes of urban precarity. However, up until more or less 10 years ago, poverty tourism did not yet exist in European welfare states. Under urban welfare regimes, urban precarity is expressed more implicitly, which is expected to influence the emergence of new manners and formats of *touring* urban precarity as well. While poverty tourism has sometimes been critiqued for being voyeuristic, at other times, it has been praised for being potentially transformative to both guides and tour participants – in both worldviews and subsequent actions for positive local societal change.

Your experience as a tour participant of one or two poverty tourism initiatives, namely Wiener Nimmerland by Martin (Vienna) and/or Ghetto Tours by a collective of Muslim youth (Copenhagen), is highly valuable for advancing currently limited insights on this recently emergent phenomenon and its voyeuristic, respectively transformatory potential. Research participation entails discussion in a focus group or collective interview with other tour participants. An audio recording hereof will be made and transcribed for research purposes only. This recording and transcription will be kept in a safe digital folder on OneDrive via double key encryption and deleted after oral defence of the research study (the latest in September 2025). You can be mentioned by (first and/or sur)name or anonymized in the study's written record, depending on your personal preference stated and recorded before commencement of the focus group discussion.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM:

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read 'Explanation of research study' and have had details of the study explained to me. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study until the submission of the written record of the study (i.e. the master's thesis, which will be submitted at the latest in August 2025) without giving a reason for my withdrawal, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences for my future treatment by the researcher. | ☒ | ☐ |
| 4. I agree to provide information to the researcher under the condition | ☒ | ☐ |

¹ This master's thesis is conducted within the framework of a two-year Erasmus Mundus Joint master program in Urban Studies – called [4CITIES](#) –, taking place from September 2023 until September 2025.

that nor personal information (e.g. name, contact information), neither pictures or (audio)visual material of me will be used in the written record of the study. However, I understand that an audio recording of the focus group discussion will be made for research purposes only; this recording will be deleted after submission of the written master's thesis.

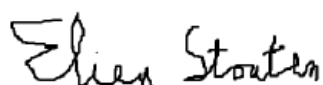
5. I agree to the mentioning of 1) my first name, 2) surname, 3) first name and surname, or 4) a pseudonym in the written record of the study, as collaboratively discussed and agreed upon with the researcher before commencement of the focus group discussion. I understand that my answer will be audio recorded before commencement of the focus group discussion to prevent any unclarity, confusion or dispute about my preference afterwards. However, I can still inform the researcher about changing preferences until submission of the written master's thesis (the latest in August 2025), which the researcher abjures to adhere to. ☒ ☐
6. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in 'Explanation of research study'. ☒ ☐
7. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study only. I understand that I can consult my information at any time, including after submission of the written master's thesis. ☒ ☐

Participant's Signature: _____  Date: 26/03/2025

Participant's Name: José Bucio

Researcher's Name: Stouten Elien

Researcher's Signature:



Researcher's contact details:

Email address: elienstouten@hotmail.be

Mobile telephone number: 0032 489 20 72 84



IC_Adriana-José
Bucio-Madeline-Rozz

Audio recorded verbal informed consent for interview with Nikita, participant of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour (11/04/2025)



IC

Nikita_11042025.m4a

Audio recorded verbal informed consent for interview with Koen and Patricia, participants of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour and Ronja's straatwandeling (22/04/2025)



IC_Koen and

Patricia_22042025.m4a

Audio recorded verbal informed consent for interview with Bert and Emilienne, participants of a Wiener Nimmerland-tour (26/04/2025)



IC_Bert and

Emilienne_26042025.m4a