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The perpetual chase of banality:
Performing long-term new urban tourism in Rotterdam

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Preface

This Master thesis is the cherry on top of the interests that have grown upon me in my student career. Being able to combine a fascination for tourism and mobilities with the ever-dynamic urban environment in this study makes me extremely thankful. I would like to thank BRAND The Urban Agency for allowing me to work in and for urban planning and place branding projects, thereby playing a key role in opening up my eyes to the topic. Most prominently, however, I would like to thank them for their continuous understanding during the research process and support when it was needed.

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Lastly and most importantly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my sweet grandmother Do, who could not beat the corona virus and only missed the delivery of this final thesis by a few days. She was a proud Rotterdammer who made me feel connected to Rotterdam from the start. Knowing her unconditional pride of and love for her grandchildren, I am confident the results of this thesis will honour hers, as well as Rotterdam's pride.

THE PERPETUAL CHASE OF BANALITY: PERFORMING LONG-TERM NEW URBAN TOURISM IN ROTTERDAM

ABSTRACT

As an emergent way of doing tourism that is rapidly changing urban spaces, the phenomenon of new urban tourism has not been clearly demarcated before in academia. Whereas previous research has set the base for new urban tourists' characteristics and behaviour, this study aims to further define the notion of new urban tourism and way in which places are constructed by its tourists through their performances. The main research question provides the structure for this thesis and is as follows: 'How is place image mutually constructed through long-term new urban tourists' performances and tourism structures created by professionals in the field?'. Through use of a qualitative case study of Rotterdam involving twelve semi-structured interviews with new urban tourists and three with professionals familiar with the city's tourism policies, supplemented by content analysis of three policy documents, thematic analysis of the data resulted in four main themes. Firstly, Rotterdam's policies show how frontrunners and long-term new urban tourists share common ground yet slightly deviate from new urban tourism. The second theme shows how this long-term tourist group fits in with the new urban tourist typology. Yet, they are more likely to construct place image built on constructive authenticity and are heavily influenced by liminality. Thirdly, the activities through which long-term new urban tourists construct authenticity show how they continuously search to live like a local and explore, perform reflexive behaviour and show first signs of a reaction to new urban tourism through pomposity, but mostly highly value immersing and connecting with a place and its people. This connection starts with encounters, comparable to Urry and Larsen's (2011) Tourist Gaze 3.0, but then further solidifies through understanding a place, establishing emotional- and most prominently personal connection, calling for a possible Tourist Gaze 4.0. Fourthly, it is portrayed whereas short-term visitors form a place image based on front stage behaviour, long-term new urban tourists engage in immersion with the back stages, which allow for creation of a lasting sense of authenticity. While place branding in its traditional, direct form – being the use of a marketing slogan – is still engaged with by institutions, new urban tourists indicate to prefer branding through an indirect and interpersonal approach like word-of-mouth branding. This supports the main argument that while there can be mutual awareness in the construction of place image, a new urban tourism experience and place image is mostly constructed through new urban tourists' own activities and construction of authenticity, which is strengthened and added to in the case of long-term tourism.

KEYWORDS: *New urban tourism, Liminality, Place image, Place branding, Performance*

Table of contents

ABSTRACT	3
1. Preparing the journey: Introduction	5
2. Theoretical framework.....	9
2.1. Authenticity.....	9
2.2. New urban tourism	11
2.3. Long-term visitors as tourists.....	12
2.4. The performance turn in new urban tourism.....	14
2.5. Place image and place branding.....	15
3. Methodology.....	18
4. Performing long-term new urban tourism in Rotterdam	23
4.1. New urban tourists in Rotterdam: frontrunners in the long run	23
4.1.1. Rotterdam's frontrunners	23
4.1.2. The long-term new urban tourist	26
4.2. Long-term new urban tourists and their construction of authenticity in a liminal space	27
4.2.1. Liminality: the blank space of long-term new urban tourism	28
4.2.2. Authenticity for long-term new urban tourists	31
4.3. Long-term new urban tourists and their performance of new urban tourism	36
4.3.1. Living like a local	36
4.3.2. Exploring.....	38
4.3.3. Behaving reflexively	40
4.3.4. Immersing	41
4.3.5. Connecting	43
4.4. Understanding new urban tourism in the formation of Rotterdam's place image	45
4.4.1. New urban tourists' place image of Rotterdam	46
4.4.2. The role of place branding in attracting long-term new urban tourists	49
5. The final act: New urban tourism in its context	54
6. References	59
7. Appendices.....	65
Appendix A. Data overview.....	65
Appendix B. Interview guide	69
Appendix C. Coding list.....	71

1. Preparing the journey: Introduction

Lunchtime in Rotterdam, 14 May 1940. The city's compact core was filled with people doing business and making their way across the narrow alleys of the historic centre. The many bridges along the canals and characteristic Dutch building style decorated the heart of the city, swarming with liveliness. Then, the alarms went off and within minutes a rain of fire instantly destroyed the heart of the rapidly expanded port city of Rotterdam. The irreconcilable damage accompanying the bombardment during World War II led the way to a forced urban renaissance in the decades after. With many open spaces and entire neighbourhoods turned to rubble, the city saw the opportunity of starting anew. By keeping only a handful of the city's old buildings, the traditional Dutch cityscape of canals, canal houses and the characteristic facades was done away with, and new architectural styles and ideologies were given a chance to grow. As a result, Rotterdam reused its rubble to create new styles with an outlook to the future. The architectural styles the city centre now features are a physical portrayal of this modernistic outlook of the city.

This origin story lies at the core of everything Rotterdam is and advocates nowadays, according to Maarten Suijker, senior tourism policymaker at the municipality of Rotterdam. The place identity - the contemporary core that is built around this story – is named 'Rotterdam DNA' by the municipality and organisations in charge of transmitting its DNA to tourists. This DNA characterises Rotterdam as young, modern and unconventional, a no-nonsense city with a future-oriented outlook (Rotterdam Partners, 2019). It thereby attracts a different type of tourism. Especially in recent years, Rotterdam has seen high growth rates in the number of tourists visiting the city. It experienced its largest increase in 2018, with a growth of 15% amounting to a total of 2.1 million visitors (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2020). This new popularity has made Rotterdam less familiar with 'traditional' tourism practices as known in world cities like Paris, London, or the Dutch equivalent of Amsterdam. Instead, the city still enjoys the luxurious position of being able to experiment with tourism policies and mobilities to fit the tourist of today (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2020).

In its active pursuit of attracting tourists who match the city's DNA, the city seems to be focusing on a specific group of people who do tourism differently than what one would regard as stereotypical tourist behaviour. That is, they are targeting tourists who actively search for 'off-the-beaten-path' experiences rather than organised trips (Larsen, 2020; Maitland, 2008). As it forms a contrast with earlier types of tourism such as package tours and cruises, this phenomenon is named 'new urban tourism' and is both a product of and reaction to overtourism (Koens & Postma, 2016; Stors, Frisch, Sommer & Stoltenberg, 2019). That is, new urban tourism is concerned with

chasing 'off the beaten track' experiences and a more profound awareness of the influence of the new urban tourist on their surroundings (Munt, 1994; Larsen, 2020). Indeed, its popularity seems to have been growing since the start of the 21st century, with increased acceleration in recent years (Stors et al., 2019). However, due to the increased individualisation of travel experiences and its position as relatively new phenomenon, new urban tourism remains a fluid concept that cannot be pinpointed easily (Stors et al., 2019).

This study aims to understand and explore the dynamics between long-term new urban tourists in Rotterdam and tourism structures created by professionals in the field by addressing the main question at hand, being: *How is place image mutually constructed through long-term new urban tourists' performances and tourism structures created by professionals in the field?*

This question is examined through an analysis of four corresponding dimensions. Firstly, an introductory level addressing Rotterdam specifically is examined by establishing how tourism is engaged with from a policy perspective and introducing the long-term new urban tourist in Rotterdam. Secondly, the position of the long-term new urban tourist is investigated through analysis of their liminal position and their conceptualisation of authenticity. Thirdly, the use of performance theory in analysis establishes how they actively construct authenticity of their experience. Fourthly, the construction of place image is analysed by incorporating and comparing place image formation among long-term new urban tourists and official institutions, as well as analysing how both groups engage with place branding.

Understanding its workings will help in the development of urban areas, as cities are increasingly realising the importance of attracting and spreading these types of tourists specifically to avoid overtourism such as in the overused examples of Venice, Barcelona or Amsterdam (Stors et al., 2019). This is often done through place branding. As a dynamic brand, place identity is continuously socially (re)constructed (Kavaratzis & Pedeliento, 2019). Yet, most literature on branding is from a policymaking approach. How place image can also be constructed through performances is only a fairly recent issue in tourism research (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Frenzel, 2019). As this is especially important in new urban tourism, existing analyses largely include a call for more insight into how new urban tourism ties in with performance theory (Amore, 2019; Stors et al., 2019).

As a novel way of conducting tourist activities, new urban tourism harbours the possibility to expand and change how future urban tourism takes place. Therefore, further delineation is essential in grasping the ambiguous workings of new urban tourism. This will not only aid in establishing a better understanding of tourists' behaviour, but it will also help organisations to efficiently adjust their policies. Especially understanding how this works for long-term international students, rather than the group of short-term visitors that most tourism research builds on, provides a different angle that will further solidify the position of new urban tourism in academic literature and will help

tourist-targeted organisations in strengthening and further differentiating their strategies and campaigns to this often-overlooked group. While new urban tourism largely relies on actions and impressions on an individual level, the role of organisations is at this point still unmissable in urban tourism. This study is therefore conducted from an analytic lens based on performance theory and examines how the influence of tourism organisations sinks through to the new urban tourist.

Previous research on new urban tourism has mainly focused on its manifestation in world cities like London and Paris, yet this is the exact space in which the added value of tourism is most marginal (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Maitland, 2008; Maitland, 2013). While the characteristics of new urban tourism have been pinned down in earlier studies, there is a call for empirical support of this conceptualisation to increase their depth and further delineate them (Stors et al., 2019). This research aims to further define and demarcate the concept of new urban tourism to solidify and diversify its position.

The manifestation of new urban tourism highly differs for each city as it is largely dependent on how existing urban structures allow for tourism (Stors et al., 2019). Yet, the urban space in which this touristification takes place is a topic that has only recently been proposed as being in dire need of studying (Stock, 2019). Supporting the delineation of new urban tourism, this thesis focuses on a case study of a city constantly reinventing itself: Rotterdam. As case study for this thesis, Rotterdam's experimental mentality makes the city the perfect playground to explore new urban tourism.

Through qualitative analysis of three policy documents indicating the strategic vision of Rotterdam on urban planning and tourism in the city and three qualitative interviews with professionals familiar with the organisation of Rotterdam's place image, a clear overview of the policy-making approach of tourism in Rotterdam is established. Yet, the main emphasis of this study is placed on capturing new urban tourists' perceptions and behaviour, which is investigated through twelve qualitative, semi-structured interviews with a group of snowball-sampled international students portraying characteristics of the new urban tourist and currently living, or previously having lived in Rotterdam for less than a year.

Having set the stage in this section, the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 2 introduces the new urban tourist and its related concepts and debates, along with the relevant theories of liminality and performance. The third chapter of this thesis concretises each topic and introduces the main setting of this study, being Rotterdam. With new urban tourists as main characters and professionals as important narrators, Chapter 4 presents the main results of the study. After introducing Rotterdam's policies on tourism and the notion of the frontrunner, the long-term tourist is introduced (4.1). Consequently, the unique position of the long-term tourist is analysed through examination of liminality and their construction of authenticity (4.2). The ways in

which they chase this new urban tourism form of authenticity in their own way is established in the third section of this chapter (4.3). These typologies are then combined into the manner in which the place image of Rotterdam is constructed by both long-term new urban tourists as well as official institutions (4.4). This chapter refers to the theoretical level throughout, leading up to the final act in chapter 5, which places all results back into context and suggests paths for further research.

2. Theoretical framework

This section describes the arguments, theories and debates underlying this study. With the main research topic – new urban tourism – at its centre, it is bordered by notions of authenticity, performance theory, and place branding. In contradiction to previous studies' focus on the short-term tourist, the position of international students as long-term new urban tourists and their liminal position is introduced too. This section will illustrate the interplay and ongoing debates for each concept.

2.1. Authenticity

At the core of any tourism experience lies the perpetual search of tourists for an authentic experience (Sharpley, 2018; Urry, 2002). What constitutes this authentic experience, however, may be different depending on the cultural and socio-economic background of each person. How tourists search for authenticity is highly personal, yet often led by a more general trend too. The way of thinking about these 'trends' has evolved into different ways of thinking over the past decades.

According to Boorstin (1962), tourists are intrinsically motivated to search for an inauthentic experience rather than an authentic one – that is, they are likely to follow the crowd. In doing so, they are one of many and it is therefore plausible they experience something catered on group level. MacCannell (1973) states how an authentic experience is solidified once an individual's authentic experience is acknowledged by others. He argues how intrinsic feelings of authenticity are arguably non-existent, as measuring authenticity involves comparison to other phenomena. As an addition to MacCannell's (1973) social realisation, Urry (1990) introduced the tourist gaze. Inspired by the Foucauldian dominating medical gaze, the tourist gaze is inflicted with ways in which tourists interact with and have the potential to objectify their host environment, named 'toured objects' (Urry, 1990; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Tourists' gazes therefore exert the power to objectify their experience and attribute value to it. The exact manner in which a person employs their tourist gaze influences their experience of authenticity, making both concepts intrinsically linked and the process constitutive of the entire tourism experience (Urry, 1990; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Contrasting with Urry (1990) and MacCannell (1973), Wang (1999) describes how the tourism experience and the toured objects both separately constitute authenticity of the tourism experience. In doing so, he defines how authenticity can be broken down in three classifications: objective, constructive and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity refers to tourists' search for real and undiscovered places (Boorstin, 1962; MacCannell, 1973), whereas constructive authenticity includes the contextual experience in which tourists position themselves within societies (Cohen, 1979). Both notions are involved with staged authenticity, introduced by MacCannell (1973) as experiences that

tourists perceive as taking place in 'real' social spaces, while these environments have been catered specifically for them. In other words, staged authenticity harbours the power to steer behaviour. Building on Goffman's (1959) front- and back stage dichotomy, he argues how what tourists perceive as real might not resemble the place's everyday society as closely. Classic examples include 'primitive culture tours' in which tourists witness local tribes' rituals appropriated to them, and places like Venice, where the idyllic Italian city has been drained from residents but retained its historical character that attracts millions of tourists each year.

As a contrasting third addition to this dichotomy, Wang (1999) introduced his idea of an existential authentic experience. Existential authenticity is a highly personal type of authenticity which is initiated by feelings and mobilised by the process of doing tourist activities. Resultingly, it is not necessarily time – or place-bound. Rather than replacing the two previous conceptualisations, existential authenticity thus serves as an addition to existing notions (Wang, 1999). This means the different types of authenticity can be present simultaneously. Along with the changes in tourism and academic literature, Urry and Larsen (2011) introduced the Tourist Gaze 3.0. This version of the tourist gaze allowed for consideration of a mutual gaze and the interaction between local and tourist as an important constituent of the tourism experience, which is one of the main topics of this study.

Yi, Fu, Yu, and Jiang (2018) built on this latest version and its associated types of authenticity by extending the concept to the notion of postmodern authenticity. It involves tourists' acknowledgement and acceptance of the staged authenticity of toured objects, their lack of acceptance of an objective definition and it is liminal in its experience (Pappalepore, Maitland & Smith, 2010). Adding to Wang's (1999) segmentation, performances can also constitute another type of authenticity. This performative authenticity takes place through authentication of emotional, affective or sensuous relation to a place (Knudsen & Waade, 2010, pp. 13). This means not only places themselves, as objects without 'feeling', can be experienced as authentic, but interactions and other subjective actions can also have a sense of authenticity to them. This is arguably especially important in new urban tourism, as its tourists do not necessarily seek places or people.

Building on existing conceptualisations, this research focuses on what long-term new urban tourists perceive as authentic and the ways in which they do this. As Stors et al. (2019) argue, authenticity does indeed steer behaviour, but this is not limited to the toured objects only. That is, tourists themselves can also alter their behaviour based on staged authenticity. This is what happens in new urban tourism, where tourists turn away from places they regard as 'fake' and search for less-known, everyday places instead (Maitland, 2008; Novy, 2014).

2.2. New urban tourism

The shifts in thinking about authenticity resonated with the manner in which urban tourism takes place. However, Stock (2019) identifies how urban tourism has become a concept that does not effectively capture the bigger touristification and especially the urbanisation process it is part of. Larsen (2020), building on earlier conceptualisations of this process by Roche (1992) and Maitland (2008; Maitland, 2013), conceptualised *new urban tourism* (hereafter defined interchangeably as such or as NUT) as a recently segmented form of tourism in recent studies on urban tourism. Perhaps in correspondence with one of its characteristics, however, new urban tourism has not been clearly defined and demarcated before. This study aims to do just that, by exploring what drives this group in their behaviour. This section lays out the recent developments and then moves on to define and ascribe characteristics to new urban tourism.

Contrasting with earlier waves of tourism, new urban tourism (NUT) is argued to grow organically, without a prompt by existing policymakers (Maitland & Newman, 2004). That is, unlike in other forms of urban tourism, new urban tourists arguably recognise the staged authenticity of traditional tourist places and therefore turn to places that exert another form of authenticity (Maitland, 2008; Maitland & Newman, 2004). In other words, it corresponds to tourists' increasing search for places and activities that are different from the modernist masses, identified as 'off the beaten track' tourism by Munt (1994). Indeed, Larsen (2020) describes how new urban tourism practices turn away from the traditional and often historical sights, to places where the new urban tourist can mix in with others. These new urban tourism places are constructed where local leisure activities and tourism purposes have become indistinguishable (Maitland, 2013).

New urban tourism seems to be of significance in recent urban developments, but there is still a discrepancy between policies and how it is performed by tourists. Roche (1992) was the first to identify how tourists were not blindly following policymakers' intentions, yet did not dive into the nature of the new urban tourist. Stors et al. (2019) described tourism practices as a process, rather than a mere phenomenon. In doing so, they highlight the active production of the tourism experience, through a continuous interplay between guest and host and increased blending of both groups in terms of mobility. Yet, Novy (2014) argues how these blurred boundaries extend further than just mobility and influence behaviour. This marks a departure point from earlier research on new urban tourism, which regarded the phenomenon as a given rather than something that is actively constructed.

The new urban tourist has been attributed multiple characteristics by previous literature. Maitland (2008) first described his conceptualisation of the 'urban explorer' as an adult, more experienced traveller, who has visited a place multiple times and often travels to visit friends and family. They are drawn by the qualities of a place and are looking for distinctiveness. This type of

tourist also makes use of their connections and existing networks in the city to decide on a place to stay and places to visit. They do this by constantly striving to live like a local for the duration of their touristic stay (Füller & Michel, 2014). To fulfill this strive, Wildish (2017) states new urban tourists arguably chase feeling of being at home by constructing their personal interpretation of feelings. This helps them to adjust to another place. Personal interaction and blending in with the neighbourhood is key in this sense. Mediatized encounters are thus not necessarily key in attracting tourists. Rather, it is about finding a personal connection (Stors et al., 2019).

New urban tourists are also argued to take up a reflexive stance, as they are seemingly aware of the staged authenticity of their tourism experience (Larsen, 2020). Larsen (2020) describes these tourists as 'highly sophisticated city users'. In doing so, he builds on Richards' and Wilson's (2004) notion of a 'cosmopolitan consuming class', which includes all city users including tourists, residents, as well as international students. That is, as new urban tourists portray a specific set of characteristics, they are often categorised as a city's *creative class* looking for distinctive features and high-quality experiences in aesthetics, arts, and nightlife. Additionally, he argues that the attractiveness of a place for new urban tourists is based on the 'standard' physical and cultural factors, but also through the appeal of consuming the landscape.

However, less is known about the specific aspects these tourists are looking for, and no further action than capturing the experience of new urban tourists themselves is taken. This leaves space for the role of policy in this matter. That is, as it is a growing phenomenon, the role of the new urban tourist is important for cities to acknowledge. However, as Ashworth and Page (2011) describe, new urban tourists pose a challenge to attract, keep and be tempted to return to the same place (pp. 9). This means more should be known about the new urban tourist to successfully attract this group.

Building on this discussion, then, new urban tourism can be defined as an organic process in which finding a 'back stage like' front stage within an urban setting is actively and continuously being chased, with special emphasis on personal contact and quality of places. As a product of postmodern tourism, the search for authenticity is at its core, but it is dependent on the context. Tourist perceptions are based on individual experiences and feelings rather than 'must-sees'. This definition will be explored and expanded in this research.

2.3. Long-term visitors as tourists

New urban tourism fits notions of classical tourism, being day visitors or city trippers, but interestingly is also constituted by tourists that stay for a longer period, thereby challenging the classical definition (Stors et al., 2019). Frenzel (2019) argues the effect of temporary visitors such as day visitors is not profound, as they will use, tell and write about these spaces, but do not actively

contribute to the creation of the place. Once people make their home in a certain place, however, he argues this leads to bigger contribution and involvement in places. This type of urban structuration is partly constituted by international students, whose everyday contributions to the urban environment portray a mix of touristic and residential purpose (Collins, 2010; Tran, Moore, & Shone, 2018).

This portrays international students as being in a grey area between tourism and migration, providing a fitting match with new urban tourism's blurred boundaries (Stors et al., 2019). First introduced at the start of the 20th century by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, this grey area is defined as *liminality*. It is a concept that covers the 'in-between' period, space or feeling in a ritual. Yet, the application of the concept has been extended to socio-cultural settings and can evolve to a permanent state of being when temporary situations of liminality become solidified (Turner, 1978). According to Turner (1978), liminality is connected to any "betwixt and between" object or situation (Thomassen, 2009, pp. 17). It can be applied to individuals, specific social groups or whole societies and can refer to any period. As Wang (1999) states, tourists' sense of liminality is experienced due to the alienation of their home environment and its presumed social performances. A liminal experience in tourism thus means an individual is temporarily 'cut loose' from everyday life, which may result in feeling like they can behave more authentically. Additionally, tourists can also experience contrasting feelings of escapism and connection to the everyday. That is, Bui, Wilkins and Lee (2014) identified how the liminal experience of tourists in East Asia illustrates the complexity and simultaneous push- and pull effect that can be experienced during long-term travels. Tourists arguably chase connection through everyday experiences, while they are not experienced as ubiquitous by tourists themselves. In essence, then, liminality in a touristic sense can be regarded as constituting a postmodern sense of authenticity (Yi et al., 2018). Whereas the ambiguity of liminality is often displayed in terms of pilgrimages in tourism research, the 'in-betweenness' of a touristic experience arguably grows stronger as time progresses (Turner, 1978). Therefore its presence in more solidified tourism practices such as long-term tourism is not as strong yet. Indeed, the influence of liminality on Urry's tourist gaze and how this takes place on a semi-permanent level is a relatively underresearched topic (Bui et al., 2014; Jansson, 2002; Thomassen, 2009).

Frenzel (2019) states how in recent urban tourism, both tourists and residents are involved in practices of '*commoning*'. That is, residents add to the livelihood of a place by living there, tourists add to this by simply being there already. This 'everydayness' is what makes a place attractive. Commoning, therefore, is an organic approach to tourism in which tourists and residents both engage - shaping everyday life along with it. The organic element and blurred boundaries of commoning are important to new urban tourists and how they construct their activities, thereby corresponding to the characteristic of new urban tourism.

With the recent expansion of the number of students travelling and studying abroad, the impact of international students on a place has grown too. University students are a group easily subjectable to tourism, as they generally have few external commitments outside studying (Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008). These types of tourists were described by Kelly and Brown (2004) as “educational tourists”, who formally or informally participate in a learning experience taking place at a certain destination (pp. 390). They identify two segments: education-first and tourism-first. For the first segment, learning something is of higher importance, whereas the latter travels mostly for the experience rather than the education. Contradicting Ritchie’s (2003) identification of international students as education-first, Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008) argue how international students and exchange students in particular, belong to the tourism-first segment.

As temporary or new residents of the city, international students engage in exploration activities in their near environment more often than residents (Maitland, 2019; Valek, 2017). Additionally, because of the temporary but long-term nature of their stay, international students find themselves caught in a liminal space (Parker, Ashencaen Crabtree, bin Baba, Carlo & Azman, 2012). Understanding how this further defines their position and performance of new urban tourism activities will help delineate the conceptualisation.

2.4. The performance turn in new urban tourism

Performance and the linked notion of *performativity* are other central concepts within new urban tourism. Tourism is not simply ‘doing’, it also reinforces the existing behaviour of individuals and involves different people. Tourism, therefore, is also a performance. Earlier research on tourism builds on Goffman’s (1959) seminal work on dramaturgical analysis. His argumentation includes how people behave differently in different settings, thereby figuratively putting on a show for other people in any social setting. Applying this sociological perspective to tourism studies, MacCannell (1973) especially differentiates between settings in which tourists and tourism workers interact and when their presence and activities take place in separate places. These different types of behaviour are conceptualised as front- and back stages. Here, front stages resemble (public) spaces and social situations where individuals perform their ‘role’ by behaving as is expected in that social setting, while private accommodation or semi-private spaces such as cafés are considered back stage areas where people feel less like they need to live up to a certain role. This conceptualisation has proliferated in tourism studies ever since (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Pappalepore et al., 2010).

The importance of performance studies also applies to new urban tourism. In their work on the identification and conceptualisation of new urban tourism, Stors et al. (2019) place recent tourism practices in a performance paradigm. In a recent study, Larsen (2020) argues how recent tourism is about feeling as if at home. That is, new urban tourists arguably exert a preference for

performing the 'local' and back stage role in favour of front stages. Yet, Stock (2019) has a different perception of the position of new urban tourists. He argues how tourism is still a non-ordinary, front-stage practice which loses its magic if it is too similar to everyday life.

This recent shift to acknowledging the importance of how tourism is a performance – identified as *the performance turn* - has led to a greater number of studies addressing how tourism can be seen not simply as a show but also as a process that is influenced by power relations (Larsen, 2020). Indeed, Goffman (1959) and MacCannell (1973) subtly identified the presence of power relations in performance theory (Jenkins, 2008; Rogers, 1977). Building on Goffman's (1959) strategic interaction, recent tourism studies focus on investigating how tourists and hosts still act out the role that is expected of them and thereby (re)produce the main narrative of tourism. Yet, recent awareness of this impression management in many tourism areas is turning people away from front stage behaviour, in which they are being shown what is expected they want to see (Knudsen & Waade, 2010).

When power comes into play, a mere performance is turned into something of *performative* nature (Lyotard, 1984). In her analysis on gender development and the linguistic power of performativity, Butler (1993) connects performance to power structures by introducing performativity as the result of repetition and reproduction of performance, which Schechner (2004) builds on by connecting performances to behaviour. As Latour (1986) states, power is produced by the collective. This means that when performances become embedded in structures, power relations – thus performativity too - are present. In tourism research, especially with regards to recent forms of urban tourism, no consensus has yet been reached on the performativity of tourism. How tourists move about and behave in urban settings, has been adopted by recent literature as part of the performance of urban tourism.

As an addition to existing literature, this research focuses on exploring how long-term new urban tourists engage with front- and back stages in urban environments during their search for authentic experiences, as well as how performativity concretely takes place in these settings.

2.5. Place image and place branding

All first touristic encounters with a city take place through perceptions and images. This may portray a different identity of the city than how its dynamics truly function. This conceptual identity is defined as a 'place brand'. Derived from earlier literature about place marketing, Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013) identify a place brand as a network of associations in consumers' minds, based on their visual, behavioural and verbal perception of a place. They also highlight the role of residents as ambassadors of the city brand. Their focus, however, is mostly on a policy level. On this level, a place brand is generally an umbrella term under which multiple aspects of local

development are pursued (Kavaratzis, Warnaby & Ashworth, 2015). These could be urban planning projects, or more programme-related aspects like events or placemaking projects, which should contain the city's identity at their core. A study that digs deeper than using the umbrella term of place branding will therefore provide more context regarding how a city is experienced by tourists. Residents' perceptions of tourism are argued to be influential in filling the place brand, emphasising their importance (Sharpley, 2018). However, Zenker, Braun and Pedersen (2017) argue how less attention has thus far been paid to the role of, and interaction between, both residents and tourists. In their analysis, they distinguish between place branding and destination branding; the latter only being targeted to tourists. Yet, they emphasise how residents are also influential in forming a destination brand, as tourists build their perception of this too.

Indeed, place branding is highly multidisciplinary, as it addresses multiple groups of stakeholders, is intangible and complex and deals with multiple social groups (Braun et al., 2013). This is then embodied "through the aims, communication, values, behaviour and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design" (Anholt, 2005, pp. 20). Strikingly, there is a lack of research on more inclusive forms of place branding, rather than mere business-driven ones (Kavaratzis et al., 2015). As a result, there has been a call for more dialogue and co-creation of cities (Kavaratzis, 2017; Richards, 2016). Yet, Ashworth and Page (2011) define how many urban planners and institutions within a city still operate through modernist structural models, which does not match the postmodern activities in a city any longer. Nuancing Harvey's (1989) argument how gentrification and touristification are mutually influential, Frenzel (2019) argues how place branding is often accompanied by practices of gentrification, thereby connecting the physical attraction to the programming. He states the attraction of space is produced, and that the users of the city are its producers.

Place branding thereby serves to connect new urban tourists with existing institutions. In his research of virtual communication on branding, Govers (2011) argues how word-of-mouth (WOM) is essential in doing so in a positive way. Instead of building on institutional place branding efforts, he argues tourists are more likely to trust the opinion of a person perceived to be on the same structural level (pp. 65). Indeed, Braun, Eshuis and Klijn (2014) identified how WOM place brand communication affects a city's target groups more positively than what they identify as 'traditional' place brand communication, meaning marketing and communication purposes. They found how a place image, defined by them as 'place brand image', mediates how tourists and residents perceive a place brand.

Interestingly, in their research on connection between the formation of a city's identity with place branding, Kavaratzis (2004) and Kavaratzis and Pedeliento (2019) define how place brands are in fact performance practices. That is, as the base of a place brand, a place image is dynamic and its

identity is the main constituent of these practices (Stylidis, Biran, Sit & Szivas, 2014). Still, the mutual influence of place image on the city's users is underresearched, yet the influence of long-term visitors and residents is an influential factor in urban tourism (Stylidis et al., 2014). In a quantitative case study, Stylidis et al. (2014) laid out how perception is a determining factor in the success of a tourism destination. Yet, they did not address how place dynamics were laid out. Lin, Chen and Filieri (2017) attempted to do so through identifying the value of co-creation in tourism, as the role of long-term visitors and residents is often overlooked. How long-term visitors like expats and international students – a group with a strong impact on the tourism industry – are situated in this matter, would shed more light on the matter (Tran et al., 2018). Additionally, studying the cultural pursuits of international students of a city provide for valuable insight into the interaction between place-makers and student groups.

Having laid out the main trends and concepts applying to new urban tourism, this study pays special attention to the role of performance and authenticity by focusing on long-term new urban tourists. Building on the conceptualisation of new urban tourism provided earlier, this section further describes how long-term new urban tourists do not only engage in the ambiguous division of tourists and residents, but also live an ambiguous experience themselves as a consequence of liminality. How this position blends in with their performances as new urban tourist will further define new urban tourism. As such, the influence of place branding on their perception and practices of a place will shed more insight into the embeddedness of new urban tourists' performances. The next chapters of this thesis will expand on the notions discussed in this section.

3. Methodology

This master thesis is focused on unravelling how long-term new urban tourists contribute to the creation of place image and how this corresponds to the tourism structures. This section describes and accounts for the methodological choices that have been made in laying out how place image is mutually constituted by new urban tourists' performances, specifically those of long-term tourists, and policies created by professionals. The four dimensions along which this analysis takes place include a specific examination of Rotterdam's place image construction, as well as how place branding helps attract the city's tourists and how new urban tourists are attracted in general. Additionally, the scope of analysis focuses on long-term new urban tourists' characteristics, most specifically their liminal position and the way in which they construct authenticity. Elaborate attention is paid to the activities long-term new urban tourists engage in to construct this sense of authenticity.

Understanding how new urban tourism corresponds to the formation and acceptance of an existing place image may prove useful in understanding what is most important in forming a successful tourism experience. Concretely, it helps to understand the most effective elements of a place image, which aids in successfully conveying a place brand that feels authentic to tourists and therefore appeals to them. Specifically, understanding how long-term tourists engage in tourist practices provides a useful extension of the existing conceptualisation of the phenomenon of new urban tourism.

To concretely investigate the research matter at hand, a case study of Rotterdam based on qualitative, semi-structured interviews with policymakers and long-term visitors was conducted, supplemented by content analysis. The sampling method consists of a combination of criterion sampling and snowball sampling. Additionally, following a postmodern perspective, it should be mentioned the results of this research do not aim to provide one solution, rather give more meaning and a diversified elaboration on the existing definition of new urban tourism (Flick, 2009).

As this thesis builds on the existing concepts by introducing themes that have been derived from verbatim data, a clear conceptualisation and consequent operationalisation are in order.

Firstly, *new urban tourism* is the main concept of this study; *liminality*, *authenticity* and *performance studies* support the sub-questions related to this role. New urban tourism is the main concept of this research and respondents have been sampled on previously defined characteristics. These include reflexive adults with travel experience, having visited the city multiple times before, regularly engaging in VFR tourism and making use of connections in deciding which areas to visit (Maitland, 2008). In other words, these are "highly sophisticated city users", looking for backstage areas within urban environments (Larsen, 2020; Maitland, 2008). This category

includes international students, who provide an interesting perspective as being in-between tourist and resident (Braun et al., 2013; Stors et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2018). This provided space for the inclusion of *liminality*. Understanding how they see and behave in the city will provide new insights into classical tourism and broaden its definition to include aspects of new urban tourism too. It therefore focuses on a niche part of the entire new urban tourism segment, making it difficult to connect this to a broader level.

Authenticity builds upon previous literature which described three components; objective, constructive and existential authenticity (Boorstin, 1962; Cohen, 1979; MacCannell, 1973; Wang, 1999). It predominantly focuses on postmodern authenticity while keeping MacCannell's (1973) staged authenticity in mind – meaning tourists are expected to easily accept the performativity of their tourism experience. Both tourists as well as policymakers were asked about what constitutes a memorable tourist experience to them, to see if there might be a difference regarding the meaning of authenticity for both groups and what its importance is to them. The concept is applied differently for each separate component of this research, being place image, performance and tourism structures.

For *performance*, Goffman's (1959) front and back stages were explored in interviews. Instead of asking directly about these concepts, addressing the characteristics of front and back stages of urban life, being the tourist activities they perform, the places they visit and why and what they do or do not value of a certain experience was aimed for (Mason, Kjellberg, & Hagberg, 2017; Stors et al., 2019). Front stages are considered places which are catered to tourism, such as major tourist attractions, cruises, and events (Maitland, 2013). Back stages, contrastingly, are considered places and spaces in which moments are not organised and in which the 'everyday' life takes place (Maitland, 2013). This difference has been addressed to understand where tourists draw the line and how this influences them. Possibly emerging power relations between 'official', marketed places and institutions on the one hand, and smaller places owing their visibility to word-of-mouth, aid in identifying the presence of performativity in new urban tourism (Braun et al., 2013).

The tourism structures as well as place image involves *place branding*. Place branding involves a city's identity, image and the influence of branding efforts on stakeholders (Anholt, 2005). All aspects of the study are expected to be present in this umbrella concept. As it is a largely policy-led concept, structure-related actions and perceptions have been asked to professionals in the field of urban planning or place branding (Anholt, 2005; Braun et al., 2013). These professionals were asked to share their view on authenticity, place branding and its effects, touching upon concepts of city identity and identity building too (Amore, 2019; Kavartzis & Pedeliento, 2019). This was supplemented by the analysis of three

main policy documents conveying Rotterdam's vision. The information has subsequently been used in interviews with tourists to explore how this identity is being conveyed.

The design of this research incorporates two different populations: new urban tourists and professionals working with tourism in Rotterdam. The units of analysis in the case of new urban tourists, are international students. Rather than just the experiences of short-term visitors, the perception of longer-term visitors is of importance too in the construction of place identity – thus is tourism (Braun et al., 2013; Pappalepore et al., 2010). This study therefore focuses on a group of international students, who have been living in Rotterdam for no longer than a year, thereby adhering to the official UNWTO definition (UNWTO, n.d.). As part of the “cosmopolitan consuming class” described by Richards and Wilson (2004), this group actively takes part in tourist activities – thus belongs within tourism. Due to its history, the presence of Erasmus University Rotterdam and the port, Rotterdam is strengthening its position as an international city and has recently been focusing on attracting more young knowledge through the start-up scene (Rotterdam Partners, 2019). It therefore forms an applicable case study for new urban tourism. Respondents belonging to this category were selected through snowball sampling.

Additionally, three professionals in the field of tourism in Rotterdam were sampled through snowball sampling. As experts in their field, their professional experience rather than their personal opinions were discussed during the interview. This method allows for practical applicability and exploration of how tourism in Rotterdam takes place (Flick, 2009). Due to the smaller number of people spoken as a result of the 2020 corona crisis, this part of the analysis was supplemented by content analysis.

Combining these two different visions allowed for valuable insights into how this new kind of doing tourism can be constructed and sustained. That is, studying the interaction between those who engage in creating policies and making places better known, and comparing this to the cultural pursuits of internationals can lead to more knowledge on what doing tourism actually means (Malet Calvo, 2018).

To explore this research topic and interviewees' opinions as elaborately as possible, qualitative semi-structured interviews provide a solid ground (Flick, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In comparison to other methods of interviewing, the semi-structured interview provides the possibility of thorough exploration of interconnections by comparing interviews all the while providing rich, descriptive data (Jordan & Gibson, 2004). Due to this flexibility, however, a pitfall of semi-structured interviews is that the answers given by an interviewee might not be exactly what is looked for (Brinkmann, 2014). Additionally, due to the limited scope of time and interviewees, the results of this research are not generalisable to a broader level (Flick, 2007). This is what makes a qualitative approach the best solution to addressing this research problem, as it

provides extensive knowledge of both sides of new urban tourism. However, both sides come with additional challenges. Regarding the expert interviews, the researcher should be able to have good knowledge of the expertise of the interviewee, as well as be strict in timekeeping due to the busy schedules of experts (Flick, 2009). Additionally, the group of international students features multiple internal differences (Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008). The retrieved data might therefore vary greatly among certain topics. It therefore proved important interviewees fit the description of new urban tourists closely.

Whereas previous researches mainly focused on capturing visitors' perceptions in world cities, little is known about smaller cities. Rotterdam is a good case of a smaller city that is increasingly embracing tourism. In contrast to other Dutch cities, Rotterdam does not feature as much traditional Dutch architecture. The city therefore had to find another way to promote itself. Hodos (2007) describes these types of smaller cities as 'second cities'. These second cities arguably have a stronger position on the global market across various social fields and have a more direct need to make themselves internationally known as the larger 'first cities' (Hodos, 2007, pp. 316). Rotterdam actively engages in urban planning and gentrification, which has led to an increase of the inner city's cultural sector and consequently of its tourism (Richards & Wilson, 2004; Gemeente Rotterdam, 2017). Whereas the management thereof first focused on policy-led tourism management through hosting mega-events, there seems to be another factor about the city that attracts a more organic type of tourism, in the shape of the new urban tourist. The documents about the city's new vision on urban planning, tourism and the Rotterdam identity provide a deeper understanding of tourists' performances are or are not embedded in official tourism structures.

Interviews with twelve long-term students who were or had been studying in Rotterdam were conducted within a 4-week timeframe in March and April 2020, amounting to 10 hours' worth of data. The full list of names and background information can be found in Appendix A. Another two hours of data was gathered through interviews with three professionals in the field of policymaking in Rotterdam and included a retail expert, a senior policymaker and the director of Rotterdam's city marketing organisation. Due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and consequent restrictive measures throughout the world, interviews were conducted through online meeting software like Skype and Zoom. Because of this unexpected obstruction for data gathering, fewer policymakers were available for interviews. This has been compensated through written responses via e-mail and analysis of three important policy documents regarding urban planning and tourism in Rotterdam: Rotterdam's *New Vision on Tourism*, Rotterdam's city marketing guide (*R Guide*), and the *Vision on Public Space 2019-2029*.

Thematic analysis and coding have been used to analyse all data obtained through interviews with both groups of interviewees. According to Alhojailan (2012, pp. 40), thematic analysis is the

most appropriate research method for any exploratory study. It is concerned with discovering perceptions and underlying themes and makes it possible to understand the likeliness of issues on a broader level (Marks & Yardley, 2004). The six steps of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) were used in analysis, being: familiarising, generating initial codes, searching for initial themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming and lastly reporting them. In analysis of the research, achieving qualitative validity and reliability was aimed for by cross-checking the findings within each source of data with the other sources and employing consistent methods across the different types of data used, respectively (Creswell, 2009). To analyse as reliably and systematically as possible, the software programme ATLAS.ti has been used. Deductive coding was used to identify the main theories and concepts using a structured guide, which was supplemented by inductive coding to discover the emergent themes and explore the richness of the data. The guides created and used in this process, can be found in Appendix B. The analysis resulted in the emergence of several subthemes and liminality as an unexpected theme. Codes had been given names corresponding to their topic and concept and were later used to further define themes and groups, to structure each theme for each group. Lastly, this research aimed for good construct validity – providing appropriate operationalisation of all concepts – and aimed to achieve reliability through systematic analysis of all data (Rowley, 2002). That is, based on the operationalisation emerging themes were coded accordingly across the different types of data gathered.

The richness of the gathered data and all subsequent forms of analysis led to the overarching themes as discussed in the next section, which forms the basis in answering how place image is mutually constructed through new urban tourists' performances and tourism structures created by professionals in the field.

4. Performing long-term new urban tourism in Rotterdam

Often described as a place where you need to know where to go to properly discover the city, Rotterdam invites its users to fully immerse in exploration. As such, this chapter dives deep into the new urban tourism landscape of Rotterdam. After the introduction of frontrunners as local policies' products, the special position of long-term new urban tourists both within new urban tourism itself as well as in Rotterdam will be laid out. Consequently, the steering force of their liminal position and notion of authenticity is discussed, which form the core of how new urban tourism is performed by long-term new urban tourists, as discussed in the third section of this chapter. Resultingly, the final section of this chapter is concerned with combining the conceptualisation of the long-term new urban tourist and their performances with the existing place image and place branding policies of Rotterdam.

4.1. New urban tourists in Rotterdam: frontrunners in the long run

As a relatively new tourism destination, the importance of the tourism sector for Rotterdam has not yet reached the level of other, more popular cities, like Amsterdam. As a city that is generally described as 'raw', 'modern', 'international' and being 'off the beaten track' as a whole, Rotterdam makes for the perfect place to search for new urban tourists. While new urban tourism is argued to be an organic phenomenon, Rotterdam's policies seem to have caught up with the new tourism developments taking place in the city. This section lays out the policymaking approach Rotterdam uses to identify new urban tourism in the shape of their frontrunner, after which the position of the long-term new urban tourists of this study is identified.

4.1.1. Rotterdam's frontrunners

In conveying the identity of the city, the municipality of Rotterdam published a new vision on tourism in 2020. Here, it described its new focus on attracting more special tourism rather than merely more tourism, resulting in the focus on the '*frontrunners*' (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2020). According to the vision document, this differentiated group fits with the core values of Rotterdam, being young, entrepreneurial, unconventional and future-oriented, united in the city's identity pillars 'Bold, Forward, Culture', making them more likely to have a positive experience in the city – thereby engaging in more special tourism. In fact, frontrunners are defined as belonging to a lifestyle and being:

[...] pioneers, innovators, builders. They value the world around them and are on top of current debates. They're driven by a willingness to make the world prettier, give it more meaning and to make it part of their identity. They're always in search of perspectives, challenges and likeminded people to work with. They are not afraid to go off the beaten path. In short, frontrunners harbour the drive and characteristics that are needed to create a reality from the ambitions of Rotterdam, and their emotional values fit with the DNA of the city. (Maarten Suijker, senior policymaker at Gemeente Rotterdam)

Here, Maarten stresses the inherent characteristics of frontrunners. That is, frontrunners do not necessarily have to be tourists and can be any type of person within the city. Not only their tourist behaviour, but also their general perspective on life determines whether a person fits the notion of a frontrunner. His conceptualisation of frontrunners blends in with how other policymakers and policy documents describe the city's main target audience. Indeed, as is also described by other policymakers, frontrunners are people who are actively searching for engagement with the city, in the shape of experiences and inspiration. While frontrunners can be tourists, they can also be entrepreneurs, residents and even organisations. Interestingly, this in itself corresponds to the blurred boundaries of new urban tourism, as the typology of the frontrunner ranges across several sectors that would normally not be associated with tourism (Stors et al., 2019). That is, even though frontrunners do not necessarily have to be tourists, the ones that do perform tourism behaviour do indeed search for the off-the-beaten-path experiences and blurred boundaries that are striking for new urban tourism destinations (Stors et al., 2019).

This same typology is described in the *R Guide*, which is an executive document for organisations in Rotterdam and descriptive of the Rotterdam brand and target audience. This guide was created by city marketing organisation Rotterdam Partners. Together with their executive branch Rotterdam.Info, these organisations are responsible for the accuracy of conveying the DNA of Rotterdam as a persuasive place image. In creating this, they work together with 178 parties within the city, ranging from local businesses to strategic organisations and municipality. In the differentiation of 'normal tourists' with frontrunners, Rotterdam Partners aims to adjust their upcoming marketing efforts to a specific group of people, being frontrunners. The tourism policies of Rotterdam, therefore, serve not to engage tourists only, but also to attract an explicit group with its associated set of lifestyles to the city, across multiple sectors.

Experiences of higher quality are not only deemed as more valuable by new urban tourists (Maitland, 2008), the case of Rotterdam also shows how a city can engage in attracting a type of tourism that is higher in quality. Building on this, the *R Guide* proposes a global overview of ways in which frontrunners can be attracted. Those factors include the city's vibe, the 'rawness' or 'realness'

of the city, the local view, and the importance of personal stories. This should then serve as ways to get Rotterdam as destination in the minds of potential tourists when they are planning their next trip.

The young, modern, entrepreneurial, international and unconventional DNA of Rotterdam should thus serve to attract likeminded people, grouped as frontrunners. As such, the main characteristic that defines frontrunners is their innovative mentality and search for quality, in line with the DNA of Rotterdam. This identification comes very close to the notion of new urban tourism, previously defined as an organic process based on individual experiences and feelings and in which finding a front stage that feels like a back stage is continuously being chased. In this sense, frontrunners' presumed value-adding approach corresponds to how Stors et al. (2019) defined new urban tourists' active construction of their own tourist experience. Especially the focus of Rotterdam on internationality should attract Richards and Wilson's (2004) cosmopolitan consuming class.

Yet, more specifically than previously defined for new urban tourism, the frontrunners of Rotterdam are described as trendsetting people from different purpose-led backgrounds, with a strong urge to actively contribute to making the world a better place. This is also what supposedly guides them in their tourist behaviour. The *R Guide* proposes three different types of frontrunners: hustlers, disruptors and curators. Whereas the first two groups are argued to be mostly from an entrepreneurial and strong value-driven background, curators are the ones who focus mostly on their individual experience and learning curve, and actively contribute to co-creation of their experience and identity. Tourists, particularly international students, form a segment of this typology, as they are focused on learning. This driven aspect and urge to share knowledge and learn, is a trait that Paola puts to use while working for a socio-cultural initiative, which is one way in which frontrunner behaviour can be displayed. Additionally, the effectiveness of the targeted strategy is also partly noticeable in the interests of visitors to Rotterdam. For instance, William, a British student with a keen interest in sustainability and circularity, was attracted to Rotterdam for its circularity and sustainability.

In this sense, the city is already attracting a part of its target audience. In their identification and differentiation of frontrunners, Rotterdam has thus segmented the new urban tourist both on an intra- and interpersonal level, thereby providing a practical application as well as addition to the existing notion of new urban tourism.

4.1.2. The long-term new urban tourist

Frontrunners, as part of the target audience of Rotterdam, form a segment that is comparable to new urban tourism. As their experience on a long term is more intricate than the experience of a short visit, the position of the international student within new urban tourism deserves special attention (Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008; Valek, 2017). This section explains what formed the appeal for long-term new urban tourists to stay in Rotterdam.

Contrary to the traditionally leisure-led nature of tourism, the purpose of the long-term student can be a more serious one. According to Kelly and Brown (2004), two different types of students exist within the international student segment: those who are led by an educational purpose, and those for whom the leisure facilities of a place are more important than education. The international students who shared their opinion on Rotterdam, chose the city largely because of its educational programmes or because the city had simply already been chosen by their programme. For Abby, her study programme was the first indicator of going to Rotterdam. She explains how she first only considered the location for its educational component: "I wanted to do a master's anyway, and I know education over here is way cheaper than in the US. [...] So I found this programme, it sounded like a dream come true, it sounded extremely unique." To Paola, the quality of the programme itself was most important. She explains how her cultural economics programme "was the second-best master in that topic" and how the educational approach defined her choice. In this sense, all interviewees could be classified as being education-led tourists primarily. This contradicts and nuances Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008), who argued how international students are mostly led by leisure purposes.

Generally, however, the role of leisure formed a more underlying theme. Indeed, interviewees indicate how it does form a very important underlying theme for them. Onur, a temporary Turkish student, regularly visits conferences, yet carefully picks the ones to go to. That is, for him the city should provide entertainment around the conference hours too, to make it possible to extend his stay with a few more days. As he states: "I really don't like only going to conferences and just leave after the conference. I try to be there as much as I can." Only Carmen formed the exception to this rule. She explains that "the reason why I picked this Master was also because I could go to Rotterdam, out of the other 3 cities." As such, her passion for Rotterdam influenced her decision about where to go.

Characteristic of how long-term new urban tourists construct their position within a place, is how it may move to one or the other end of the liminal space shortly after one another. That is, interviewees indicated how they had interchanging thoughts of feeling either like a local or as a stereotypical tourist.

Whenever the shroud of anonymity covered them, interviewees described finding the sense of 'blending in' that characterises new urban tourism (Maitland, 2008; Stors et al., 2019). The acceptance that Azra deems as important for blending in successfully, is more likely to happen when they can be more anonymous. However, when confronted with 'real' locals, she realised how she still felt as if she were a tourist. She would define her position as being both a tourist and a resident simultaneously. These divided feelings could take place shortly after each other. This process is described as follows:

[...] One day I was a tourist and the other day I was a local – it was not like that. It was just in the moment that I felt like that or changed. While I was not thinking, my foot was going somewhere else and so on, I was feeling like a local. But when I crossed something that I didn't know, I felt like a tourist. It was changing each moment, each time... So it was very... This shift was always with me, I would say. (Azra, Turkish student)

When blending in with others, tourists were able to feel like locals. Yet, being confronted with the unknown is what puts interviewees' position as tourists in the spotlights. This might also explain why the theme of liminality is strongly present in the case of Rotterdam. The open atmosphere of the city and its many cultures make it a place in which it is easy to feel anonymous and blend in with the already diverse crowds. As Alexander states: "in Rotterdam you never know who is local. [...] You can either say no one is local, or everyone is local." This is explanatory of the most prominent ways in which long-term new urban tourism perform new urban tourism activities.

Indeed, as liminality makes up part of the core of new urban tourists' performances, it also exerts influence on the other part of new urban tourism's core that makes up the next section, being tourists' notions of authenticity.

4.2. Long-term new urban tourists and their construction of authenticity in a liminal space

As such, the position of the international student within the new urban tourism debate is a special one. As is described in this section, their temporary residency forms the core for their position within society. Consequently, their attempts to delineate their liminal position sets them apart from both the group of tourists as well as residents. This position therefore also influences their perception of authenticity, which shows correspondence with the performative nature of new urban tourism yet adds to existing notions in terms of constructive and existential authenticity.

4.2.1. Liminality: the blank space of long-term new urban tourism

New urban tourists' signalling of *liminality* is one of the major emergent themes of this study. Looking back at her experience in Rotterdam from an outsider's perspective, Azra identifies how she "couldn't feel either like a local or tourist". This ambiguity and confusion about their sense of belonging is what emerged as an underlying theme in all interviews with new urban tourists and is something not acknowledged by the organisational forces of Rotterdam. Indeed, this lack of organisational and experiential demarcation of their experience is in line with what liminality is argued to be. The long-term new urban tourist, therefore, could be conceptualised as being caught in between being a tourist and being a local – thus, living a liminal experience.

Interviewees described the process they went through as moving from being a tourist to being a local, however not quite reaching the end:

[...] At the beginning, when I came to Rotterdam, I felt kind of like a tourist. But then, especially after the first six months, when I really started to live as you actually, I wasn't considering myself as a tourist anymore. I was considering myself as a citizen. (Luisa, Italian student)

The end of Luisa's journey to becoming a local is connected to bureaucracy. Multiple interviewees identified how their experience as international students is different from a short holiday in terms of visas, forms, residence, and other types of paperwork. These details exerting a lot of importance are what Elektra defines as having a "bureaucratic relationship with the city", which is why she does not consider herself as a tourist. Indeed, this type of everydayness is something that cannot easily be given a magical touch and is therefore less likely to feel as a touristic experience (Bui et al., 2014; Stors et al., 2019).

Yet, whereas Luisa described this process as ending at feeling like a local, she still identified how she felt more like an outsider to the city and The Netherlands. This is echoed by Elektra, who – despite acknowledging how she felt related to Rotterdam bureaucratically – would not say she felt local. Instead:

[...] I would consider myself as a... of course not as a local, because I did not live there and did not have my friends and stuff. But as a person who stays there for a longer time. And I think that is happening in our generation. (Elektra, Greek student)

By simply regarding herself as a 'person who stays there for a longer time', Elektra does not classify herself as either group and hints at the concept that is between feeling like a tourist or

local: *liminality*. As a concept with an anthropological background in modern studies, Elektra explains how she sees her experience as liminal by referring to her Greek background. She interprets the term as follows:

[...] Liminal places are the places where something has been destroyed, and you wait for the beginning of something new, but you don't know where you are or where you are going. But you are somewhere. In theological studies, that was considered the gate before going to hell or to paradise. So poetically, I consider my life in Rotterdam as a liminal place. (Elektra, Greek student)

Indeed, by referring to the notion of liminal spaces, Elektra explains how liminal experiences are disconnected from any anchor points of everyday life. In this sense, the individual manifestation of liminality influences students' tourism experience (Bui et al., 2014; Turner, 1978). That is, experiencing everyday feelings while being confronted with alienating elements that are dissimilar to their home environment, international students find themselves in an undefined grey space. Elektra describes this grey space she identified as a place where "You are not a tourist, you are not a local, but you live there. You have to build some connections with the city, with the state, with friends... and with places." The experience Elektra describes here is one not of short-term duration, but one that can last for multiple months, thereby taking on the character of a semi-permanent experience. That is, interviewees found themselves in a liminal position for the duration of their stay. Alexander also finds it difficult to pinpoint his position as being either touristic or not. He states how there is a lot of overlap between activities, as they can either be considered touristic or not touristic at all. It therefore perfectly illustrates Turner's (1978) argument how a liminal experience becomes more permanent.

In coping with this semi-permanent state, long-term new urban tourists identify how there seem to be factors that influence the extent of this feeling, creating figuratively flexible borders of the concept. That is, interviewees identified how certain conceptualisations and mainly activities constructed borders between feeling like a local or a tourist: building connections, using local means of getting around, and establishing a routine.

To interviewees, there is a difference between simply 'being' somewhere for a specific purpose and living in a place and making a home. Arguably, the stronger the feeling of having built a home, the more the liminal space evolves into either the permanent liminal state Turner (1978) argues for, or integration into localness. And one of the ways to construct this change is by building connections. For Alexander, there is a clear distinction between personal contact as is

characteristic of new urban tourism and personal contact that constructs localness. He explains this as follows.

[...] So for Rotterdam, I would say... the first month after I came I kind of missed out on everything that was going on. And then afterwards, I started to behave more touristy in the city. But with the goal of learning something about it. And eventually, I think that if you want to feel home - for me - you need to understand where you are. And if you understand the city and understand why it's this way, then you feel more connected to it and feel home. (Alexander, Russian student)

To Alexander, the construction of a deeper personal connection with the city and its residents go hand in hand with understanding the surroundings. Indeed, the way to demarcate the liminal experience of international students comes close to their performance of new urban tourism as identified later. In a way, the characteristics defining a long-term tourist experience can become the activities with which liminality is demarcated. As he states, this might differ on an individual level and could work both ways:

[...] But also these people who are expats and international students, which could be a big problem - these people might live somewhere for two years, and they might still be a tourist. It depends on the certain person, but I would say if you... not just set up a life, but also get to know the city, like getting acquainted with the city you live in, and have lots of different points of reference and connection to the people who live in the city... That's probably when you'll stop being a tourist. (Alexander, Russian student)

In this sense, an active understanding of the surroundings and a firm rooting in a place is something that defines the extent to which a person feels like they belong. This might also explain why some people never leave the liminal space and why others can quickly integrate into local society.

Another theme that showed how long-term new urban tourists made the city their own and decreased their feelings of being 'in-between', is by using everyday facilities like public transport systems and making use of local initiatives. Where Abby and Azra displayed pride in mastering an understanding of Rotterdam's public transport system, Alexander describes his surprise and joy upon finding the Rotterdampas, a programme with which students and low-income groups can participate in a wide variety of local cultural initiatives for a low price. Activities like these are what he describes as "one of the most non-touristic things but which can still be connected to touristic activities". Thus,

using local means of getting around the city are the ways which help facilitate the transition in the liminal presence.

Additional help to decrease the liminal space, however, are mundane activities like shopping, walking, working out, and other routine activities. The defining aspect is that it forms a solid structure for interviewees to fall back to and which makes them feel more grounded. To several interviewees like Azra, Luisa, and Andrina, front-stage site Markthal turned into their fixed spot for grocery shopping. Whereas they were all struck by its architecture upon their first visits, this gradually changed into another type of destination. Azra describes how this made her feel more like a local than a tourist. "Every week I was going to Markthal and shopping from that marketplace. And with my shopping bag, I was really feeling local. Especially after one or two months, I was just feeling very local."

As Thomassen (2009) states, liminality cannot explain social phenomena. It cannot explain why international students find themselves not belonging to tourists or locals. Yet, it can illustrate their position and give meaning to the grey space they find themselves in. The position of this type of long-term new urban tourist is important to acknowledge, as their formation of place image can partly provide insight in both tourists' place image formation, as well as how Rotterdam's place identity is lived by its residents. While organisational documents do acknowledge students belong to the wider group of tourists in a sense, the categorisation of this type of visitor is still largely lacking in the Rotterdam of 2020, as Renske Satijn acknowledges. As such, establishment of how long-term new urban tourists demarcate their liminal position through building connections, using local means of getting around and establishing routine will help in solidifying the position of this group in structures too.

4.2.2. Authenticity for long-term new urban tourists

The characteristic liminal position of long-term new urban tourists also influences the way they perceive authenticity. This section will first describe the essence of a general new urban tourism experience, then moving on to highlighting the position of the long-term new urban tourist and the sense in which they construct authenticity differently from regular new urban tourism. This will then be portrayed in the case of Rotterdam.

The characteristics, interests, and activities of new urban tourists are all closely connected to what they regard as authentic, and the exact ways in which they do so. In line with how Maitland (2008) describes types of tourists who are generally frequent travellers and especially like to visit cities, the interviewed new urban tourists are likely to visit cities multiple times. As a result, they feel less pressure to see the main front stages of a city in case they had already visited those previously. Instead, they turned to more banal elements of life. In providing a clear explanation, Paola discusses

her general tourism behaviour by using the multiple trips to Berlin she made while living in Rotterdam as an example:

[...] I traveled to Berlin twice and I had already been there like two times before. And in these places, the type of travelling I did was really like living the city like a local. I had already gone to the Jewish museum... I had already gone to the concentration camps... I didn't need to see that again. So I was pretty much just doing the things I really like to do, which is walking around, going to see arts, to see culture in general, eating. (Paola, Colombian student)

Upon repetitive visits, banality thus became something that defined the place for Paola and made it unique to her. In this sense, everyday situations like walking around and eating are given a 'magical' touch and make tourists feel as if they touristically experienced the city differently. This supports the idea of Stors et al. (2019) that the everydayness of places can become an enchanting element that makes a place feel authentic to new urban tourists. Indeed, the 'banal atmosphere' is the underlying indicator of all emergent themes, simultaneously engaging in Frenzel's (2019) commoning by being the element they construct with their presence.

Previous works on new urban tourism defined personal contact and interaction as one of the main pillars of new urban tourism (Füller & Michel, 2014; Maitland, 2008; Maitland, 2019; Wildish, 2017). And new urban tourists do indeed search for these moments. Paola, who strongly displayed all new urban tourist characteristics and fit well with the description of frontrunners, describes her most authentic tourism experience as being one in which she went out for dinner in a Vietnamese restaurant where no one spoke English and she did not speak Vietnamese. She had no idea where she was, what to order and how to order. When her food was served after a local woman offered her help to her and had ordered food of which Paola had no idea what it would be, she witnessed a fight between another customer and the waitress. After a while, she understood they had been served the wrong food and had eaten a dish the other customer had ordered. Upon being served the wrong dish, they had no idea this was actually the case and, in this sense, lived both a very local as well as touristic experience. The reason for this experience being her most memorable one is that it defined the 'real' Vietnam for her. Because of her blending in with locals, it felt like an authentic experience, even while her obvious position as a tourist who does not speak the language was easily noticeable. This form of authenticity could be seen as a countertype of staged authenticity, as it showed her how a non-staged place could feel authentic. Indeed, her interaction with the environment around her and her decision to eat at such a place also indicate how constructive and performative authenticity can be present simultaneously. The intersection of her tourist gaze with those of the Vietnamese

visitors of the restaurant is a significant example of 's (2011) 'Tourist gaze 3.0', in which the gazes of tourists and locals meet.

Something that sets long-term new urban tourists apart from the wider segment of new urban tourists, is that the influence of existential authenticity and constructive authenticity seems to be more prominent for long-term new urban tourists. That is, interviewees indicate how specific moments, feelings and their actions mostly defined a truly authentic feeling to them, rather than objects. It is the association with their position as an international student and its corresponding themes of self-discovery and exploration that is most strongly present. Upon answering what her most iconic memory is, Azra describes the following moment:

[...] I think when I first came to the city, in the Central Station, when I entered the city. It's like a gate to the city and it's a very monumental gate. My breath was like 'ahhh'. Oh my god. I think it was the most good and challenging experience was the first moment that I entered the city. Because I felt like there are so many things that I will do in a year. I will challenge myself and this is the first step of this time. And these feelings were intertwined with these monumental buildings. (Azra, Turkish student)

To her, the objectivity of the buildings was striking, but it was intertwined with the anxious and grand feeling of entering a new residential place. The emotion she experienced at that moment will be a long-lasting memory. In this sense, her experience was existential of its sort. The authenticity in experiences such as these, then, lies in the individual feelings that each tourist connects to certain experiences. These feelings supposedly grow stronger the longer tourists stay.

As such, interviewees indicated how constructive authenticity, in the shape of the awareness of their position as non-locals, influences the way they experience their exploration of cities and how they construct authenticity. While feeling the urge to explore and live in the city, many interviewees indicated how they felt more like a Rotterdamer the longer they stayed in the city. The open and international ambience of the city facilitated feelings of acceptance. As Onur explains: "I don't know the number of international people living in Rotterdam, but even the residents I think are international. For that reason, I never feel like a foreigner here. What I like in Rotterdam is that". By experiencing the city with another international friend like Azra does or seeking to integrate by learning Dutch like Alexander, interviewees are likely to define their authentic experiences in a constructive sense.

In line with what existential authenticity is argued to be by Wang (1999), long-term new urban tourists' emotional connection to a city is not specifically bound to a time or place.

Azra, Andrina and Carmen all indicate the importance of the right atmosphere, however intangible it

is. According to them, it can be felt or simply known whenever the atmosphere was right for them and felt 'real'. This was the case in areas associated with back stage behaviour like Fenix Food Factory, of which they mentioned Markthal as the opposite.

Regarding authenticity in Rotterdam, long-term new urban tourists display a clear and conscious awareness of how tourism takes place in Rotterdam. In fact, long-term new urban tourists conceptualise authenticity differently. That is, many of them could draw a clear line between MacCannell's (1973) conceptualisation of front- and back stages. As such, they noticed a difference in authenticity feelings about public spaces characteristic for Rotterdam, and places that felt more private and less known. This distinction is largely based on how each group of citydwellers were expected to behave – another characteristic that makes the typology of public spaces. Rotterdam's anonymous public spaces that are strongly associated with front stages, mostly define the rough edges of its place image. However, places that new urban tourists associate with back stage behaviour, are the ones that fill the picture and create memories that last, thereby defining the city's authenticity. The way in which new urban tourists search for this lies mostly in how they perceive the city's place image.

The front stages of Rotterdam were experienced as mainly public spaces or iconic buildings, which were specifically targeted at tourists. Especially the area 'Blaak', which features architectural eyecatchers like Markthal and the Cube Houses, was often named as an example by interviewees. Interviewees argued how their perception of Rotterdam's centre was initially mostly based on this area, only to find out later the centre of Rotterdam spread out further. However, as their stay in the city proceeded, so did their reluctance in visiting the area. The more time tourists spent in this part of the city, the more they felt 'as if we were tourists'.

This feeling was caused by the lack of connection, which is an important constituent of new urban tourists' sense of authenticity. As Carmen explains, the reluctance of long-term new urban tourists lies mostly in how areas like the centre of Rotterdam feel fake. She knows there must be locals in Markthal, "but I've never seen them." Caroline de Jager, quartermaster and retail expert in Rotterdam, argues how the front stages lack something that connects people to the place. To her, areas like Blaak and shopping street Koopgoot are soulless and cause a complete disconnect. While discussing the effects of the corona crisis, Caroline noticed how the areas that still had some life's breath, were those places that felt less massive and iconic and had a more personal appeal. In other words, there had been a major shift from places that were associated with MacCannell's (1973) front stage behaviour, to places that were more likely to evoke feelings as if tourists found themselves in back stages of social spheres. In other words, places that do not feel as 'staged', like local cafés and restaurants, were predominantly perceived as more authentically Rotterdam. This is largely based on what tourists perceive Rotterdam's uniqueness to be: its internationality and atmosphere. The

connection to locals was felt more strongly in these places than in the more anonymous public spaces of Rotterdam.



Figure 4.4: Fenix Food Factory

Fenix Food Factory (n.d.). [digital image].

Retrieved from:

<https://indebuurt.nl/rotterdam/nieuws/nieuw-in/de-nieuwe-fenix-food-factory-opent-volgende-week-dit-is-er-veranderd~129347/>

A good example of a place generally regarded as authentically Rotterdam, is the Fenix Food Factory, illustrated in figure 4.4. Situated along the riverside with wide views, this facility combines its unique location in a previous dock in a gentrified area of Rotterdam with offering a variety of different types of drinks, food and shops from local entrepreneurs. After its opening in 2014, the venue attracted many young residents of the city and quickly became popular and intricately intertwined with the Rotterdam DNA. In the same period, the surrounding area

of Katendrecht was successfully subjected to active gentrification initiated by the municipality. Resultingly, it now belongs to their conceptualisation of what the centre of Rotterdam is.

Long-term new urban tourists, however, do not feel the same way. To them, Fenix Food Factory still has an undiscovered vibe and is one of the places in which they truly experience the international and young atmosphere of Rotterdam. For Greek student Andrina, Fenix Food Factory was a regular stop whenever she was showing her friends around. In explaining the appeal of it, Onur states how he especially likes that local people also visit the place. Besides the good food and drinks, he specifically appreciates the atmosphere. This opportunity to connect with locals and feel as if they take part in, and contribute to a young, open, worldly and multicultural atmosphere, is what drives new urban tourists to the place. Not only the available goods on offer or its location, but the atmosphere of the place is very important in attracting them.

Building on this, one could state that performance theory plays a defining role in new urban tourism in Rotterdam. Rather than only looking for the 'ordinary' as Larsen (2020) describes, Rotterdam's new urban tourists also search for the 'urban magic' that Stock (2019) lays out. Whereas these ordinary places are indeed something that attracts tourists, the reason they do this is largely that they still regard it from an outsider perspective and do search for an atmosphere that is more special than merely this everydayness. In fact, then, front stage-places draw people in and define place image, but places associated with back stages are the areas that fill in the void left

by the 'fake' front stages. One could thus state Rotterdam's 'back stage places' are the places that really deserve to be in the spotlight of Goffman's (1959) conceptual stage.

4.3. Long-term new urban tourists and their performance of new urban tourism

To find the difference between these 'fake' and 'real' places, long-term new urban tourists arguably visit both places. What characterises them as long-term new urban tourists, is their search for the previously defined authentic places. In doing so, long-term new urban tourists actively engage with five types of behaviour that are characteristic of their position and add to existing typologies of new urban tourism: behaving reflexively, living like a local, exploring, immersing and connecting. This section will describe the exact ways in which long-term new urban tourists perform their role.

4.3.1. Living like a local

In performing new urban tourism, one of the most important aspects is that its tourists strive to 'act like a local'. In the case of Rotterdam, this is also something that is recognised by institutions. In fact, Renske Satijn accounts for the differentiation in the target audience by stating it is much more pleasant if visitors that fit with the DNA of Rotterdam and therefore blend in with residents are attracted to the city. This is something actively pursued by the interviewees of this study, as it also makes them feel as if their position within the city is somehow strengthened and helps them in their experience. Azra explains how this makes her feel as if she is learning about the city while 'cosplaying like a local':

[...] I think I understand more things if I feel like a local. Because I want to experience that space as ... like, original ... how can I say... I want to experience it the authentic way. I think the way to do that is to be and come close to those local people. Like seeing trees, or seeing buildings from the eyes of a local. Because there are so many stories that they are feeling there. So I'm just cosplaying like a local. And if there is a place like that, I feel more comfortable and I feel like I am more experienced in that city. (Azra, Turkish student)

As Azra explains, in essence, new urban tourists are still the 'ignorant' tourists who aim to discover places they had not seen before. However, their idea of doing this is by chasing the behaviour of locals and the places locals visit, which is seen as the 'authentic way'. With 'cosplaying like a local', then, new urban tourists are performing the role of locals, while in essence still being tourists. Ways to perform this role could either take shape in engaging in couchsurfing, something that Alexander prefers over any other type of stay, or in re-creating an everyday situation in another place, such as Carmen pursues.

[...] I've done the 'fast tourist gaze' of travelling back in 2012. I did Europe in that form, but I don't like it in that way. So whenever I go to cities, for example the last trip that I remember I would say, before the master. It was Madrid. I stayed for almost three weeks, and my way of doing was that I would first do nothing touristic-like. So I would find a yoga studio, I would go to a yoga studio, I would have breakfast around... I would try to be as local as possible, which I know is not local, because I would still go to the coffee bars that are meant for tourists. But I would at least take it at a slower pace. And then, of course, there are the museums that I like, the ones that are quite high ranked. Of course I go there. But I normally never do all the touristic things that people do in the city. I just pick the most important ones for me. (Carmen, Colombian student)

By thoughtfully behaving in the way she thought locals would behave, Carmen described how she generally explores cities – including Rotterdam – by using Madrid as an example. In her opinion, behaving like a local means enjoying the slower, everyday parts of life, rather than the fast-paced city trips she describes as being a ‘fast tourist gaze’ type of travelling. This is an interesting notion, as it refers to Urry’s (1990) conceptualisation of the tourist gaze as being the objectified way in which tourists regard something from an outsider perspective. She states to aim for closer involvement with the place she is visiting. Especially striking in this regard, is that she associates the tourist gaze in its basic meaning with a negative connotation. As a result, she actively evades situations involving this gaze. Indeed, as Alexander also argues, in order to create an authentic atmosphere: “[...] you need locals. You need people”. Indeed, this calls for acknowledgement of Urry and Larsen’s (2011) Tourist Gaze 3.0, which highlights the mutual awareness of tourists and locals.

The importance of blending in also shows in the popularity of VFR tourism under interviewees. In line with how Stors et al. (2019) describe how personalised encounters are more important in constituting the tourism experience, new urban tourists are also argued to specifically engage regularly in VFR tourism (Larsen, 2020; Maitland, 2008; Wildish, 2017). Indeed, interviewees indicated how visiting friends and family (VFR) and travelling for specific events was often a motivator for their travels. This type of tourism helped them in determining the ‘local’ places and felt as if they were blending in better than if they had been on their own. As Elektra states:

[...] [In] my adult life I have been in places where people I know are - friends of my study or work, in some countries. So when I am with them, they know how locals act and where they go. And so I prefer that over the tourism. Of course, as I told you, I have to see some stuff. (Elektra, Greek student)

In this sense, literally blending in with an existing group of locals was a way for Elektra to act like a local and discover the parts she wanted to see. In Rotterdam, she engaged in this by visiting local bars and cafés where she could find other residents of her neighbourhood. Doing away with notions of objective authenticity like buildings and the elements of a city that are already said to be defining, interviewees therefore search for their defining traits of a place and position within the place they are visiting. Acting like a local could thus be viewed as a way to create constructive authenticity as introduced by Cohen (1979).

Still, chasing the backstage areas is the core activity of 'acting like a local', in which the act of performance is strongly present. Interestingly, multiple interviewees mentioned the similarity to performing a role. Whereas Azra described it as 'cosplaying like a local', Elektra expresses how she observes a comparison to a role in a play.

[...] I believe that as hard as I try not to be a tourist, everybody is going to see me as a tourist, because I am a tourist. And I think it's a play, that's happening. Because people... I do what I hate other people do. So I behave like a local. (Elektra, Greek student)

What she means here is that by behaving as locally as possible, while not being local, tourists are taking part in a play that reinforces their role. She describes how during her first days in Rotterdam, she tried to blend in with the locals by going sightseeing in a way that did not feel like traditional sightseeing. In doing so she still visited tourist attractions like Markthal, but then did not read all the information specifically for tourists as she did not want to appear as such. Looking back, she identifies how others would still have noticed how she was not local by the exploratory manner in which she walked through Markthal. Arguably, these performances indicate a performative power distribution between tourists and locals. She notes that even if tourists try hard not to perform traditional touristic behaviour at all, the audience of their performance is still able to distinguish who is and who is not local.

4.3.2. Exploring

Indeed, interviewees indicated how exploration is a major motivator and characteristic of their behaviour to live like a local. Maitland's (2008) 'urban explorers' still largely attribute their identity as a tourist and person to this activity. As Andrina describes, a prerequisite for a new urban tourism experience is that "you have to be an explorer, in all the aspects of your travelling life". As she explains, people who do not possess this trait are less likely to visit places outside of the 'obvious' front stages. The municipality of Rotterdam acknowledges this with their conceptualisation of the frontrunner, which shows an exceptional focus on the importance of

exploration as a major motivator for their activities. Arguably, this shows differentiation between the tourists the city does and does not want to attract.

Indeed, exploration is an activity that is acknowledged to also be needed to properly discover Rotterdam. That is, both tourists as well as professionals acknowledge it is a city in which you need to know where to go and where to be, in order to find the 'real' city. To Caroline de Jager, a retail expert in Rotterdam, the uniqueness of the city lies in the way its facilities are spread out and how the city is a type of 'scavenger hunt'. To her, this also means the city is one to be explored. William and Abby recognise that you 'need to know where to go' as well. Alex states she had not found these places to go, which is also why she felt like she did not get to see the local places of Rotterdam. As Abby admits, these places are difficult to find and can be found very unexpectedly. She describes how she found a backstage that defined the authenticity of Rotterdam to her, as they just "work here".

Additionally, there does seem to be a division between explorers and non-explorers among interviewees. Whereas all interviewees inhibited characteristics attributed to new urban tourists, the ones who were less inclined to explore were more likely to visit targeted places they had seen on (social) media. Chinese student Jenny, for instance, actively uses social media and memories from media items she has watched or read in determining which places to visit. The result is that she realised she was only visiting the obvious touristic places. To her, however, they still felt authentic. In this sense, the objective authenticity was enough inclination to visit a place.

Yet, the unexpected is a major theme in interviewees' exploratory activities. However, exploration in a new urban tourism sense does not have to entail conducting full-day expeditions to a certain place. Instead, in most cases, it is manifested by banal activities such as walking around, turning corners, and observing everyday activities in the city. This shaped how interviewees constructed their notion of what the real local places were. While interviewees generally did have a plan in mind about which places to visit, they also left room for unexpected things. Luisa explains how she always takes some time to "just go walking and see what's around the corner" in order to find the unexpected. Onur displays the same behaviour and states how walking around in the city is the best place to find the "niche places" and multifaceted elements of the place. Andrina has a different way of finding the unexpected and works according to a pre-established plan. While walking through a city is her way of discovering "new faces and new places" she explains how "I have a skeleton on my mind. Like, I have to visit these, these and these places. So every path [to these places] is welcome. And sometimes outside this main plan." In addition to walking, Carmen also likes to use her bike to explore cities, such as she did in Rotterdam. To her, simply cycling around is one of the best ways to "feel the vibe of the city", find the places that seem attractive to her and stop there whenever she wishes. It could thus be argued that while finding the back stages in Rotterdam might

be like a scavenger hunt, this is also an attractive factor to new urban tourists. As the city is more challenging to discover, tourists get more opportunities to do their exploring and find the unexpected, authentic places that new urban tourism advocates. One could say that exploration is thus not just one of the activities that make up new urban tourist practices as defined by previous literature yet constructs the identity of the long-term new urban tourist at the same time. Or, as Renske Satijn would define it – it is a character trait and an entire way of living.

4.3.3. Behaving reflexively

In the construction of an authentic new urban tourism experience, reflexivity plays an influential role. Previously identified as a defining trait by Larsen (2020), most interviewees demonstrated their awareness of it. By carefully picking the places she assumes to be front stages when visiting a place, Carmen demonstrates the thoughtful process long-term new urban tourists go through in defining what feels authentic to them. That is, by acknowledging the staged authenticity they sense in places they associate with front stages, interviewees displayed signs of postmodern authenticity. They knew certain places were more touristic than others and knew when they were being shown the front stage of the city. What Alexander describes below, is how the activities he defines as stereotypical touristic and glossed over can still serve to get to know the city better.

[...] I would say if you go on some sort of an organized tour, an organized trip or something like this. That is definitely one of the most touristy experiences that you can get. For instance, I went for three walking tours here in Rotterdam, when I arrived. Which was a very touristy activity, but it was also a way for me to get to know the city and become more of a local.

(Alexander, Russian student)

In line with how Yi et al. (2018) described the new urban tourist as a postmodern subject with acceptance of a lack of definition, Alexander thoughtfully conceptualises the term authenticity and how it can differ for each person. This nuanced awareness positions him as one of Yi et al.'s (2018) postmodern subjects.

Simultaneously, Elektra addresses another important element within the reflexive, postmodern stance new urban tourists arguably take. That is, by doing 'what I hate other people do', she refers to a reflexive awareness of her role as a tourist, which is another important indicator of new urban tourism: trying not to be a tourist (Larsen, 2020; Maitland, 2008). Traditional front stages are largely disregarded as being too touristic. Whenever Azra pays a visit to second city Istanbul, she avoids visiting places like these at any cost. Yet, new urban tourism behaviour seems to possibly go one step further than identified in previous researches, up to the level of pomposity. A certain level

of rivalry appears when being among other tourists. Elektra explains this rivalry while addressing her position amongst other tourists:

[...] Of course I HATE them! The whole purpose is to be annoyed with all of these people that are next to me and are waiting for tickets, and how they behave... OMG, they are such tourists. (Elektra, Greek student)

The motivation behind this feeling of standing above other tourists, is one of sensory nature. Whereas Elektra indicates she just feels that way, yet does not know why, Azra thinks it has something to do with a crowded feeling and (in)efficiency of a place. To Andrina, this is not necessarily a sign of pomposity. Regarding herself as a person that is keen to explore, she explains how people who are less inclined to do so are less likely to be new urban tourists in her regard. In doing so, she draws a borderline between those who like to discover and those of less exploratory nature – thereby exerting a certain level of pomposity herself.

The embeddedness of new urban tourism in more general tourist practices seems to suggest that searching for off the beaten path experiences is not as unknown as it used to be. It could thus be argued how these types of behaviour have become more accepted and have merged into a form of structure, as was suggested by Schechner (2004). Indeed, it seems to suggest that as the mere performance of new urban tourism has grown into a structure, it has evolved into what Butler (1993) coined as a performative practice. Pomposity could be a new type of agency challenging the existing structure of searching for off the beaten path experiences.

4.3.4. Immersing

A theme that is characteristic for long-term tourists and extends the notion of new urban tourism, is *immersion*. In both a spatiotemporal as well as social sense, strengthening the connection with their surroundings is key to long-term new urban tourists.

Building on the existing character of new urban tourism in which the importance of understanding a place is laid out, long-term new urban tourists can spend more time to immerse themselves in their surroundings, thus make their tourism experience deeper and more worthwhile than if they had been there for a short term. Luisa states how she sees a difference between staying somewhere for a short time and for a longer period, in which she can engage in “entering in the mental ways of people”. Indeed, Andrina is convinced a longer time is needed as well. She states: “[...] I think this is the period you need to discover a place: seven or eight months. But then without studying... To properly feel the vibe of a place.” As a result, long-term tourists spread their activities over a wider period. Both Onur and Andrina describe how they feel less pressure to see everything in

one go and rather take their time to explore the city. However, this can also lead to procrastination. As such, long-term tourists deeply dived into their surroundings through exploration. It can be noted tourists are more actively searching for a solid background before looking for the actual sight, site or object. As Carmen indicates, she could better inform herself before visiting the place. This significantly influenced her understanding and perception of a place. For her stay in Rotterdam, “the immersion into the city has also been around the history of the city. And then, for example, I read about Hotel New York and how it developed. And then I go and visit it.” As previous architecture student and with an interest in heritage, Azra enthusiastically dived into the city’s history as well. She explains how she, during the duration of her stay, gradually discovered the history of Rotterdam and only then understood the city better. Interestingly, she touches upon the time that is needed to properly experience the city and ‘sense’ why everything is the way it is. The impression of a place may thus be established on a short term – the actual immersion only happens after a longer time. Therefore, in focusing on Rotterdam’s history and architecture, long-term new urban tourists engage with the origin story as described by Maarten Suijker. In this sense, it shows how tourists’ activities and policymaking forces align in the case of Rotterdam.

Additionally, the importance of personal contact is also a strengthened aspect of how long-term new urban tourism is connected to immersion. That is, the establishment or non-establishment of a deeper type of personal contact can make or break their tourism experience. For instance, Luisa considers the time she spent in Rotterdam as a unique experience, as she explains how she met very important people in her life and discovered more about herself. William refers to this same feeling of belonging. Whereas he first felt disconnected with the city, he later nuanced his view when he discovered the sense of community that is present in the city. In line with what Onur and Azra indicated as being welcomed by the open atmosphere of the city, and how Carmen and Elektra placed emphasis on the multicultural ‘vibe’ of the city, William argues here how immersion could strengthen these feelings.

On the other hand, immersion with regards to personal contact can also break a long-term tourism experience when it is lacking. Whereas William still harboured mixed feelings towards his sense of belonging in Rotterdam, Alex did not feel connected to the city at all. She explains how the lack of community sense in her student accommodation negatively influenced her emotions. She also recognised this in the student community at the city’s Erasmus University and in general. She explains how “I didn't have any connections with anyone. I didn't really make small talk with anyone... I kind of always just felt disconnected from everyone around me.” In recognising this, Alex acknowledges how she sees a link between her lack of immersion in a social sense with the way she experienced the city. This same aspect is addressed by Paola, who temporarily lived in Paris a few years before moving to Rotterdam. Yet, in comparison to her previous experience, the experience in

Rotterdam was much better. That is, she felt no connection to Paris and its people at all. She explains how forming friendships made the difference between Paris and Rotterdam.

[...] definitely it wasn't a city to get used to. It was super hard for me to make friends and it was just very lonely. And in Rotterdam, I don't know, I had super nice roommates from the start, so we really made like a family in Charlois. So yeah. It was very different. The experience was like entirely different. (Paola, Colombian student)

As Luisa, William, Alex and Paola all differently portray, the importance of forming friendships and a sense of belonging in a place is thus more prominent for people who are staying in a place for a longer period. In this sense, a long-term new urban tourism experience dives deeper into the new urban tourist's urge to establish a connection and personal contact, through immersion thereby verifying Bui et al.'s (2014) description of personal contact, which is important for establishing connection, as a pull factor.

4.3.5. Connecting

However, the theme that remains most striking for all interviewees is one that signifies and strengthens the notion of new urban tourism is how they are chasing connection. As such, it is addressed separately. This deeper type of immersion is established through deeper understanding, emotional connection, and lastly the active construction of a deep connection.

The importance of personal memories and experiences is something that is also recognised by institutions in Rotterdam. That is, with the frontrunner typology, Rotterdam Partners is aware of how personal contact and ambassadorship either makes or breaks a touristic experience and makes the difference between a front- and back stage. Indeed, an important indicator of back stages is that "Interactions are real", according to Carmen. As previously noted, ways to chase these back stages can take place through VFR-tourism.

Yet, the importance of this personal contact stretches deeper than merely loose personal interactions. What interviewees indicate, is that a deeper attachment is the element that makes or breaks their experience. Therefore, interviewees indicated to actively engage in establishing these real connections. The exact ways in which new urban tourists do so, however, has not been addressed in previous studies. What interviewees indicate, is that this is done through actively understanding their surroundings. This shows a contrast to the passive reception as is advocated in places considered as front stages by interviewees. Elektra explains why this, to her, passive way of understanding a city does not work any longer:

[...] With touristic attractions, the only thing you do is just watch. And you pretend that you read the letter they have in front of you, but you never do that. I don't believe that anyone – especially the big texts, tables full of details – only a few people read it and are focused. I'm not focused, just watching all this information, pretending I'm reading the details. The history and stuff. But I don't really read, I'm just going through the sentences. So that I don't like. (Elektra, Greek student)

For her, at the core of grasping a city's identity lies active participation in understanding what is around her. Signs telling her what to do and what to think do not work for her. Yet, the same type of information is still something new urban tourists are interested in. The way they get to it, and the extent to which they care to know the details might differ. However, at the core, it could be said that "in understanding lies the key to decent connection", as Alexander puts it.

With understanding forming the base, the next step to forming a connection is finding the right atmosphere and an emotional connection to the place. According to Rotterdam's policy documents and confirmed by Maarten Suijker and Renske Satijn, the aspect that frontrunners are keen to return to is the 'vibe' of the city. Resultingly, they search for places in which they find the international, open atmosphere, which could be described as follows:

[...] non-touristic places are places that don't really have something, something tangible. But they have the vibe, the atmosphere... something good happened there. (Andrina, Greek student)

Referring to the importance of intangibility for Rotterdam, this same type of atmosphere is what facilitates connection to others. While Abby explains why a hotspot in Rotterdam is her favourite, she highlights the place's unique atmosphere - as it combines sports, with leisure, with nightlife. To her, this is one of the aspects that makes an experience most unique to her.

Still, the most influential factor of long-term new urban tourists' construction of authenticity, is the creation of a deep connection to the people of their destination. As Urry and Larsen (2011) already identified the importance of acknowledgement and interaction with the local population in their description of the Tourist Gaze 3.0, the creation of this connection goes further than this. The contrast between front- and back stages is something that determines the connection of new urban tourists to a place. Whereas Carmen describes Markthal as a front stage, and therefore without having any type of attachment and being "soulless" to her, Elektra describes how one of her most iconic authentic experiences took place in a pub in a quiet London borough, which only served three elderly people at the time she entered the pub. Upon her entrance, the elderly people started a

conversation, which Elektra deeply appreciated as she likes meeting locals and really hearing their stories as well. Upon explaining what it exactly is that makes her experience as authentic, she emphasises the importance of feeling connected with other people.

[...] it's the essence of being somewhere local. And I also like the style of the places. On the one hand, I love this urban, hipster thing. But also I like the old-fashioned bars. With wooden floors and bar... And I like to be next to people who have [...] this story behind them. You could feel a continuity. And an essence of a group, everybody knew the bartender and the bartender used to know us. The person next to us... So we made friendships. That was really nice for me. I often go to places where I can have a connection with the people that work there, or other people that go there. So I want to feel that in the places. Specifically I have this feeling that while I was in Rotterdam, wherever I was there were people that I knew. So for me, it was more to build the connection with these people. (Andrina, Greek student)

This explanation is highly explanatory for long-term new urban tourists' constant search for connection. Whether they are in bars, restaurants, cultural venues, or public spaces, strolling around markets – interviewees were constantly searching for attachment to the place and its locals. This stretches deeper than mere interaction. Indeed, as Elektra states, forming in-depth friendships and lasting connection to a place is what counts. Therefore, rather than merely establishing a mutual gaze, as is argued to be the Tourist Gaze 3.0 by Urry and Larsen (2011), new urban tourism might bring a fourth version of the Tourist Gaze to the stage. That is, by going one layer deeper than fleeting contact and actively seeking a deep connection to a place by understanding, feeling, hearing stories, and consequently being immersed in them, long-term new urban tourists form a closer bond to a place than what the Tourist Gaze 3.0 accounts for.

4.4. Understanding new urban tourism in the formation of Rotterdam's place image

Since its forced renaissance after World War II, Rotterdam has constantly been reinventing itself. The city took full advantage of opportunities offered by the empty site the city centre had largely become and started to actively experiment with architectural styles. The result has been built up throughout the years and now includes a wide variety of styles, ranging from the Brutalist architecture of 'Blakeburg', to the Structuralist 'Cube Houses' of the 1980s, to newer iconic buildings like Markthal and 'De Rotterdam' and its new take on Brutalist architecture. Yet, Rotterdam's urban planning design and architecture merely form the top of the iceberg. That is, its physical attributes are a portrayal of a full process of active decision-making and worldview of its

municipality, but also signify the mentality of the city's residents. So to say, the Rotterdam of today has grown into a city with a strong future-oriented outlook.

As Rotterdam Partners' marketing 'handbook' on Rotterdam – the *R Guide* - states, Rotterdam is not just physically a young city. Instead, its intangible atmosphere is just as important as the tangible parts. That is, its contemporary appearance is said to facilitate a modern and innovative outlook. Its unconventionality goes together with an entrepreneurial mindset and its dynamic multiculturalism paves the way for international attraction. In correspondence, policymaker Maarten Suijker highlights the innovative, entrepreneurial scene and international outlook of the city as well. This place identity forms the basis of all place branding practices the city engages in. And in line with its innovative focus, Maarten states the exact image that is constructed by marketing organisations has evolved over the years from a port city with an engaging entrepreneurial environment to an international and cosmopolitan city. This strong focus on being known internationally and constructing a place image that is different from its traditional Dutch surroundings illustrates its position as a second city (Hodos, 2007).

This section compares the city's policy view with the existing place image of Rotterdam among long-term new urban tourists and reflects on place branding practices engaged with in the case of Rotterdam.

4.4.1. New urban tourists' place image of Rotterdam

Rotterdam knows specific touristic clusters that attract the majority of the tourists, but is also made up of many different neighbourhoods – each with their own character and less touristic identity. This distribution influenced tourists' perception of what Rotterdam is. Here, interviewees identified two different types of place image corresponding to feelings of front- and back stage behaviour: a type that is experienced during a short-term visit, and an alternative place image that is experienced mostly during a long-term stay. This difference influenced their perception of Rotterdam.

For short-term visitors, Rotterdam's undoubted main asset is its iconic architecture. In fact, of the 12 tourists that shared their opinion on Rotterdam, everybody referred to how they noticed the city's characteristic architecture and modernity straight away. For Greek student Andrina, it is the one thing the city shouts out to the rest of the world. It is the image that captured the interviewees' attention in the first place and either did, or did not draw them in. Many empty bombed sites had been used to create completely different buildings and this is something that still captures visitors' attention in their first impressions, such as is described below:

[...] My expectations were somehow expecting something special, because I think in Europe a place like Rotterdam is a very unique place. In terms of how it looks and how it goes above

itself. And I would have expected to see something different. Because when I saw the pictures of skyscrapers and stuff, I was like 'That doesn't look like Amsterdam?! Europeans don't do that... especially not in the capitals...' I didn't believe they would do it. But Rotterdam does it, and that's kind of cool. (Alexander, Russian student)

As the traditional place image of The Netherlands partly overshadowed the image of Rotterdam, the city's modern architecture formed a confronting break with this image. Tourists' first gazes on the city are therefore most likely to include an assessment of its architecture: the Erasmus Bridge, the Cube Houses and the city's central station are all examples of striking architecture, as illustrated in figure 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. This is also what tourism policies acknowledge, as Rotterdam's modernity is defined through its architecture at first glance.

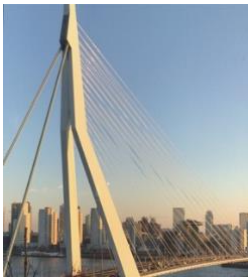


Figure 4.1: Erasmus Bridge
Photo taken by author



Figure 4.2: Cube Houses
Baster, N. (Photographer).
(n.d.). [digital image].
Retrieved from:
www.unsplash.com



Figure 4.3: Central Station
Skitterians, R. (Photographer).
(2017, June 18). Rotterdam
Central [digital image].
Retrieved from:
www.pixabay.com

This obvious physical trait is something that captures attention in the first place was also noticed by interviewees who engaged less actively within the city noticed this. American student Alex had initially expected Rotterdam to be like the idealistic, traditional image of The Netherlands – including canals, clogs and tulips. After coming to the city and finding out on her first day how “mismatched” the city was, her perception of it was negatively influenced, which she argues led to lower involvement with the city. The factors for the first impression of a city are therefore influential in determining the initial place image.

However, Rotterdam benefits from another striking but more underlying asset making the city unique to its visitors. That is, the longer interviewees stayed in the city and engaged in activities, the more they discovered the unique ambience of the city. Long-term new urban tourists experienced the city's atmosphere as extremely international, diverse and open. While they knew

Rotterdam would be an international city, many had not realised the scope of this and the consequences for the ambience of the city. As a result, this formed a pleasant surprise. The many international users of the city create an atmosphere that feels open and accepting for international students. For instance, Onur describes how he felt welcomed by the city right away and how he has not felt uncomfortable in any case since. In line with this open and international ambience, interviewees had also not expected to encounter as many cultures as they did in Rotterdam. Due to its history as a port city and Dutch (post)colonial history, Rotterdam hosts residents of more than 170 nationalities. Resultingly, the city hosts many different communities, restaurants and cafés. Interviewees highlighted how they were surprised by the diverse types of cuisine on offer and how communities were spread through the city. As Russian student Alexander put it: “In Rotterdam, you never know who is local”. Carmen had even devised her own metaphor for the city and explains it as follows:

[...] Rotterdam is like a patchwork, yes? So you know this fabrics that ... I don't know, in Latin America it's the grannies that do it ... but you know, you have the patchworks made of different fabrics. But somehow it looks harmonious. It looks pretty. But it's different fabrics of things. I think the uniqueness of Rotterdam is diversity in all its meanings. (Carmen, Colombian student)

By comparing Rotterdam to a patchwork, Carmen identifies how Rotterdam is made up of different cultures and different neighbourhoods, all with their own identity. The different architectural styles but mostly the different atmosphere in each neighbourhood is the element that makes the city unique to her. Indeed, this multiculturalism is also something that is acknowledged as part of the internationality of Rotterdam by the city's policy-forming parties. As previously stated, Rotterdam's identity as a future-oriented and innovative place is built on its internationality. Whereas this forms one of the pillars of Rotterdam's place image, long-term new urban tourists are specifically charmed by this aspect of the city.

However, what is at the core of this place image and a striking emergent theme from all interviews, was how Rotterdam took up the position as second city. As it was a relatively unknown city to most interviewees, they displayed a tendency to associate and connect Rotterdam to The Netherlands' best internationally known city – Amsterdam. However, the history and demographics of the Dutch capital are different from the port city. This comparison influenced their opinion of the city either before or during their stay. That is, whereas Rotterdam's architecture deviates from traditional Dutch architecture associated with Amsterdam, this either set their expectations before visiting or struck them when they first arrived. As a result, the city struck them as

being fairly unknown in a touristic sense, but mostly as being a very experimental city. As Azra explains:

[...] There are some places that are traditional, or looking like traditional places, but there are some places that are very good in inventing new architectural places and architectural environments. So there is an experiment going on there. So I think that experiment is also very important. Very unique for Rotterdam. (Azra, Turkish student)

As suggested above, this perception of Rotterdam's unconventional place image makes a strong fit with new urban tourists, who are attracted by alternative, off the beaten track places (Larsen, 2020; Maitland, 2008; Stors et al., 2019). This shows an interesting comparison with existing policies highlighting this aspect and to Hodos' (2007) explanation of second cities as needing to 'get out there'.

However, this tendency to be as deviant from other places as possible, can also have another effect. American student Alex, for example, had high hopes for the "idealistic version of the clogs, the canals and boats" mostly associated with The Netherlands. The modern and "mismatched" physical character of the city therefore surprised her. While it did not lead to her disliking the city right away, she admits it did influence her overall negative experience of the city. Therefore, one could say the influence of second cities on how Rotterdam is experienced as authentic, can have two types of consequences: positive, and negative.

The uniqueness of Rotterdam, according to interviewees, is thus not just manifested in the physical and static attraction, but rather in its openness, internationality and multiculturalism, which is what is more prominent in places associated with back stage feelings. Especially this alternative place image is what makes the city unique to its visitors and displays the mix in which both traditional as well as alternative aspects of place image are prominent in Rotterdam's tourism policies.

4.4.2. The role of place branding in attracting long-term new urban tourists

As stated, Rotterdam's 'patchwork' is made up of various elements. Its place image – thus its brand – is multidisciplinary (Anholt, 2005). A place brand is a set of associations visitors have of a place and forms the product of everything they experience within the city. In turn, place branding involves conveying and influencing these associations (Braun et al., 2013). Interestingly, there is a difference between how the place brand of Rotterdam is experienced by tourists, and how institutions engage in place branding. Arguably, Rotterdam's place image is formed by 'soft' branding rather than 'hard' branding practices in the form of marketing. This is illustrated through an examination of the city's

slogan 'Rotterdam. Make it happen.' and the recognition of recommendations and VFR-tourism in attracting tourists.

Make it happen

Even though Rotterdam actively uses its slogan 'Rotterdam. Make it happen.' in many instances, it faces some criticism. There seems to be a discrepancy in how effective structural parties think it is and how this is received by the tourists – who exert agency.

The R Guide of Rotterdam states how 'Rotterdam. Make it happen.' has been the city's marketing slogan since 2014 and is a product of structural collaboration between the Port of Rotterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam Festivals, Rotterdam Topsport and Rotterdam Partners. It serves the international market of Rotterdam and arguably displays the city's core values 'Bold, Forward, Culture'. 'Make it happen' focuses on co-creation, but rather in the sense of how tourists can add (economic) value to the city and its vibrancy. It largely focuses on how tourism can serve the city in its development, whereas the actual creation of the atmosphere is largely neglected. Arguably, then, that leaves room for improvement of the existing branding strategies of Rotterdam. That is, by actively making use of its 'Make it happen' slogan, Rotterdam corresponds to the conception of a postmodern city selling itself as a package to its tourists as argued by Harvey (1989), Sorkin (1992) and Selby (2004). Yet, despite the questionable effectiveness of this for new urban tourists (Stors et al., 2019), it is something with which the city targets frontrunners as well.

Still, how Rotterdam aims to convey its identity to this group of people does not seem to be noticeable for interviewees. That is, they do not see the same appeal of the slogan and branding campaign as the institutions do, even while their stay here is longer than that of the average city tripper in Rotterdam. Most interviewees indicated not being very familiar with the campaign, slogan and what it stands for – only Italian student Luisa and Colombian student Carmen were outspoken about this. That is, Luisa had a highly personal association with the slogan, as 'Make it happen' inspired her to open her mind to new things, which she never made time for in Italy, and made her start on personal projects she always wanted to do. In her case, she was 'Making it happen' herself. As such, 'Make it happen' symbolises her period in Rotterdam, connecting it to a type of existential authenticity. Yet, Colombian student Carmen had a different opinion. As a previous marketing professional, the slogan did not appeal to her at all. She states:

[...] It needs an explanation. And if you need an explanation for a slogan, then it's wrong. So yeah... for me it says nothing and it means nothing. It may be easy to use in terms of business, but I do - again- think they need to explain it. (Carmen, Colombian student)

Here, Carmen emphasises the importance of co-creation in a city brand as argued for by Richards (2016) and Kavaratzis (2017). In this sense, the place branding of Rotterdam could work in different ways. It could lead to highly personal associations like Luisa's, very negative associations like Carmen's, or it could be confusing for most people. To decrease the latter effect, Onur – who has an extensive interest in place branding – proposes a better integration of co-creation, in which tourists are also included in 'grasping' the brand of Rotterdam. In doing so, Onur highlights the same importance of inclusion of residents in place brands as Braun et al. (2013) identified earlier.

What is especially interesting in this regard, is how the importance of connecting structure with agency comes together. What makes Rotterdam unique to the interviewed new urban tourists, is primarily its ambience. Yet, by visiting these places and attending the events American student Abby teasingly calls inexplicable 'random events', tourists are contributing to the existing place image. Co-creating a touristic experience, then, is indeed key in new urban tourism (Frenzel, 2019). Arguably, then, that leaves room for improvement of the existing branding strategies of Rotterdam. That is, by actively making use of its 'Make it happen' slogan, Rotterdam corresponds to the conceptualisation of a postmodern city selling itself as a package to its tourists as argued by Harvey (1989), Sorkin (1992) and Selby (2004). However, this type of branding does not work effectively for new urban tourists, who do not fully understand what 'Make it happen' is supposed to mean.

Co-creation of Rotterdam's place image

If it were up to the interviewed new urban tourists, co-creating a communal sense of what a city is instead of finding a slogan would be more effective, thereby aligning with the view of Lin et al. (2017) and Pelling and Manuel-Navarrete (2011). That is, rather than a direct marketing approach, a softer approach in the form word-of-mouth branding and visiting friends and family (VFR) tourism would work better in attracting new urban tourists. This is in line with how Braun et al. (2014) argued that word-of-mouth-branding (WOM) is more effective than traditional place branding. Whereas policy documents emphasis how residents should function as ambassadors, interviewees also saw this ambassador role for themselves.

Apart from the use of the 'Rotterdam. Make it Happen' strategy, institutions within Rotterdam seem to be largely aware of the influence of 'soft branding'. In fact, all policy documents acknowledge the importance of residents in conveying the place image of Rotterdam. What Braun et al. (2013) argued for in their work on the role of residents in co-creating a place brand, thus proves to still be in effect in the structural tourism-shaping forces of Rotterdam. However, the inclusion of residents in place branding does not guarantee a successful attraction of new urban tourists. By

actively including residents in the formation of the new tourism vision on Rotterdam, this should help create a less artificial place brand according to Braun et al. (2013). And while this may be the case for residents currently, the group of tourists had not directly been included. As a result, this may account for the discrepancy in connection to the city's place marketing efforts.

Additionally, the *new vision on tourism* of the city proposes to use residents' roles and stories more actively in telling the story of Rotterdam. While this form of generation WOM-branding might not be received as effectively yet, this way of promoting the city in general is indeed regarded as effective in how the interviewed new urban tourists discovered the city before coming here. The use of internet sources and social media pictures or publications about the city were generally deemed as trustworthy and providing a more reliable image than what they read on the website of Rotterdam.Info. Jenny, a Chinese student who moved to Rotterdam to start her bachelor's studies, was not quite certain of her destination when deciding a place to study. By checking the internet for reviews of people just like her, she found out more about the city and was eventually swayed to making the move to Rotterdam. Besides using an easy Google search like other interviewees indicated, Andrina stated she also actively searched for information on social media, particularly Instagram. The impressions she got from these channels filled her first few days of exploration in the city. Indeed, this active type of exploring the city closely fits the nature of new urban tourism as a process in which both locals and tourists actively engage in adding to the identity and image of the city (Maitland & Newman, 2004; Stors et al., 2019).

Simultaneously, during their stay in the city, long-term new urban tourists also make decisions based on friends' and locals' recommendations. For example, Onur indicates how he would not have discovered a bar with spectacular views on the river right opposite his house, had it not been for one of his friends' recommendations. Recommendations like this could thus majorly influence decisions and perceptions of the city. A reason for this is that these types of information were regarded as being more real and truthful than marketed information. Again, this stresses Govers' (2011) and Stors et al.'s (2019) argument that WOM-branding is indeed a way of promotion that is more likely to be positively perceived. In fact, the effect of WOM-branding also stretches beyond merely attracting new urban tourists. In the case of a longer stay, it also means the occasional visit of friends and family (VFR tourism). And by showing them around, interviewees switched in their roles from being attracted to a place, to being the ones that showed how the place can be attractive to others. In other words, the personal connection established through VFR-tourism also creates an opportunity to create ambassadors out of tourists (Stors et al., 2019; Wildish, 2017). Adding this to Rotterdam's 'locals as ambassadors' campaign would make for an effort deeply appreciated by the city's new urban tourists.

By establishing how Rotterdam's policies fit with the long-term new urban tourists through policies, place image and place branding, a deeper understanding of how new urban tourism is performed in contemporary setting is aimed to be constructed. Bearing in mind the liminal position of long-term new urban tourists and ways in which they perform tourism behaviour, the next chapter places the findings of this study in their context.

5. The final act: New urban tourism in its context

While long-term new urban tourism easily takes up centre stage, it is still part of a wider environment. This chapter repositions the findings into their context and reflects on the study that has been conducted.

To shed more light on recent developments in how tourism takes place in cities, this thesis aimed to further demarcate and unveil the workings of new urban tourism in the formation of place image. Rather than focusing on capturing experiences or behaviour only, it was aimed to understand and explore the mutual dynamics between long-term new urban tourists in Rotterdam and tourism structures created by professionals engaged with policymaking. Thus, the research question this study answers, inquires: *How is place image mutually constructed through long-term new urban tourists' performances and tourism structures created by professionals in the field?* With a special focus on performance theory, both a deeper understanding of the group of new urban tourists as well as an insight into the ways both parties engage with this type of tourism was aimed to achieve. Using Rotterdam as case, the group of previous and current international students, as well as the group of professionals in the creation of tourism policies, shared their opinion on tourism in the city. Especially the group of long-term new urban tourists provided insight in their general tourism behaviour as well. Focusing on four main dimensions constituted in providing the answer to the main research question. By examining the place image of Rotterdam and tourism in the city specifically, it was established how place image and an understanding of tourism align for tourists and organisations alike. The role of place branding was determined through the use of the case of Rotterdam as well as a general level, thereby laying out how new urban tourists can and cannot be attracted to a place. Most importantly, by diving into the exact conceptualisations, behaviour and activities at the base of new urban tourists' activities, the construction of authenticity and the influential role of performance theory was mapped out. Additional emphasis was placed in identifying the influence of liminality in determining the experience of long-term new urban tourists, which showed through different conceptualisations of authenticity.

Firstly, it should be stated that tourists who visit Rotterdam in search of traditional Dutch imagery will discover how their expectations will not be met. This modern and international outlook of the city also proliferates in the city's tourism policies, which emphasise the exploratory and innovative character of the frontrunner as its main target audience in the coming years. Rotterdam's policymakers portray a beginning awareness of new urban tourism with their typology of frontrunners. Indeed, they are already attracting part of their target audience through this strategy.

Additionally, the liminal position of long-term new urban tourists proves an important underlying factor in long-term tourism behaviour. The sub-dimension of this study focusing on their position within Rotterdam's tourism industry shows how they identify as neither tourist nor resident. This liminal position constructs their perception of Rotterdam considerably. They aim to demarcate their liminal position by building connections, using local means of getting around and establishing a routine. As such, the way in which long-term new urban tourists attribute to the existing place image, is by actively chasing the sense of authenticity they identify in their liminal position. Consequently, constructive authenticity is more strongly present than existential authenticity. While showing minor deviance from the general level, long-term new urban tourists emphasised new urban tourists' need for deep connection and immersion in establishing a more existential authentic experience and suggest a possible addition to Urry and Larsen's (2011) Tourist Gaze 3.0 or even the introduction of a fourth version.

The third dimension of this study shows how long-term new urban tourists do so by constructing certain behavioural characteristics that are both similar as well as deviant from existing typologies of new urban tourism. They do this by aiming to live like a local, thereby owing their notions of authentic experiences to their place as a tourist within the bigger societal picture, which indicates how constructive authenticity is present. Additionally, by emphasising the importance of actively exploring a place, this study supports Wildish' (2017) and Larsen's (2020) existing conceptualisations of the behaviour of the new urban tourist. Furthermore, through behaving reflexively, long-term new urban tourists recognise the staged authenticity of places they regard as front stages. However, this study also showed how new urban interviewees are more likely to display pomposity toward other new urban tourists on top of their postmodern behaviour, as well as how they chase a deeper connection rather than mere interaction as argued by previous studies. Instead of establishing a Tourist Gaze 3.0, long-term new urban tourists immerse themselves in their surroundings, building up an understanding of a place through an emotional connection with the physical sites and its people, in which the construction of a deep, interpersonal connection is key. Arguably, there is a call for a further extension of Urry and Larsen's (2011) most recent tourist gaze conceptualisation into a possibly emergent Tourist Gaze 4.0

Zooming in to Rotterdam, the fourth sub-dimension of this research shows how its iconic buildings and architectural style draw in new urban tourists from a first glance. Whereas this seemingly spectacular front stage is what creates and guides the first definition of place image, the less-known parts of the city seem to be the areas that form the place image that sticks with new urban tourists. Long-term new urban tourists have more time to explore these back stages and attribute a deeper meaning to the place. This gives space for openness, internationality and multiculturalism as the most important constituents of Rotterdam's place image. As these are the

elements emphasised by organisational structures of Rotterdam too, a certain alignment of views can be noted here. The place identity of Rotterdam could therefore be said to indeed lie at the core of its touristic image as well (Kavaratzis & Pedeliento, 2019). Yet, new urban tourists are more likely to rely on interpersonal recommendations as a form of branding. That is, as Füller and Michel (2014) and Stors et al. (2019) identified earlier, new urban tourists are indeed chasing banality in their search of an authentic experience. While this is something structural organisations in Rotterdam still engage in, particularly through Make it Happen, it is not something that new urban tourists are looking for. Instead, they are more likely to build on the opinion of others, explaining new urban tourists' positive attitude to VFR tourism and illustrating the effectiveness of word-mouth-branding as identified by Braun, Eshuis and Klijn (2014), Govers (2011) and Malet Calvo (2018). The alignment as portrayed through place image thus slightly deviates here when it comes to the branding of Rotterdam. While place image is something that influences new urban tourists' first perception of a place, they are not likely to be attracted through direct marketing approaches like Rotterdam's 'Make it Happen' slogan.

On a general level, analysis shows how co-creation as is recognised by the institutions of Rotterdam largely includes locals only. Still, considering how the definition of frontrunners portrays an overlap with that of new urban tourism, the typology of the frontrunner portrays possibilities to include aspects of Frenzel's (2019) commoning. Through a strengthened emphasis on constructive and existential authenticity, long-term new urban tourists actively engage in practices that do not only allow for blending in, but also facilitate the construction of connection and emotion. Coming back to the main research question at hand, it could thus be said that while structural forces do portray a beginning awareness of new urban tourism, place image for new urban tourists is still largely influenced by their performances, taking shape in the way they actively construct their own sense of authenticity. This rings especially true in the case of long-term new urban tourists, who have more time thus power to co-create the brand of Rotterdam. The influence of performance theory is mostly applicable for analysis of the new urban tourism phenomenon, thereby providing an additional dimension to the existing new urban tourism performance studies (Larsen, 2020; Stors et al., 2019).

Whereas new urban tourism had previously been attributed the characteristics of an ambiguous topic, this study aided in the further demarcation of the phenomenon, as well as enriching the existing conceptualisation by providing additional dimensions and a proposal for a reconsideration of the notion of the Tourist Gaze 3.0. By using a case study of a second city rather than a world city, it was aimed to demonstrate the workings of new urban tourism where its presence is more easily recognised. Where previous studies on new urban tourism mostly focused on tourists themselves, this study set out to include the role of policies as a reaction to or guiding new

urban tourist behaviour. Additionally, the position of international students as long-term tourists within the group of new urban tourism provides a more detailed description of a subgroup within tourism. By uncovering how liminality is experienced by these groups, it provides more insight into the position of the group of temporary residents, which may help in repositioning them on the spectrum of tourism.

This reconsidered conceptualisation can also prove useful for policies, as it provides more insight in a specific subgroup rather than an anonymous tourist crowd. Using illustration from the case of Rotterdam, this study calls for more emphasis on 'soft' branding practices, in the form of word-of-mouth branding as well as VFR tourism, in policy-making processes within urban environments. Specifically, in the case of Rotterdam, this research calls for a reconsideration and expansion of the role of locals in the frontrunner strategy to include a more tourist-centred approach. In doing so, more alignment between both parties is achieved, which may help in developing a more targeted approach that helps prevent overtourism.

However, even if this study provides more insight in the general term of new urban tourism, it should be noted that the scope of this research has been limited to the inclusion of one city, being Rotterdam. The results are therefore not easily generalisable to other cities, as policies in each city are different. The typology of the frontrunner is an interesting example of how organisations may engage with new urban tourism, yet it only illustrates the case of Rotterdam. A study with a broader comparative scope, focusing on analysing the research population in multiple different cities, would make an insightful continuation of this study. Additionally, by focusing on capturing the experience of long-term new urban tourists in the form of international students, it should be noted the population of this study is a narrowly defined group within a certain scope of age. The perceptions of other age categories might differ from the perception of the interviewed generation. Further research could focus on identifying categories of new urban tourists across different age and geographic clusters as well.

Lastly, the influence of the outbreak of the COVID-19 (corona) virus and the consequent crisis heavily influenced the proceedings and outcome of this research. Tourism organisations and policymakers faced deep-reaching crises, leading to a reconsideration of data gathering methods in this study. Policy documents filled up the position of the tourism officials taking care of the crisis in local tourism. As the influence of the corona crisis included the call for self-quarantine and closure of many public and private institutions, face-to-face interviews were off-limits. Instead, conducting interviews through digital communication platforms Zoom and Skype was used as a solution. Yet, this might have influenced how rapport was established, possibly leading to different outcomes of this research. Further research could therefore investigate the alignment of structure and agency at a closer level by broadening the scope of this

research and conducting more face-to-face interviews with policymakers. Naturally, the influence of the 2020 corona crisis in itself would make a challenging and insightful research topic for the case of new urban tourism.

Considering this study suggests a reconsideration of the notion of the Tourist Gaze 3.0 and the possibility of a Tourist Gaze 4.0, additional research is needed to justify and concretise this conceptualisation. Further delineation of the position of liminality in new urban tourism may prove useful in the adjustment of strategies and policies to its presence in new urban tourism.

As a city known to be experimental in both its architecture as well as its policies, the case of Rotterdam creates the perfect playground for new urban tourists. Through considerate analysis of the perceptions and behaviour of new urban tourists, as well as the interplay between organisations and tourists alike, this thesis aimed to establish an understanding of how place image is constructed through new urban tourists' performances and organisation efforts in place branding. Both tourists as well as organisations show awareness of each other. This reflexive stance might lead the way in the mutual strengthening of Rotterdam's frontrunner strategy, thereby further interacting with new urban tourists' characteristics, behaviour and activities. Instead of memorising and reminiscing on its past as traditional Dutch city, long-term new urban tourists do not visit the city for its destruction-related origin story only. Instead, they are keen on diving deep into the city's renaissance and show a willingness to actively contribute to bringing this to a higher level. In doing so, this might lead the way for the new way of doing tourism which is currently evolving. As a city that is 'like a baby in the tourism industry', then, Rotterdam shows full potential to grow up alongside new urban tourism. Who knows what the future origin story of the city might be – instead of wartime bombardments, new urban tourism and its tourists might form a new beginning. Not just in Rotterdam, but in doing tourism generally.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A. Data overview

A. New urban tourists - Anonymised

1. Abby

Abby is a current master student at Erasmus University Rotterdam. Originally from the United States, this is her first time living abroad. As a previous flight attendant she is a frequent traveller, and has an interest in tourism. She has been in Rotterdam since August 2019.

2. Carmen

Carmen is a Colombian master student currently studying in the interdisciplinary programme GLOCAL. With 10 years of experience in marketing, she has a keen interest in place branding and its marketing consequences. She is very fond of Rotterdam and loves talking about her experiences, including criticism. She has been in Rotterdam since September 2019.

3. Azra

Azra is a Turkish cultural heritage professional with a PhD degree. As part of her previous PhD degree, she went abroad to do a second master's degree. The destination: Rotterdam. She stayed for a total of 10 months. With a background in architecture she specifically loves exploring these interests within a city. She poses an analytical perspective on her own behaviour.

4. Luisa

26-year-old Italian consultant Luisa (Milan) visited Rotterdam in 2016 – 2017 as an international student and international intern. Studying for 4 months and working at a startup in Rotterdam West for the next 6 months, she spent a great deal of time exploring Rotterdam and The Netherlands in many different ways. While she portrays some aspects of a new urban tourist, she is also perfectly content with experiencing the glossed-over front stage.

5. Andrina

Andrina is a Greek young professional living in Athens. Having moved to Rotterdam to do her Master's degree, she lived in the city for about 9 months. She travels regularly and is used to living abroad. She has lived in Budapest for a year previously. Exploration is her biggest passion.

6. Onur

Onur is a postdoctoral researcher at Erasmus University. In comparison to his home town in Turkey, he is pleasantly surprised by the openness and multiculturalism of Rotterdam. With a background in architecture, he is extremely interested in Rotterdam. Specialising in cultural heritage and place branding currently, we found ourselves talking about the same interesting questions and challenges and established good rapport.

7. Alexander

Alexander is a Russian master student who has lived in different places for the past two years. He has been staying in Rotterdam since summer 2019. As a frequent traveller, he enjoys discovering places but has lately mostly done this in his changing cities of residence. He shows a very sharp analysis and well-argued opinion on his role as tourist, both in and beyond Rotterdam.

8. Elektra

Elektra is a Greek student from Athens. Having lived in Rotterdam for a year during her Master's degree programme in 2018, she moved back to Greece after finishing her thesis. She likes exploring new places and hates to be a tourist. Her view on liminality and contradiction between feeling like a tourist and like a local are especially interesting.

9. Alex

Alex is an American student following the GLOCAL programme. She has lived in the US, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Barcelona, Rotterdam and now in Edinburgh. Contrary to other interviewees, Alex did not like Rotterdam as much and only stayed for four months. She does not belong to the category of NUT either as she portrays more traditional-tourist behaviour. Her case is interesting to benchmark with the other interviewees.

10. William

William is a British student enrolled in the GLOCAL programme and living in Rotterdam for 9 months. Having previously lived in Spain as an English teacher, he is used to living abroad and mostly picks his places of residence for their educational purpose. His interest in circularity and sustainability show a comparison to Rotterdam's frontrunner strategy, making him an interesting case within the city's target audience.

11. Paola

Paola is a Colombian student who moved to Rotterdam to enrol in a Master's degree programme at Erasmus University Rotterdam in 2018. Having moved back to Colombia right after graduating 10 months later, she now works for a sustainable and innovative festival in the arts and culture sector. She is a keen traveller and very interested in exploring the unknown, thereby not afraid to go off the beaten path.

B. Professionals in the tourism field of Rotterdam – name and function

1. **Caroline de Jager**

Independent retail expert with a clear view on what does and does not work in retail. She also has a lot of knowledge on aread within Rotterdam. A Zoom-meeting was established to conduct an in-depth interview.

2. **Maarten Suijker**

Senior policy maker at the municipality of Rotterdam. Due to the outbreak of the corona virus and crisis, a digital meeting was replaced by a textual response through e-mail.

3. **Renske Satijn**

Managing director of Rotterdam.Info and executive within Rotterdam Partners. Plays an important role in the retrieval of data on tourism and its consequent correspondence to the municipality. Rotterdam Partners is an important chain in managing the city's current tourism policies and establishing new strategies.

C. Policy documents analysed

1. **Te gast in Rotterdam – Een nieuwe kijk op toerisme**

Document containing the newly published vision for tourism in Rotterdam from 2020 – 2030. Due to the corona crisis, the content of this document may not be as actively engaged with as planned.

Availble at:

https://www.rotterdam.nl/nieuws/nieuwe-toerismevisie/Visie-Toerisme_DEF_toegankelijk.pdf

2. **Spatial vision on public space - Rotterdam**

Policy document including urban development processes and gentrification plans

Available at:

https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/document/7704685/1/s19bb012319_1_51913_tds

3. R Guide – Rotterdam Partners

Policy document to be used as guidelines for marketing

purposes concerned with the attraction of tourists or other interested parties to Rotterdam. Includes the conceptualisation of frontrunners.

Available at:

https://rotterdampartners.nl/app/uploads/2019/10/260419_RGuide_RotterdamPartners_v01.1.pdf

Appendix B. Interview guide

A	General question / theme	Sample / guiding questions	Concept / sub Q
		<p>Explanation study + consent form</p> <p>[START RECORDING]</p> <p>Introduction + consent</p>	
<i>General</i>	<p>Could you tell me a bit about yourself?</p>	<p>What is your name/age/profession/where are you from?</p> <p>How long have you been staying in Rotterdam?</p> <p>How often do you travel on a yearly basis?</p> <p>Where and to/with whom?</p> <p>How often do you visit places within the city, generally (day/night)?</p>	<p>new urban tourism</p>
<i>Authenticity</i>	<p>Authenticity</p>	<p>What makes a holiday unique to you?</p> <p>What do you look for when going on holiday?</p> <p>What should a place have? And why?</p> <p>Can you tell me about your favourite city trip?</p> <p>What did you do?</p> <p>Where would you NOT like to go?</p> <p>How would you describe Rotterdam?</p> <p>What makes Rotterdam unique to you?</p> <p>Can you tell me about one experience you have had that made you realise this?</p>	<p>authenticity</p>
<i>Behaviour</i>	<p>Activities</p>	<p>What did you do today?</p> <p>Is that a typical day for you?</p> <p>What kinds of activities do you normally do when on holiday?</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>What kinds of activities do you do here in Rotterdam?</p> <p>Why and when?</p> <p>How often do you visit cultural events in Rotterdam or go sightseeing and what do you think of this?</p> <p>Can you give an example of this?</p> <p>Which places in Rotterdam do you like most?</p> <p>Could you name a top 3?</p> <p>Why those and why over others?</p> <p>How often do you visit these places?</p>	<p>new urban tourism</p>

		<p>How does your experience as a longer-term visitor compare to the way you usually behave as a tourist?</p> <p>What places would you recommend to your friends?</p>	
<i>Performance</i>	Front/back stages	<p>What are the main tourist attractions of Rotterdam, according to you?</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Why do you / do you not visit these places?</p> <p>What would you describe as stereotypical Rotterdam places?</p> <p>Do you come there often? Why?</p> <p>What makes the difference between those two, according to you?</p> <p>Do you think about this when choosing a place to go?</p> <p>Can you give an example of such places?</p> <p>If you'd compare a city trip to a cruise trip, what would be the similarities and differences to you?</p>	performance theory
<i>Place image</i>	Place image / place branding	<p>What was your image of Rotterdam before coming here?</p> <p>How did it compare to your actual experience?</p> <p>What is that image based on? (media/friends/campagins?)</p> <p><i>Municipality vision report: aims to distribute tourists across the city, to the edges too.</i></p> <p>How do you notice this happening in the city?</p>	place image place branding
<i>Future</i>	How do you see the future of Rotterdam?	<p>What do you think are current interesting developments in the city?</p> <p>Where do you think Rotterdam is heading in the next few years?</p> <p>How do you think tourism in Rotterdam is going to evolve?</p> <p>What do you think the role of tourists will be in the city?</p> <p>Is there anything else you'd like to add or comment upon?</p> <p>[STOP RECORDING]</p>	

Appendix C. Coding list

Used as guideline in analysing and structuring ATLAS.ti output

1. From theory section

Theory / Section	Codes	Intention	Corresponding question	Corresponding sub-question
Tourist gaze	Tourist gaze 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 Co-creation of tourism experience	To position the data within a type of tourist gaze	1.1. What makes a place feel authentic? 2.1. What are the ways in which new urban tourists construct authenticity?	1. How is the place image of Rotterdam constructed by new urban tourists and professionals? 2. In which ways can new urban tourists be attracted?
Authenticity	- Objective authenticity - Constructive authenticity - Existential authenticity - Postmodern authenticity - Performative authenticity - Staged authenticity	To understand which types of authenticity are underlying different actions	1.1. What makes a place feel authentic? 2.1. What are the ways in which new urban tourists construct authenticity? 3.1 What role does authenticity play in attracting new urban tourists?	1. How is the place image of Rotterdam constructed by new urban tourists and professionals? 2. How are new urban tourists' activities performed? 3. In which ways can new urban tourists be attracted?
Performance turn	- Front stages - Back stages - Performativity - Local places	To understand which areas are considered front stages / back stages, why and what this means to impressions	1.3. How do front and back stages constitute place image? 2.2. What activities construct the difference between front and back stages?	1. How is the place image of Rotterdam constructed by new urban tourists and professionals? 2. How are new urban tourists' activities performed?

New urban tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Off the beaten track - NUT characteristics: activities, behaviour, importance - NUT definition - Interaction host-guest - Exploration - Frontrunner 	To lay out how international students ('behaviour) correspond to earlier identified characteristics of new urban tourists		<p>2. How are new urban tourists' activities performed?</p> <p>3. In which ways can new urban tourists be attracted?</p>
Long-term tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational tourists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education-first - Tourism-first - Border between tourist – local - Liminality - Immersion 	To deepen the understanding which types of students might be more prompted to being NUTs	2. 3. How do long-term tourists use tourism facilities?	2. How are new urban tourists' activities performed?
Structuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differentiation in tourism attraction (structure) - Awareness of structuration (agency) - Difference in place image - Duality of structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structure - Agency - Commoning 	How structural actions (policies and executive organisations) influence tourists' actions and vice versa. How do they work together?		How is place image mutually constructed through new urban tourists' performances and tourism structures created by professionals in the field? (Main RQ)
Place image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Place branding - Place identity - Uniqueness city - Place image before coming - Place image after coming - Make it Happen - Attraction of Rotterdam - Second city 	To understand what Rotterdam is – and wants to be – known for	<p>3.2. What is the role of place branding in attracting new urban tourists?</p> <p>3.3. What is the role of co-creation in place branding?</p>	3. In which ways can new urban tourists be attracted?