

Framing the Windows of Prostitution

A study on the discourse of window prostitution in the centre of Amsterdam, folded into policy documents



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Master Thesis in Sociology – Engaging Public Issues

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Abstract:

This research is about documents carrying histories and power by shaping discourse. Through the example of the policy discourse around window prostitution in Amsterdam, this research shows that histories around and about prostitution can be used in powerful ways by parties to determine the form of discourse. These histories are 'folded into' the documents as truths, and go on to live on in other documents. By looking at different identities in connection to the moral values and characters represented, I will highlight an alternative narrative. Drawing on the notion of M'Charek's (2014) folded objects and van Oorschot's (2014) legal case files folding into themselves, I will show how policy documents, leading up to and following project 1012, shaped perception and the dominant public discourse about prostitution in Amsterdam. This 'dominant discourse', is often assumed to be universally true. This research shows how the narratives presented and re-produced can lead to tangible outcomes for people's everyday lives, because they are often taken as truths.

Keywords: Alternative Narrative; Critical Policy Discourse Analysis; Documentation; Folded Objects; Prostitution

1. Introduction

‘Our country romanticizes prostitution. [...] Girls are afraid of the government because it is often not to be trusted in their country’ - Lodewijk Asscher (2011) initiator of Project 1012, about prostitutes in Amsterdam and their position towards coming forward about abuses (NOS, 2011).

In the city centre of Amsterdam lies the Red-Light District (RLD), ‘De Wallen’ - a place with a ‘history’ and ‘moral character’. Due to ideological values, prostitution has been a topic on the political agenda in the Netherlands for over 750 years. Regulation measures went from legalizing to de-legalizing prostitution and back again. Often the same three arguments were used in favour of and against legalization; 1) to protect the safety of women (against diseases), 2) to regulate the sex work industry and the surrounding nuisance it creates, through its connection to illegal practices, and 3) to combat the exploitation of women (often related to human trafficking). These three reasons fit within the political framework that Amsterdam historically often is associated with; a liberal city.

In 2007 the municipality of Amsterdam introduced ‘Coalitieplan 1012’ (project 1012) geared at transforming the area of the Wallen and its reputation, which, according to them, had fallen into disrepair. This project, mainly focused on the area of ‘De Wallen’, was implemented to lower crime rates, reduce the nuisance and gentrify the area to be more attractive to real estate developers. Prostitution was deemed a ‘criminogenic job’ under the administration of counsellor Lodewijk Asscher who initiated this plan. This meant that window prostitution was considered sensitive to crime, but was not itself illegal. According to the municipality, there were two relationships with organized crime; first, criminals invest or launder money through this sector, and second, the industry is ‘engaged in forced prostitution (human trafficking)’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2009). In 2009 a bill was submitted to regulate prostitution and combat abuse of sex workers. This bill was substantiated by the argument that there were ‘clear problems in the prostitution sector’ but what these problems were, was not made explicit. However, in 2009 the municipality of Amsterdam put project 1012 in motion and it continued until March 2018. This project did not only change the prostitution sector in Amsterdam, closing down 112 windows, it also changed and influenced the discourse about prostitution in the Netherlands in the form of shared ‘common’ knowledge (as per Foucault).

This research aims to expose the power of policy documents to make certain truths explicit over others. By looking at the documents that were produced in the beginning, during, and after the initiation of project 1012, the research will show how, by using certain language, the identity of window prostitution is formed, reformed, and repeated in a way that is only representable to parts of this sector. By following the use of words and by looking at common themes, this research comes to understand, that policy documents can fold certain truths in themselves, making policy and discourse assume and normalize these truths. Through conducting critical political discourse analysis, this research brings light

to these truths, while also critically assessing their power to guide policy and real consequences for people in their everyday lives.

2. Research Question

The legalization of prostitution at the beginning of this century was presented with various reasons. For example to protect the integrity and the position of prostitutes¹. The municipality of Amsterdam has recently highlighted the window prostitution sector as ‘criminogenic’, presented with similar reasons, but underlining an alternative picture of prostitution. This change leads us to question the way policy can be used for certain purposes. This perspective also questions how the effect of documents carries the power to create certain truths and change political discourse when presented in the ‘right’ way.

How come, even though the protection of women is in one moment ‘used’ to safeguard windows from closing and prostitutes gaining agency, years later the same construct is ‘used’ to abolish prostitution from the city centre altogether? Is this history of prostitution in Amsterdam then so malleable that the political discourse can be changed through a certain representation of prostitution? Or, is it even possible for discourse to be *created* through policy documents? This research tries to comprehend how the formation of policy documents and changes in regulatory measures, can subsequently influence and even change the discourse around window prostitution. The research question I will be studying is as follows:

How has the changing policy, following the implementation of project 1012, impacted the policy discourse within policy documents about window prostitution in Amsterdam?

3. Social and Scientific Relevance

Window prostitution is one thing the city of Amsterdam and the Netherlands are famous for. Tourists from all over the world flock to Amsterdam to experience the Wallen. However, this discourse of Amsterdam being the ultimate *Valhalla* of sexual liberty and freedom is changing. This is not only noticeable within the area itself, but also according to the number of policy plans that have been introduced since project 1012. This change can bring along very important changes for prostitutes, who already form a precarious social group. Not only can the policy change worsen circumstances for these people, often women, also the value of their work is constantly questioned through changing policy (Leidholdt, 2004). Policy changes have led to the disappearance of parts of the visible windows, making these visible businesses disappear into the invisible sector, which is often even more difficult to regulate.

¹ Kamerstukken vanaf 1-1-1995 via officiële bekendmakingen.nl: Kamerstukken Tweede Kamer 1996-'97 ('Parlementaire documenten', 'dossiernummer') 25437 nr. 3, Memorie van toelichting minister Sorgdrager, 1 juli 1997.

Often the voice of these women is lost when only considering the narrative presented in policy documents. Policy documents set in motion practices that affect the everyday life of this group. It is important to recognize that these changes do not only affect parts of the city positively. This public space is driven by power structures that are not easily changed by closing down the windows. These structures of power stem from different histories and are maintained by different stakeholders, such as municipality councillors, entrepreneurs, building owners, exploiters/ 'soutaneurs' – often referred to as pimps, prostitution support groups, and costumers that bring with them different interrelating yet conflicting interests. The idea of trying to find a 'solution' for this 'problem' is the issue here since it perpetuates the way prostitutes, which are often not even given a voice, have to go to work every day.

4. Researchers Positionality

Conducting this research I, as a researcher, have to be aware of my position in the field. Being raised in the city of Amsterdam and born in the city centre, I was surrounded by prostitution, considering it part of a city where everything is allowed. Despite the cultural history I grew up in, I also identify as a feminist, which on this topic seems to incorporate dividing perspectives on whether prostitution is 'good or bad'. This is why I think it is crucial for research to include different narratives, since the conversation about prostitution seems to be so dividing and complex.

By stating that the dominant narrative presented in policy documents is a construct, I am also implying that my research can present an alternative narrative. This might nonetheless present some important limitations. Since I am conducting critical discourse analysis, I am aware of the fact that the dominant discourse is a construct of one possible representation of the truth. In addition, I am aware that through the epistemological perspective I am inseparable from my reality. I am culturally positioned within my framework of thought where I cannot separate myself from my research subject, to be an objective observer of truth. This is not what I am trying to achieve in this research.

What I am trying to achieve is to present a different narrative in parallel to what is often presented and acknowledged as the objective truth within our society and policy documents. What I would like to achieve with this alternative narrative, is to point towards the importance of acknowledging who is given a platform to talk when it comes to making policy. Not only does my narrative present that policy documents keep stigmas and taboos in existence, but they also make sure to silence groups of people, in this case, prostitutes. By presenting this alternative narrative, this does not mean that 'my' truth is more valid or real than what is the dominant one. Even though I am looking into the discourse, I am aware of my biased judgment determining and interpreting the texts and policy documents that I will be using. This is also why I set out to include in-depth interviews to create a broader narrative to the research.

During the research I contacted multiple different sources; policymakers, (window) prostitution interest groups, sex worker support groups, and other parties like the Wallen business association. From

their answers, I could conclude that during this already difficult time throughout the COVID-19 lockdown, these organizations were dealing with so much that often they did not respond or said they had no time for an interview. While this was a setback that changed the course of my research, it also showed me how this group is situated in a precarious position where they do not have the luxury of standing up for their place in society, due to anonymity issues and the stigma's that are connected to the job.

Since I did not have the access to enter the field of interviews, I did feel like the information that I gathered within the first and second analysis was quite far apart. I decided to include a third analysis in between, focusing on the plan to investigate the infrastructural crime that was 'behind the façade' of the window prostitution; project Emergo. Subsequently, I included a fourth analysis of the research of the Rekenkamer², to shed a light on the way project 1012 performed qualitatively and quantitatively. This opened up the research again, where I felt like my position was put into perspective by including another source from a different standpoint than from the municipality of Amsterdam.

Lastly, I want to reflect on the fact that by conducting this research, I am adding documentation to the discourse about window prostitution. This illustrates how my document in itself is a narrative tool for folding in a certain truth. The power of my narration is to point to the fact that there is a choice in giving certain people a platform over others. By writing this thesis, I hope to present the truth in a way where I show how the position of prostitution that exists in the Dutch society is created by the historical and cultural idea to achieve certain goals, showing how documents have agency to form policy by using discourse.

5. Historical Context of Prostitution

Prostitution in Amsterdam

In 1600, during the Dutch Revolt against Spanish rule, prostitution became illegal, and sex workers were forced into underground working places (Wildt, 2002). Consequently, in the 18th century, the demand for brothels increased when a central place for this type of work was desired by wealthy men. In 1811 prostitution was made legal to assure better regulation of health checks (Ditmore, 2006). In the 20th century, resistance against the legality of prostitution ascended again, led by the demand of Christian organizations. In 1911 the 'brothel ban' stipulated that the holding of brothels became a criminal offence in the Netherlands. While 'inciting fornication' became a criminal offence, practising

² Rekenkamer Metropool Amsterdam (Rekenkamer) is an independent research objective, investigating how the board of the municipalities of Amsterdam, Weesp, and Zaanstad implement their municipal policy. They check whether the board works according to the rules, whether it achieves the agreed goals and whether it does not spend more money than necessary (Rekenkamer, 2021).

in sex work was not prohibited (Atria, 2016). Despite most brothels closing down, prostitution behind windows was in some places tolerated by the police and thus increased in the centre of Amsterdam.

From the 1980s onwards, the public debate in the Netherlands changed, especially in Amsterdam. Organizations that wanted to completely legalize prostitution initiated a demand for amends. The aim was to create better working circumstances for prostitutes and regulate exploitation and human trafficking (Starting, 2012). Even though prostitution was still illegal, the public in the Netherlands understood that the ‘brothel ban’ legislation did not abolish prostitution. Instead, the policy allowed it in some places, which made regulation quite difficult (Post&Vols, 2018). Multiple organizations joined the conversations about decriminalization and de-stigmatization in favour of legalizing prostitution.

In 2000 the ‘brothel ban’ was abolished. It is important to note that there were different reasons for abolishing this law. Some of these reasons appeared to be presented as discourse, commonly accepted statements, for abolishing this law by taking the ‘feminist’ perspective of trying to protect the position of prostitutes. Among these were: ‘protecting the position of prostitutes, combating the exploitation of involuntary prostitution, control, and regulation of the exploitation of prostitution’³. These reasons are important to grasp, since they had previously been presented when the brothel ban was initiated, and were now, ten to twenty years later, also presented to minimize window prostitution in Amsterdam. This shows that the same arguments, without much explanation or a lot of new evidence, since information about trafficking is very hard to gather, are used time after time, by both parties in favour and parties against the legalization of prostitution.

Project 1012

In 2007 the municipality of Amsterdam presented project 1012, named after the postal area within the city centre where most window prostitution is (Rekenkamer, 2018). The aim of the plan came from a previous report ‘Grenzen aan de Handhaving’ (2007), which stated that the problems concerning this area were not manageable by the existing amount of enforcement. The report specified that the area was too big and ‘crime-sensitive and economically low-valued jobs’ facilitated crime. The directorate of the Public Order and Security spoke of a ‘criminal infrastructure’ (Rekenkamer, 2018; Noorderburg, 2019). In December 2007 the municipality decided to launch project 1012. The project took off in July 2009 with the following aims: breaking criminal infrastructures by reducing ‘criminogenic’ sectors and changing the one-sided economic structure by reducing the ‘low-quality and nuisance heavy’ jobs (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2007).

Subsequently, to the first approach of the project, a second recalibration was initiated (‘Herijking plan 2015’). This plan aimed for a transformation of the streets by reducing the criminal

³ Kamerstukken Tweede Kamer 1996-'97 25437 r. 3, Memorie van toelichting minister Sorgdrager, 1 juli 1997

sensitive sector and simulated job diversity together with real estate development. In addition to these goals, the municipality also claimed that they wanted to reduce criminal and abusive activities and enhance women's rights, but this seems not to have been effective. Since the project started, the number of prostitutes did not go down even as a lot of visible windows are closed, this might be due to more women disappearing from the visible windows, having to go work in the invisible sex work sector, which is not controllable and these women often experience worse conditions (Aalbers & Deinema, 2012). While these aims were historically used before, they also indicate that conclusions about the position of prostitutes are often not questioned or assumed to change. This is because these negative ideas about the position of prostitutes are assumed to be true, since they form most of the discourse around prostitution.

6. Discourse in Sociology

Discourse

Discourse is the notion of a historical social system, producing knowledge and meaning to the world we live in (Foucault, 1972). Not only do these systems describe things to make sense of them, but discourse also materializes things into being, producing 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972, p. 135-140). Discourse organizes knowledge to make sense of the world and materializes social relations by creating a collective understanding of phenomena, unconsciously assuming that people all have the same understanding of this 'social fact' (Adams, 2019). But according to Foucault, that *universal* knowledge is produced within a certain timeframe, within a context of the 'effects of power within a social order, and this power prescribes particular rules and categories which define the criteria for legitimating knowledge and truth within the discursive order' (Adams, 2019; Foucault, 1972). These rules are assumed to come before the discourse, making that a discourse 'masks its construction' and the way this *general* knowledge is produced. Furthermore:

[...] discourse claims an irrefutable a-historicity. Further, through its reiteration in society, the rules of discourse fix the meaning of statements or text to be conducive to the political rationality that underlies its production. Yet at the same time, the discourse hides both its capacity to fix meaning and its political intentions. It is as such that discourse can mask itself as a-historical, universal, and scientific – that is, objective and stable. [...] Foucault's concept of discourse as 'a set of ideas and practices with particular conditions of existence, which are more or less institutionalized, but which may only be partially understood by those that they encompass' (Adams, 2019).

Discourse hides that it is shaped by social influence and is not a universal, established matter, that it is formed from political and historical context (Gill, 1995). When discourse highlights one specific *truth*, it disqualifies any other meanings to that phenomenon. So, for prostitution to frequently be mentioned

as something which is low-valued or always oppressive to women, means that when this is repeated in every document without explanation this disqualifies any other meaning to the phenomenon.

It is important to understand about certain phenomena, who is speaking and who is being heard. Foucault highlights that the institutions that stimulate people to speak and distribute truths have certain viewpoints that are important to understand (Foucault, 1976). Foucault challenges researchers to pay attention to this while researching discourse, to understand that discourse itself is spoken about and that we should ‘analyse the effects of power that are produced by what is said’ (Adams, 2019). Thus, discourse analysis can be understood as ‘constituting or producing the social world’ (Bryman, 2012, p.528). In this way, the words used to describe window prostitution can impact our perception of it.

Sociology of Documents

Nowadays, social studies pay considerably more attention to the power of documents. Not only do sociologists focus more on the networks that are connected to certain documents, the social consequences they have on interactions and existing constructs, but also on the way they might hide or even create certain narratives. Documents have agency, according to M’Charek (2014). Because some things are written down, which seem the most relevant, important, and politically accurate at that moment, other things are left out and are thus not spaced within the linear framework of what happened in a time frame. In written documents, time is ‘gathered together and folded in objects’ (p.31). A document should be understood as ‘polychronic, multi-temporal, and reveals a time that is gathered together, with multiple pleats’ (Serres & Latour, 1995, p.60). These folds that gather moments in time make that the histories portrayed within these documents have agency because they can be recalled (M’Charek, 2014; van Oorschot, 2018).

Legal practices like Project 1012, create limitations which in turn are instruments of periodization that stabilize ‘expectations with regard to the future’ (van Oorschot, 2018). Van Oorschot describes legal case files as being ‘technologies of recording and memory, as are they instruments of forgetting’ (p. 229). What is recorded in certain legal cases or within reports, does not just fix moments in time, but also functions as a tool of eliminating what is said at the same time, but chosen or forgotten to not be recorded. In addition to ‘hiding’ certain narratives, legal documents can also make relevant other narratives and make them visible as truths. Through the writing down of cultural discourse they, subsequently, can affect how things are understood and placed within time, which might not represent the whole historical context (M’Charek, 2014). These narratives articulate a certain political understanding, that can impact a discourse.

This discourse, since it influences everyday lives, performs in some way to people. This performativity, Judith Butler explains, ‘cannot be understood outside a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms’ (Butler, 1993, p. 95). She explains how the subject, in this case, the prostitute does not perform the repetition, but the repetition of the norms enables the

prostitute to behave outside these norms, constituting conditions for the prostitute to behave in. This performance is not something that is acted out once, it is a ‘ritualized production [...] under and through the force of prohibition and taboo’ (p. 95).

Butler argues this performativity can form an identity for its subject, here prostitution. This means that the prostitute is formed by external factors repeating norms, making what is said and repeated about prostitution create an identity. Butler adds to her idea of performativity, where she focuses on the performativity of traditional gender roles, that traditional taboos and norms that documents repeat to create a difficult circle of repetition. When not falling under the established norms, this becomes a problem. When reading about prostitution and its problems, the people who do not experience these problems, still experience these external norms and values like immoral judgment, shame, and connection to illegal practices like others (Butler, 1993).

Foucault also presents these problems, where systems of power make people behave in ways where they perform what is described about that performance. The role policy documents present about prostitution is the role prostitutes come to represent. Butler points out:

Juridical notions of power appear to regulate political life in purely negative terms—that is, through the limitation, prohibition, regulation, control, and even “protection” of individuals related to that political structure through the contingent and retractable operation of choice. [...] The political construction of the subject proceeds with certain legitimating and exclusionary aims, and these political operations are effectively concealed and naturalized by a political analysis that takes juridical structures as their foundation (Butler, 1990, p. 4-5).

These policy documents can present the identity of a phenomenon while at the same time hiding the construct of it, making it seem like this identity already existed far before these documents were at play. They thus hide their influence in forming that identity. So, it is not enough to understand that the way prostitution is often presented as a problem, but also how policy is guiding these identities to behave. How they have the power that legitimizes their own ‘regulatory hegemony’ (Butler, 1990, p.5). Within this identity, we have to uncover the traces of where this identity was formed before discourse assumed it.

7. Methods and Data

Policy documents encapsulate events that take place. The structure of following the documents aims to find interesting values that try to give an account of associations between the use of words and the policy that follows. By following certain words, contexts, and structures that associate as a network producing one narrative, rather than others, this research unveils the power-carrying capacity of documents.

Critical Policy Discourse Analysis

Language is often understood as being ‘performative’ by sociologists. By using words, we establish facts in the world (Epstein, 2018, 4.6.2). Foucault’s discourse analysis will help us understand the effect language, or rather, written policy discourse can have on social networks and relations. Discourse analysis, based on the Foucauldian theory, is a research method that focuses on the power relation in a specific society expressed through language and practices (Given, 2008, p. 217; Bryman, 2016, p. 549).

Through analysing discourse, language, and context we can understand the characteristics of certain power relations which are not expressed at surface level but are determined through social interaction in everyday lives. As a researcher, I am trying to show this relationship between what exactly is presented in policy documents and what I think this language produces as a result. It is important to note that I am taking a critical, constructive approach where I assume there is no objective truth, but that the reality is constructed within these documents.

In addition to discourse analysis, this research is adding a critical approach that questions the narrative which is presented within these policy documents. The critical discourse analysis ‘emphasizes the role of language as a power resource that is related to ideology and socio-cultural change’ (Bryman 2016, p. 536). The composition of words can change our view on a subject. I focus on exploring why some ‘meanings become privileged or taken for granted and others become marginalized’ (p. 538). Because text is always subject to interpretation in the way it contains values, attitudes, and assessments, the sender will convey to the recipient (Fairclough, 2017).

Following the Folded Objects

Critical discourse analysis explores the notion of discourse existing further than a particular event. It encapsulates a particular history that is folded within the traces of the discourse, meaning the documents. This is how the folded objects become particularly important to the theory. This research follows certain phrases that seem important to the conception of prostitution, by looking at the repetition and rephrasing.

To narrow the research down to the critical policy discourse, I focused on policy documents, policy reports, and reports of council meetings. The focus is on the policy of the municipality of Amsterdam especially concentrated on the practices around window prostitution. Window prostitution is the most visible form of prostitution, which makes the way opinion is formed quite clear compared to other forms of sex work.

First, I focused on the policy discourse portrayed in the documentation of public policy. This means that I read policy documents made by the municipality, which were public property with online access. I began by reading my starting document; ‘Grenzen aan de Handhaving’ (2007), which was the first initiative to minimize de Wallen and change the ‘criminogenic sector’ within the centre of Amsterdam. In this document, window prostitution and coffee shops are described as being problematic sectors of society, as they are portrayed as instigators of crime and as down-grading the neighbourhood.

Subsequently, I looked for phrases, categorizations, and value judgments connected to window prostitution in Amsterdam and traced back where the use of this language might have come from since it was highlighted as one of the biggest problems. With this, I followed these phrases further and tried to discover whether they influenced or were reproduced into other documents and what that did to the discourse around prostitution. The research focused on four different periods of discourse around prostitution in Amsterdam:

1. The period from 2007-2009, the first three years the project 1012 was initiated and planned, 153 pages.
2. The second period from 2012-2018, where policy changes were implemented, and the first developments were visible, 132 pages.
3. The third period from 2009-2011, the second two years after the presentation and implementation of project 1012, 304 pages. I later added this analysis, to better understand the shift in discourse between the first two analyses.
4. And finally, the period from 2018-2019, where I added the administrative report on how the initial policy plan performed according to the Rekenkamer, 61 pages.

By looking at these four time periods, I managed to understand whether the policy discourse around prostitution in Amsterdam has changed since the implementation of project 1012. In total, I analysed 650 pages, focusing on the way window prostitution was presented. However, since the context is important to understand the discourse, I did read the full documents for context.

8. Results

First Analysis (2007-2009)

In this first analysis, I commenced by analysing what problems were stated about window prostitution to uncover which solutions were highlighted most frequently. The first three policy documents I looked at were ‘Grenzen aan de Handhaving; Nieuwe ambities voor de Wallen’ (2007), ‘Strategienota Coalitieproject 1012 (project 1012 for short)’ (2008) and ‘Reguleringswet Toelichting’ (2009). These documents, planned 112 windows in the Wallen area to close down. Four main themes became unmistakably visible when reading about the reasoning behind closing these windows.

The first common theme is the classification of legality and illegality, where a juxtaposition between coffee shops and prostitution is presented. According to these documents, prostitution and coffee shops are neither legal nor illegal but *criminogenic*. For example, coffee shops gather their product from the provider that is ‘gedoogd’ (tolerated) which makes it legal for coffee shops to sell weed but not to obtain it. As a result, this business model is instantly connected to illegal practices, to begin with. When we consider prostitution, this is not as clearly related to illegal practices. The service being

sold is sex, which makes the transaction not require illegal goods or practices, like coffee shops. This classification is apparent from the third sentence; ‘People from all over the world come to the Red-Light District for this. In a small area, many criminogenic functions have been compressed, causing nuisance and crime’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2007).

The problems that arise within the Wallen as a result of prostitution are not connected to the service itself. Within the first few sentences of these documents, the Wallen area is described as an area where ‘criminogenic functions that cause nuisance and crime’ are prevalent. This puts the whole industry in a box which has huge consequences for the image of this industry. In ‘Grenzen aan de Handhaving’ (2007), the municipality mentioned in the first sentence:

‘This memorandum takes a critical look at the infrastructure of criminogenic sectors such as prostitution and coffee shops, which is currently being maintained. An impetus is also given to formulating principles for a different approach to the area in favour of higher-quality functions’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2007).

What is clarified in these documents is the fact that prostitution businesses form a great place for illegal money laundering practices. In the addition to the ‘Reguleringswet’ (2009), the municipality mentions:

The sex industry is sensitive to crime: it is a criminogenic industry. The relationship with (organized) crime manifests itself in two aspects. Firstly, criminals invest in the industry to launder money, secondly, they engage in forced prostitution (human trafficking). The consequences are noticeable locally because criminals use legal economic and legal infrastructures in various industries to carry out criminal acts, conceal them or invest criminal money (p.7).

By stating sex working businesses create an ‘easy’ way for people to conduct illegal practices is shifting the blame to a business, which to begin with is not an illegal practice. The people working in this business are blamed for illegal practices, when primarily they are not the ones committing the crime.

In addition, growing nuisance in the area is mentioned. The question that immediately emerges is; who is creating this nuisance? Is it the window prostitutes, standing behind the windows? From the research presented in these documents, the answers point right at the growing amount of tourists, the hardening and internationalizing environment that creates the most nuisance for residents.

I believe, what the municipality is doing in these first documents, is blaming window prostitution for the problems that emerge without acknowledging that the solutions may also lie within other factors, like tourism. In these documents, the problems of the growing arrival of tourists, internationalization, and less cohesion are suggested to be reasons for the ‘hardening’ image of the Wallen. But these reasons are not highlighted as equal problems to the way window prostitution and coffee shops are presented. ‘The deterioration visible within certain parts of the 1012 area is partly caused by a lack of social cohesion and engaged entrepreneurship’ says the municipality in project 1012 when talking about the changing environment. In addition, they also mention that:

In the last 20 to 30 years, the influence of women has decreased and that of men has increased. The prostitution climate has hardened. The industry became "more professional", larger-scale, more criminal, and above all more international (p. 9).

Indicating that problems are coming from an outside actor that has led to the larger scale, more professional, and hardened environment. This statement makes me question the solution of closing down windows to combat the problem of the hardening environment, since these windows have been there before the hardened environment was there.

The third common theme explains how prostitution and the Wallen are a part of 'the real Amsterdam' which should be cherished, appreciated, and not completely be demolished by displacement. In 2008 the municipality wrote: 'Prostitution and coffee shop policy is internationally known, is used in the image as a metaphor for the tolerant society that is mainly represented by Amsterdam and has specific regulations' (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2008). While this text folds the image of window prostitution attracting a lot of unwanted nuisances, they also mention: 'The proposed partial reorganization can distort that picture. That's not what we're after; We do want, as stated, to significantly reduce the criminogenic functions and strengthen the position of the sex worker'. In addition to this, the text also concludes that the value of the Wallen has been downgraded to the point where there are no longer any 'Amsterdammers' (people from Amsterdam) residing or working in the area. Furthermore, They mention:

It is not without reason that we use the motto give the area back to the Amsterdammer. For the individual resident, we aim to reduce the enormous pressure on the life and living environment while respecting the existing qualities of the area (p.35).

According to these documents, only low-valued businesses are concentrated in the Wallen, while this centre is supposed to represent the historical, city centre of Amsterdam. What does this mean? Who is allowed to be there? This statement results in a contradictory conclusion, whereby the idea of prostitution in the city centre is allowed, bringing the historical, free image that the municipality does not want to distort, but prostitutes doing their jobs are not valuable and even create a bad image, requiring a change for the area.

This contradiction and this identity that *is* desired in the area is something that keeps repeating itself in all the documents. Not only do these documents function as a way to present that prostitution is seen and described as changing the area, producing a positive and negative image, at the same time. These documents narrate this version of the identity of prostitution, structuring the reader's way of looking at prostitution, which is needed to approve of the minimizing of window prostitution.

Most astonishingly, this imagined identity of what a 'real Amsterdammer' needs to be, is not filled in. The way these documents let the reader fill it by presenting the negative and dangerous and dependent side of prostitution assumes that this was never part of 'real Amsterdam' society. While

connecting it to bring this area back to the real Amsterdammer, assuming that through all this negativity a window prostitute could never become or be a real Amsterdammer. This image of window prostitution is then folded into the identity of the Amsterdammer. In a sense, the municipality is using already existing identities of prostitution, for example, the link to human trafficking, oppression of women, and the non-autonomous choices they have, to create their version of showing how bad prostitution is for the neighbourhood. Considering the theory from Butler about performativity, we can understand that by vaguely mentioning the negative sides, but not mentioning that prostitution is a bad thing, the negative identity of window prostitution is created and ingrained into policy (Butler, 1990, p.5).

The final theme in these documents is the devaluation of people themselves and the circulation of taboos connected to the topic of prostitution. The taboo of anonymity is either used in favour of prostitutes, where it is expected to create a better situation if their identity is not anonymous. While at the same time taboos, shame, and consequences in their everyday lives, are created by the reproduction of phrases such as; ‘while prostitution is considered normal as a phenomenon, this does not apply to the profession of a prostitute’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2007). Here, the municipality does not only confirm taboos around prostitution, but the sole job is de-valued, where it is argued that the profession of prostitution is not considered a normal phenomenon in society. The critique of prostitutes not wanting to lose their anonymity, by explaining that they will gain social security, is something we can see repeated multiple times. While at the same time, the documents actively de-value prostitution and materialize these taboos to be true, making it impossible to think of prostitution without considering that the identity of prostitutes should always be something taboos are connected to.

Second Analysis (2015-2018)

In the second analysis, I looked at the ‘Voortgangsrapportage’ (2015), the ‘Voortgangsrapportage’ (2017), and ‘Overgangsproject 1012’ (2018). All were written by the municipality and included a different attitude towards the discourse of prostitution than the previous documents.

Prostitution in itself is still presented in a negative light. What changed is that this negative representation is less obvious than before. While in the first documents prostitution and coffee shops were referred to as ‘criminogenic businesses’, later documents present this differently. Voortgangsrapportage 2015 recalls: ‘Postcode area 1012 is characterized by a large concentration of window brothels and coffee shops. In addition, there is a monoculture of other low-value and over-represented functions’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2015). While the problems that arise from prostitution, are talked about in a less obvious way in association to the nuisance and illegal infrastructures, the minimization of windows is well established as something that might fix nuisance. The municipality talks about the conversations and negotiations with the business owners, stating that if they do not cooperate with the plans the municipality has devised for them, expropriation will take place. In the ‘Voortgangsrapportage 2017’ the municipality records:

During the review of project 1012 in December 2015, it was agreed that of the remaining 83 windows at the time, 46 windows could still be left open. Implementation of this Decree has meanwhile been taken up by the Municipal Preferential Rights Act to cancel the windows that may remain open. In addition to the 46 windows that can remain open, there are another 37 windows that still have to be closed. The municipality is in talks with the owners to purchase the properties amicably. [...] If it is not possible to reach an agreement before the summer of 2017, the municipality will still acquire the buildings using expropriation (p. 7).

This nuance in negative connotation towards window prostitution is quite strange when still all windows are shut down, without any real options of change or further conversations with prostitutes themselves. Have the considerations about prostitution within the Wallen area changed? Or is this '*problem*' just mentioned less compared to the first documents, because it will evoke quite some political reaction?

While the plan 'Herbestemming Raambordelen' (2015) was published where the municipality decided that 24 of the 37 windows that had to still close down were allowed to stay open, this decision was later recalled after reactions from the neighbourhood. One could wonder what it is that the municipality wants. Do they want to remove prostitution because it creates such nuisance, do they want to create a better situation for the prostitutes, or is there no clear plan but just the wish to close windows and get rid of the image that is associated with visible prostitution?

The second theme we saw is how blame is put onto a different catalyst. The blame for the main nuisances in the area is now shifted to the big flood of tourists coming into the city. This problem is highlighted much more in these documents than in previous ones. While the 'crime-sensitive businesses' like prostitution and coffee shops are still described as the main reason these tourists are lured into the area, they are now recognized not to be the only problem that leads to nuisance. Shifting this blame and using different language about prostitution in these documents, creates a different image. The following quote indicates this shift:

[...], Amsterdam has undergone a new development. Due to its appeal, the city has continued to grow for day trips of people, tourists, and companies, the crowds are increasing faster than expected. This leads to rubbish on the street and in some neighbourhoods (especially in the centre) the quality of life is under pressure. To keep the crowds on the right track, the municipality has implemented various measures (p.5).

While this different representation is something that shifts blame, it is written as if these problems have just arrived in the last couple of years. Of course, these problems have become bigger, but formulating them in a way where they have only recently arisen is not correct, since they were mentioned before.

Following the second theme, we can discover different representations of these problems. Problems which are presented as mentioned by the people that live in the neighbourhood:

One of the open questions asks what the municipality should tackle first. Although this question was answered differently per neighbourhood, the top 3 is as follows: Crowds and tourism, Cycling (parking and lack of space), Traffic nuisance (taxi nuisance, dangerous traffic situations, loading and unloading, parking incorrectly) (p.9).

Even though these issues were mentioned before and the conversations with the neighbourhood were mentioned in other documents, these concerns were nuanced next to the immense problems window prostitution and coffee shops presented. In these documents, the nuance is taken away, and these problems are stated as main priorities, connecting them to the lack of cohesion in the area. While this is, in my opinion, an important change for the discourse on prostitution and the image, they are presented in a way that suggested that this is a recent problem, while in fact, these issues were mentioned in the documents from the first analysis.

Finally, the municipality presents that they have made mistakes for not communicating well enough to the public and neighbourhood. What is most interesting in regard to this, is that when reading the first documents, the conversations with the stakeholders and neighbourhood are described, but the outcomes are not made explicit. They mentioned that they intended to go into collaboration with the neighbourhood in the documents used in the first analysis:

As an appendix to this strategy note, you will find an extensive picture of the future with atmospheric images, references, and the interventions we require. We do not intend to impose the spheres as a blueprint; we prefer to consult with residents, entrepreneurs, and other investors to further develop this vision. It does indicate a clear direction and also shows what we certainly do not want (p.14).

Later they explicitly mentioned the different groups they presented the concept-version to, wanting to hear their reaction about the plans:

At the beginning of December 2008, a draft version of the bill was presented for consultation to the Board of Police Commissioners, the Board of Procurators General, the VNG, the municipalities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Groningen, the Red Thread Foundation, the Prostitution Information Center, the Association for Exploitants Relax Businesses, the Stichting Overleg Raambrothels, SOAIDS Netherlands, the Council for the Judiciary, the Dutch Association for the Judiciary, the Dutch Bar Association, the Dutch Data Protection Authority, the Human Trafficking Coordination Center, the National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking and the Tax Authorities.

The responses received about the bill were extensive, very diverse in terms of subjects and divergent in terms of points of view. In a general sense, it can be said that all the organizations consulted saw the need to combat the existing abuses and to arrive at further (and more uniform) regulations within the sector. In addition, there was a consensus regarding the improvement of the position of prostitutes (p. 4).

While the consensus that the position of prostitutes needed to improve was clear, this is subsequently not discussed within the following documents. These points are just *now* highlighted to be important enough as something initiating change, while the first change only followed from the incentive to fight

the illegal practices connected to prostitution. Even though the discussions and connection to the neighbourhood were mentioned before, one might wonder what was said in those meetings and if that information was purposefully not highlighted for some reason. Perhaps only now the municipality realizes that this was a problem but chose not to highlight it earlier because it would not lead to the support for abolishing window prostitution in the area.

The document also explained how the unclear policy has made it quite difficult for the neighbourhood and the policymakers themselves to follow which policy fell under what project. This issue made understanding the infrastructural problems even more difficult. This theme was also recognized in the first analysis, where vagueness about illegality and legal practices created a strange grey area where the image of prostitution and the problems surrounding that image became more important than the actual situation of prostitutes themselves.

The image is nuanced, in my opinion, compared to how negatively it was portrayed within the first documents, but this image still has agency within the documents. While the negative parts are less obviously stated, the policy documents still fold negative connotations in themselves by assuming the same characteristics. This folded image is then assumed as the truth, since multiple documents repeat this.

Third Analysis (2011-2013)

This third analysis connects the first and second, as they were quite far apart from each other in time. While reading Project Emergo, a project about ‘the joint approach to serious (organized) crime in the heart of Amsterdam’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2011), the problems in the area were again addressed differently. Not only were the problems in the area put onto different catalysts, but this also made the problematization of prostitutes less of their fault. Furthermore, this document explained what criminal actions were happening in this area, making the problems that were talked about more transparent.

First, the focus on the negativity of prostitution has shifted to be more specific. The document referred to window prostitution as follows; ‘in the Red-Light District and part of the Damrak, money laundering in real estate and companies and the involvement of organized crime in sectors such as prostitution [...] is a cause for concern’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2011). With that, the blame for the crime had also been put onto other actors. Where before the legal practices connected to window prostitution were mentioned to gain more power but not perform an illegal action, now these actors are called out to be a big part in creating illegal infrastructures:

Remarkably, legal or regular actors play a crucial role in most forms of this malafide, including brokers, notaries, appraisers, auctioneers, and brokerage firms. In other words, this malafide is highly embedded in the normal structure of the real estate industry. [...] The fact that real estate as such forms an important logistical basis for their illegal activities can of course be deduced from several examples in this study (p.69).

Different from other documents, this document explains how actors may be visible while also functioning in the underground, mentioning that the secretcies involved with prostitution make it easier for these actors to make themselves invisible. Where criminal organizations involved ‘behave like learning organizations and therefore do everything they can to limit that visibility’, the prostitutes behind the windows do not have that luxury of invisibility (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2011).

While the document states that research about the complexity in this area is difficult to conduct, they also acknowledge that research done about the underlying infrastructures does not exist, while research about the problems with window prostitution is widely available. This could also indicate why the problems are often placed on window prostitution, since this is the most visible and accessible thing to change for the municipality. This is possible, while not having to acknowledge that the lack of knowledge about other problems in the area could be one of the reasons why this change has not led to the expected outcomes.

Another theme was how the identity of the Wallen is created and assumed. This image is assumed by devaluing prostitution, but still acknowledging that one certain way of prostitution is allowed. The type of prostitution that is desired here is presented as ‘humanized Wallen’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2011). This idea of ‘humanized Wallen’ follows the idea where the Wallen are supposed to form an entranceway into the city; ‘TopStad Amsterdam’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2006; Bontje, 2006). Topstad Amsterdam was a project leading up to project 1012 which was aimed at attracting more business to the city to get back to the top five European cities. This is interesting since Topstad Amsterdam was aimed to make the city more approachable for international investors. So, is this the image that the municipality wanted to call the real Amsterdam? Where big investors and businesses are welcome?

Finally, the document mentions the nostalgia that is connected to the Wallen: ‘From time to time, people speak and write about the world of the Red-Light District with a certain nostalgia. The intricate structure of the area, the canals, the varied buildings, and the many colourful inhabitants contribute to this’ (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2011). While repeating this and folding in this image of nostalgia, this document explicitly explains why this image is not relevant any more:

However, the police literature on prostitution in this area does not leave much of the nostalgic image intact. That is one long story of poverty, exploitation, violence, and deceit. [...] Hartsuiker made in his 1965 dissertation on the different types of pimps in Amsterdam offered no other picture of the situation before the fifties. [...] The latter has, moreover, described more sharply than police officers how, from the 1960s onwards, the organization of prostitution in this area was changed. Where it was traditionally operated on a small scale—spread over a few buildings, cafés, and hotels—and was also largely interwoven with everyday socio-economic life in the area, it was then increasingly expanded into an independent industry that covered all life in neighbourhoods, streets and streets dominate (p. 73).

While the police literature does not lie about the abuses in the area, still people have this nostalgic feeling towards the Wallen. This is because these abuses are not made explicit to the outside world. As this document recalls multiple times, the ambiguity of the area forms an obstacle to change what is going on. Making assumptions from former research about similar subjects such as prostitution forms the leading source for policy, the document mentions:

Many people think they know what is going on in the centre of Amsterdam, but there is actually great ignorance about the old heart of the city. This ignorance constitutes an important obstacle to a proper understanding of the problem of organized crime in the centre, for the simple reason that an understanding of this problem presupposes the necessary prior knowledge about the social context in which that crime and its fight against it are embedded (p. 37).

Fourth Analysis (2017-2019)

Instead of looking at documents produced by the municipality, I included Rekenkamer's final administrative report on the performance of project 1012. A few things stand out on how prostitution, and the problems surrounding prostitution, are now presented.

Beginning with the explanation of the Rekenkamer that no significant breakthroughs about the criminal infrastructures happened. According to Rekenkamer: 'To get a grip on the neighbourhood, an approach is necessary for which ambitions and efforts are more balanced and can be sustained for a long time (Rekenkamer, 2018)'. While there have been some improvements, mainly cleanliness, and building enhancements, solutions were not focused on long-term goals. While windows have been closed, this 'had a negative effect on the position of sex workers'. Where not only their economic position has been affected, making it more difficult and expensive to work behind a window, also unnecessary stigmatization has affected their image even more;

[...]: the picture that has been given that there is a lot of abuse in window prostitution is experienced as unnecessarily stigmatizing by brothel owners and sex workers and hinders them in their normal participation in society (p. 28).

While some windows closed, the criminal infrastructures or knowledge about it did not change. The position of prostitutes did not improve, and the nuisance problems are still present to this day. This document shows how this stigmatization affects the position of prostitutes. Stigmatization still does not allow prostitutes and other sex workers to become part of society, since their government and municipality still negates their position in society as valid workers.

In this document, prostitution and other jobs are mentioned as 'attention functions'. This indicates that Rekenkamer recognizes that it is not beneficial to keep mentioning the connection to criminal activity, but rather chooses to acknowledge that attention has to be applied to this complex sector. Finally, prostitutes themselves are asked how this policy affected their position. There was an obvious change from the first documents where prostitution was boxed in with coffee shops as

criminogenic low-valued jobs. This terminology was repeated until years later, in the Emergo plan, which finally acknowledged the complex connections and relations. This stereotype shows how this image was folded into these documents and was assumed from then onward.

Speaking of Emergo, Rekenkamer acknowledges that this project was not given enough attention. One could wonder if the municipality did care about the people in the difficult situations located in the Wallen, or if problems were just acknowledged to sway the opinion of the public while creating a platform to abolish prostitution out of the city centre?

It is quite certain that the livelihood of the prostitutes was not at the forefront of the agenda. By interviewing officials and administrators Rekenkamer exposed that ‘because of the rules of the zoning plan, only spatial arguments could be used and that other considerations, such as which places are best for the industry and the sex workers, had no place in this’. The report also mentions that even during the ‘reassessment of Project 1012, when it was necessary to reconsider where window brothels would be closed, there was no place for arguments other than spatial (Rekenkamer, 2018)’. While this is quite astonishing when looking at the main aims of the projects following 1012, we could assess that the goal was maybe not about solving the abuses in this sector, but more about emptying the properties to get rid of prostitution. All the while, improving the situation of prostitutes would be a nice side effect.

9. Conclusion and Discussion

When project 1012 was initiated in 2007, specific categorizations of window prostitution within policy documents were presented. Following the initial project, similar use of a particular criminal image infolded window prostitution. Later, when the plan did not achieve the expected outcome, the presented image changed, aiming to show that the problems of the area were the result of different actors. The problematization of prostitution was presented as more complex and determined as a consequence of the difficult infrastructures in the area. This change challenged the solutions the first analysis presented, by placing the stigmatization and problems surrounding prostitutes in a different light. Here, it was suggested that prostitution is a central part of the Amsterdam character and a sector that should not be minimized.

These documents carried the power to fold in an image, presenting it as the truth. By highlighting the negative, stigmatizing aspects of window prostitution over others, they emphasized that window prostitution makes living conditions for the ‘regular Amsterdammer’ unbearable. This identity has led to the (partial) disappearance of window prostitution, a less stable position, stigmatizing the job even more, without creating transparency about the criminal infrastructures. It makes that these (mainly) women are not valued in their job, have lost part of their anonymity, and have lost part of their job security (Rekenkamer, 2018). Following this, what is most certainly problematic is that this is all

happening under the initial goals of the municipality to enhance the position and empower prostitutes in their job.

This contradiction appeared in the first analysis, where prostitution was portrayed in a negative light, while later on prostitution is also mentioned as an iconic part of the city. However, because these negative parts are already folded into the first documents, it ends in an outcome where the historic centre has been tarnished in a way that is difficult to change since these folded in values directed the discourse on prostitution from the first documents onwards.

This research shows that by highlighting this difficult position, pointing towards the criminal aspects *connected* to prostitution, these policy documents created the image needed to legally and politically abolish prostitution out of the city centre. The municipality knew which identity and image they strategically imagined for the city centre, and they needed support from the public to make this happen. To achieve this goal the portrayal of prostitution, in a problematic manner, was necessary. When the municipality talks about its role in creating a safer environment for prostitutes, by implying that window prostitution is at the forefront of illegal businesses, they are immediately citing the problematic image. By implying that window prostitution is criminogenic, they perform norms by keeping prostitution in the box where there is no way out of the 'act' of being immoral, criminal, or low-valued. This contradiction is apparent from the first analysis where the municipality aims to protect the livelihoods of prostitutes in Amsterdam, while also still participating in the adding to the negative connotation of involvement with crime.

So, what is produced with the discourse about prostitution? It produces exactly what the theory of Butler describes; under the norms of society, people tend to perform these norms, embodying what is projected onto them. The discourse we see projected in these documents, where there is no choice, no cohesion, jobs are low-valued, and not part of society, leads to the fact that people become to believe this about themselves. These stereotypes and ideas about prostitution come to life in the performance of how prostitutes are treated by the municipality and Dutch society.

The municipality used already existing identities of prostitution, for example, the link to human trafficking, the oppression of women, and the non-autonomous life they have, to create *their* objective of showing how bad prostitution is for the neighbourhood. This is all happening while prostitutes are suffering to survive in Amsterdam at all, reporting to be denied access to certain commodities because of the stigmatization (Rekenkamer, 2018).

Like project Emergo reflected, the problems with the criminal infrastructures often connected to prostitution and coffee shops are of a completely different complexity than problems of nuisance in the city centre. What happened within project 1012 and onward, is that these problems were considered to require the same solution. By considering these as the same problems, closing down windows was expected to solve the problems, even though underlying infrastructures were a lot more complicated.

What project Emergo did was separate underlying infrastructures from the visible problems that appeared on the Wallen. By doing so, the blame on the nuisance in the area is not put on window prostitution, folding a different truth and identity of prostitution into the document. This is what has to be recalled and reproduced in documents, the acknowledgment of the complexity of the problems in this area. That changes the dominant discourse on how window prostitution is perceived in society.

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Appendix 1: Checklist Ethical and Privacy Aspects



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Framing the Windows of Prostitution

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Start date and duration:

September 2020- June 2021

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?

(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES - **NO**

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - **NO**

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. YES - **NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). YES - **NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

→ **DUE TO INTERVIEWS NOT WORKING OUT THIS PART DOES NOT APPLY ANYMORE**

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - **NO**
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - **NO**
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - **NO**
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES - **NO**
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES - **NO**
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? **YES** - NO
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? YES - **NO**
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES - **NO**
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES - **NO**
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - **NO**

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

I will collect special categories of data, this is due to the fact that I am planning on interviewing specialist in the field, meaning experts that will give me a alternative narrative to my research. With this, their place in society will be relevant to my research and their place within, for example, the municipality will be important because this position might differ from the narrative that I am presenting.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

I will be conducting my interviews over zoom. I will try to reach my informants through emailing them and prior to the interview I will send them an informed consent sheet where I will ask them if they would like to be anonymised about their position, their name or any other information that could be harmful to their person.

Even though I will ask this prior to the interview, I am conducting in depth interviews and I will not be prepared to inform them with all the questions that I will be asking since some other things can come up that will come from answers that my respondents will be offering. This means that I will ask them at the end of the interview if they would still like to anonymise parts of the interview. Respectively I will ask whether the respondent would like to read the interview back.

I will use the transcribing option in Zoom or record the interview without video and transcribe it right afterwards so that I can delete the voice file to assure the security of the respondents.

I will store these documents on my computer in Doc files and will upload them in OneDrive.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

No

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

<https://hetccv.nl>

<https://www.rekenkamer.amsterdam.nl/>

<https://www.amsterdam.nl/zorg-ondersteuning/prostitutie/maatregelen/>

<https://www.amsterdam.nl/stadsarchief/organisatie/open-data/>

<https://www.amsterdam.nl/sociaaldomein/zorgprofessionals/programma/>

Project 'Grenzen aan de Handhaving'

<https://www.amsterdam.nl/sociaaldomein/zorgprofessionals/programma/>

Possible interviews on zoom.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

I would like to speak to 1-3 policy workers with an in depth interview, to try to understand whether they see a change in the discourse or not. I will contact them via the available email addresses that are available online.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

In my research I am not really looking at a population, but I am interviewing people with expert knowledge.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

- **I will store this on my personal computer, within a protected word document.**
- **I will hopefully conduct some interviews over Zoom, either voice record the interview on my phone, transfer it to my computer or use the transcription mode on Zoom, that will transcribe while we talk. This I will only do with the permission of my interviewee and delete the voice memo/file immediately after transcribing.**

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

- **I am responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of data. I will legally be responsible for the data.**

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

- **Documents will automatically save every five minutes, or when the document is closed. These documents will then be saved to my One Drive I connected to my private Microsoft accounts.**

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

- **I will first ask the interviewee if they would like me to anonymise it or not. I will ask this through an informed consent document, that I will present them prior to the interview. Some information about the people is important, because they are public figures and within the research, their position matters. The difficult information or sensitive information that would be relevant to the research, for example their idea on sexual identity, will be talked about in the informed consent checklist I will present to them prior to of the interview. When things come up that will not be mentioned in the informed consent document because the in-depth interview leads there, I will ask the respondent at the end of the interview if they would like to be anonymised again.**
- **Subsequently, when they prefer to stay anonymous, I will refer to the people within the thesis as person 1, interview 1, interview 2. With that I will not provide further information about the persons personal or work related life, to make sure they are not traceable.**
- **I will only restore audio recordings, and as soon as I have transcribed them, I will delete my audio files.**

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Sarah Fijen

Name (EUR) supervisor:

Date:

20-06-2021

Date: