# THINKING

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THE CITY
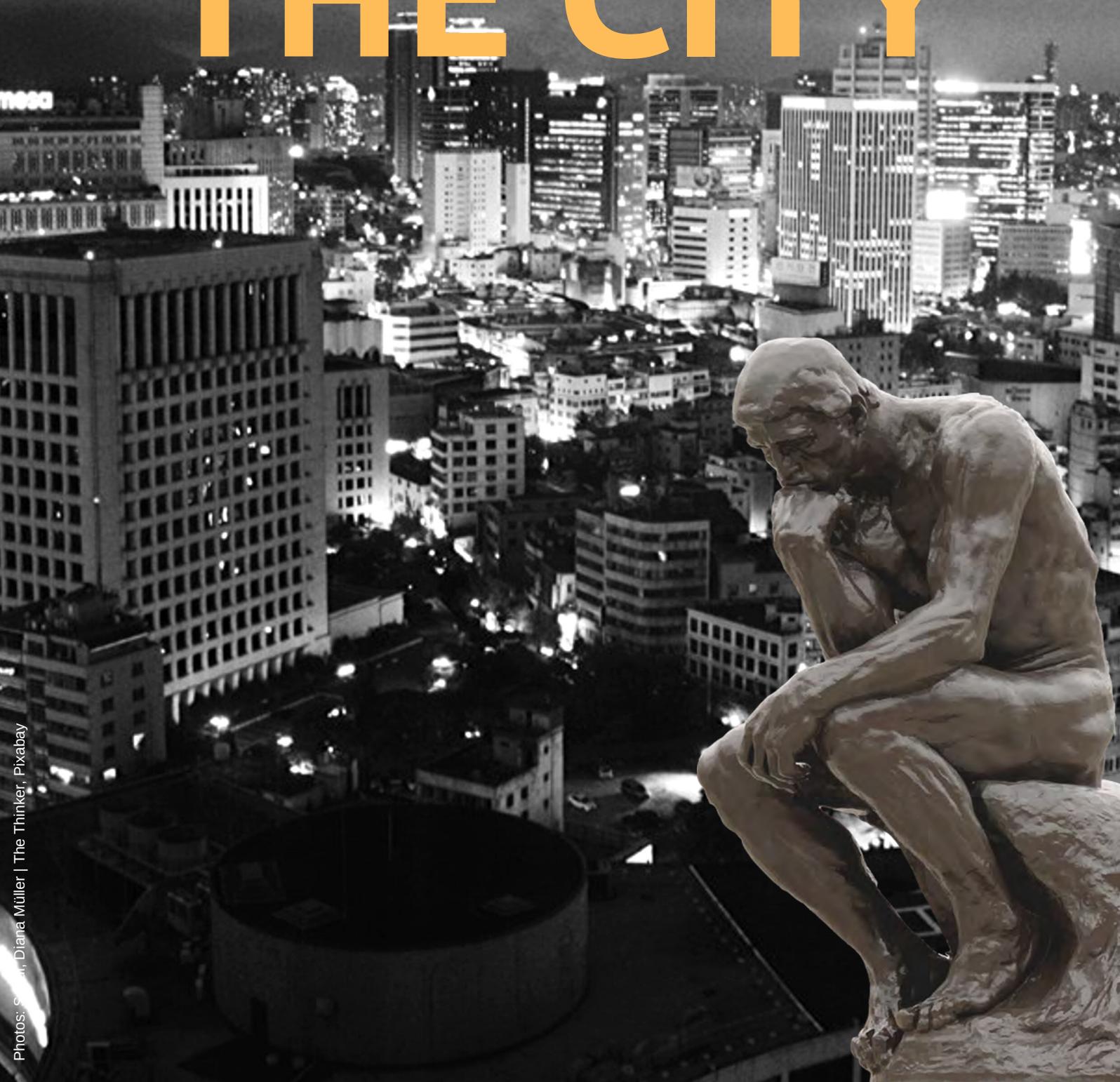
"Most people in the world have probably seen the famous photograph of the Earth taken from the Apollo 17 mission on December 7, 1972. Spanning a swath of the globe from the Mediterranean Sea to the southern polar ice cap, the image features lovely white cloud swirls over the grand African continental massif. Much has changed since that photo was snapped. NASA satellite images of the Earth today show a vast increase in the clusters and chains of bright dots that represent cities and their night-time lights. In forty years, a new constellation of cities has emerged."

"THE THING TO NOTICE IS THAT THE DOTS OF LIGHT CASCADE ACROSS THE EARTH'S SURFACE WITHOUT ANY REFERENCE TO NATIONAL BORDERS."

PARAG KHANNA |
"WHEN CITIES RULE THE WORLD" |
MCKINSEY & COMPANY |
2011

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IVCF 2019 in Barcelona / Maarten van der Burg

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EDITORIAL

10 YEARS IVCF - CITY COOPERATION FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE

'Love doesn't need to perfect, it just needs to be true.'
– Marilyn Monroe

Although working in international student teams on cases might not seem like a novelty anymore, as we take a step back we are reminded that it is. We have been persistently working in this way little over 10 years ago through the founding of the IVCF (International Virtual Consulting Firm), in the time of the advent of the Internet as a tool for education. After a decade of perseverance, we take a moment to celebrate that we are still going strong and looking forward to the future.

A pioneer of its times, the IVCF has originally been our formula for working on real life cases at a distance with partner universities abroad. It was our aim to contribute to enhancing a way of internationalization that was different to only individual exchange, and to stimulate a learning-by-doing experience. We were supported by the spirit of the moment and aimed at bringing together what was seen as the pillars of the Knowledge Economy: Education, Research and Business and Civil life.

Fortunately we managed to literally not only initiate but also maintain a long-term cooperation and knowledge exchange between partner universities in Amsterdam, Barcelona and Paris. Year after year we have been cooperating with a large array of companies, institutions and firms in our cities and have had the opportunity to work on many trending urban topics near at hand. The overarching theme was city marketing and the manner in which cities were positioning themselves and working on their image and competiveness; marketing their activities.

Throughout this process, the IVCF quickly became a beloved context for many of us, something beyond a formula to incorporate real-life international experiences in our educational programmes. Our long-term cooperation between the three cities has given us the opportunity to gain a better first-hand understanding of those trending topics in European post-industrial cities, and to get a better insight into the nature of practices such as city marketing, including their dilemmas. In short, and as they say, the genie was let out of the bottle: the IVCF turned out to be a window to interdisciplinary urban studies in teaching, researching and learning, and a ground for the foundation of the research group Cities & Visitors.

To mark, commemorate and relay our experiences, we will reflect on this decade of inter-city cooperation in a common publication (to be finalized by December 2019).
The present compilation is a start and contains contributions of students and faculty partaking in this current edition in Amsterdam. It is the beginning of an ambitious short term project meant to provide a more accurate insight into the richness of perspectives and layers that have been conforming our program, **to thank all those who have made it possible** and to take steps forward towards a more flexible and deep inter-city cooperation for the sake of commitment and love for knowledge.

- Núria Arbonés Aran, Programme Leader
& Diana Müller, Junior Researcher

COOPERATING FIRMS AND INSTITUTIONS:

22tracks, Gran Teatre del Liceu de Barcelona, Muziektheater Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona MACBA, Modafad, YER, Vueling, Gemeentebedrijf Amsterdam, Barcelona Activa Innovation District 22@, Bureau Zuidas Amsterdam, Brouwerij t IJ, Cerveses Moritz, Fortisbank, La Caixa, Zoo Artis, Parc Zoològic de Barcelona, Student Housing DUWO , Eurolines, Bureau, Ling Magazine, Maltier le Malletier, Amsterdam Economic Board, Jewels Messika Paris, Airport Barcelona, Schiphol Airport, City Council Amsterdam, Amsterdam Zuidoost Partners, Pathé Cinemas...

INTER-DISCIPLINARY VIEWS

DOING RESEARCH IN A PLACE LIKE AMSTERDAM

CITIES AND THEIR IMAGINARY

by Núria Arbonés Aran

Amsterdam can be easily compared with other cities in the Western world. In fact, sometimes the pictures of new buildings along the banks of the river IJ are so generic that for a foreigner it would be difficult to decide whether they were looking at Hamburg, Oslo, Ottawa or Amsterdam. Obviously, it could be argued that this kind of replicability and repeatability has always characterized the renewal and evolution of cities; however, one of the most important differences today is that this simultaneity has become visible. One can literally see the same sort of architecture arising simultaneously in different places around the world, documented and disseminated on the internet.

In fact, global multi-referencing is one feature that seems to typify contemporary cities. Terms such as 'liquid modernity', 'late modernity' and 'reflexive modernity', coined by the sociologists Ulrich Beck, Zygmunt Bauman and Anthony Giddens, point to some of the characteristics of contemporary life in highly developed societies.[1] 'Liquidity', for example, points to the difficulty of comprehending and defining clear concepts, ideologies or expressions of identity, while 'reflexive modernity' points to the process in which 'social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices'.[2]

Another important feature of the post-industrial Western city has been the progressive commercialization of the public sector and the increasing mistrust of government policies. Bauman, Giddens and Beck state that today commerce and the profit sector are not necessarily perceived as any less authentic than the traditional non-profit public realm. The commercial world also seems to offer some kind of certainty to people, despite the fact that it can no longer be taken for granted that a job will be for life.[3] This apparent displacement of trust might be explained by the gradual shift in Western societies from state support to the privatization of services, with the latter appearing more dynamic and up to date and the former regarded as old-fashioned, bureaucratic and sluggish.

At the same time, and precisely because of those enmeshing features, the contemporary city is seen as a field of study in which we might gain a new understanding of the social, the cultural, the political, the economic and the scientific realms. Over recent years, 'the city', considered as a concrete place in a globalized world, has recovered its relevance and has increasingly been seen, among other things, as an 'example' of global processes. As Beck

states, this is because 'one of the most important consequences of the globalization thesis is the recovering of the concept of place'. The local place reflects the global-local dialectics (and here Beck refers to Robertson's concept of 'glocalization'),[4] which means that globalization 'happens not out there but [also] in there'.

Taking an additional step, Beck refers to Sassen's work, showing the significant implications of such concepts 'for the analysis and theorization of cities: not the city as a bounded territorialized unit, but the city as a node in a grid of cross-boundary processes'. This implies that 'this type of globalized city cannot be located simply in a hierarchical scale that places it beneath the national, regional and global. It is one of the spaces of the global, and it engages the global directly, often by-passing the national'.[5]

Due to their new autonomy, cities have revived their emancipatory character. It is now possible to identify with them, without necessarily being identified with a nation, for example. In contrast to the idea of country and nation, the city is compared to a dynamic body of 'assemblages or collections of parts, capable of crossing the thresholds between substances to form linkages, machines, provisional and often temporary sub- or micro-groupings',[6] a place in which newcomers can start a new life, in which various vanguards can arise, stimulated by diversity, miscegenation and the melting-pot effect. Such cities are associated with liveliness and vitality that at its best offers the ideal environment for a contemporary society to reinvent itself, as well as find ways to reconcile the antagonistic character of concepts such as cosmopolitanism and nationalism.[7]

Others, such as Valentine, however, state that although positive associations with the city can offer important 'reservoirs of hope', one should never take for granted that a contemporary city is a place of encounter in itself. Courtesy in brief encounters, such as being kind to each other, ceding one's seat on a bus or holding a door open for a stranger in a public space, are important in daily life, but are not the kind of in-depth encounters that enrich knowledge and the mutual and synergetic discovery of city life. In his profusely cited work, Valentine shows that encounters are not only restricted by specific place barriers but also by the prejudices of others, expressed in terms of class, gender, ethnicity and age.[8]

This would mean that in the contemporary city nothing seems to have a very clear and univocal meaning. More than ever before the intertextuality and the multiplicity of references seem to enmesh meanings and contexts and combine elements as different as local traditions and global tendencies. In this context, traditional signs such as a Christian cross or the image of a Buddha, have mostly lost their literal meaning and might be worn or found in homes as a decorative reference to a malleable and ambivalent 'something'.

The interesting aspect of this is that the meaning of such signs and their incorporation or reincorporation into the imagery of daily life in the Western world is actually reinterpreted and justified in the context of specific meaning-giving exchanges, as a part of specific 'imaginaries'. In this sense, an 'imaginary' would be 'the creative and symbolic dimension of the social world, the dimension through which human beings create their ways of living

together and their ways of representing their collective lives'.[9] The undeniable importance of gaining a further understanding of the role of imaginaries in contemporary daily life means that it is crucial to develop new research approaches and strategies.

From *Capturing the Imaginaries: Students and Other Tribes in Amsterdam*

Núria Arbonés Aran, programme leader Cities & Visitors

[1] Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Traditions and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994). Zygmunt Bauman, Liquid Modernity (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

[2] Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 38.

[3] Those dynamics have led to what Ulrich Beck has called the Risk Society. In among others: Beck, Giddens and Lash, p. 6.

[4] The introduction of the terms Glocal, Glocalize and Glocalizations is mainly attributed to Roland Robertson and his book Globalization, Social Theory and Global Culture (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publication Ltd., 1992). Uitermark suggests that the term was first used by Erik Swyngedouw who in turn mentions Andrew Mair. In Justus Uitermark, 'Re-Scaling, "Scale Fragmentation" and the Regulation of Antagonistic Relationships', Progress in Human Geography, 26 (2002), 743–65 (p. 750, and note 7) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/0309132502ph401oa>.

[5] U. Beck, 'The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies', Theory, Culture & Society, 19 (2002), 17–44 (p. 8) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/026327640201900101>.

[6] Elisabeth A. Grosz, Space, Time and Perversion (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 107–108.

[7] Beck and Sznaider argue that modernity should not necessarily be a seen as a twilight, as cosmopolitan research offers us the chance to overcome dualisms in: 'Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: A Research Agenda', The British journal of sociology, 57 (2006), 1–23 (p. 1) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2006.00091.x>.

[8] Gill Valentine, 'Living with Difference: Reflections on Geographies of Encounter', Progress in Human Geography, 32 (2008), 323–37 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0309133308089372>.

[9] The 'social imaginary' as defined by Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort and referred in: John B. Thompson, Studies in the Theory of Ideology (Berkeley, Los Angeles: Univesity of California Press, 1984), p. 6.

A DEFINITE NO NO: DOING RESEARCH WHERE YOU DON'T SPEAK THE LANGUAGE; A CONSIDERATION

by Jeroen Keip

In Don Delillo's novel 'White Noise', Jack Gladney, a professor of Hitler Studies, has a minor but distinguished and unique academic career. He may not work at a prestigious university, but his research chair is the only one of its kind in the world. He does, however, harbour one excruciating secret: he does not speak German. Obviously, hijinks ensue when he feels obligated to organise the world's first conference on Hitler Studies, during which scholars from all over the world, including Germany of course, visit his university and expect to converse with him in German.

The non-Dutch students doing research in Amsterdam were in a similar predicament that is less funny, and sadly also real, as it has become apparent how challenging it is for a non-Dutch speaker to do qualitative research in the Netherlands. It is probably helpful that the Dutch are, on average, good English speakers, but interviewing people in their second or third language is bound to lead to less detailed responses and could also exclude potentially good interviewees who do not speak English.

This was discussed in class, and a consideration was made regarding how non-natives were at a disadvantage compared to the Dutch speakers when it came to being able to interview anybody anywhere to the same standard as them. In the end, it was decided that this simply was something students had to deal with, but frustration lingered. We were not as troubled by it as the fictional professor, but it still felt slightly awkward. Indeed, in the world of 'real' academia, doing research where you do not speak the language is seen as problematic. The same would of course apply to a Dutch researcher working in Paris or Barcelona. In her article 'Against Good Advice: Reflections on Conducting Research in a Country Where You Don't Speak the Language', sociologist Molly Andrews relates her experiences in doing research as a non-German speaker in the former East Germany in 1990. It was impossible for her to secure funding for the project, and her lack of speaking skills in German was the logical and justifiable reason for this. Nevertheless, she persevered on what she describes as a 'shoestring budget', leading to the following, less than ideal, solutions:

Andrews admits that, knowing what she knew at the time of writing, she would have never undertaken this project. However, there were some advantages that she could not deny:

· The translation delays during interviews gave the interviewees the time to already think about their answer by interpreting whatever they could already understand, along with gestures and facial expressions;
· even conferences she attended that were held exclusively in German were interesting to her, as not understanding the words did not stand in the way of Andrews connecting to the speakers' humanity.

All in all, it helped remove any barriers thrown up by the preconceptions that inevitably live in the most seasoned researcher, especially when it comes to slippery aspects like history and culture. The specific setting of this research, just after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 'liberation' of the East Germans, made this particularly important. It may be hard to imagine now, but the reality of the Iron Curtain made it so that a Brit from the 'free' West may have felt like being truly 'other' to someone who had been part of the Eastern block, even if it was just because of the Cold War, during which Germany and Berlin were the epicenter of a worldwide dichotomy between East and West. In Andrews' words, 'My struggle was not only to understand what my interviewees were saying to me, but to understand that I was both outside and not outside of the experiences they described. In some ways, this might have even been made easier to see as we regarded each other across the barriers of language.'

This quote ties into the aforementioned slipperiness in differences of history and culture, the inevitable 'otherness' that a researcher does, and of course should, encounter. It is not in the interrogation of the subject by the researcher that truth is found; it lies in their further interaction and recognition of each other, which Andrews claims is a highly underrated aspect of qualitative research.

In the end, Andrews mentions the richness of the data gathered as outstanding, both thanks to the unorthodox nature of the contact she enjoyed with her subjects and the timing of her arrival. If she had not taken the risk of going when she did, and had not taken all the extra work, she would have never had the same results.

The lessons are clear: awkwardness and lack of resources may be annoying, but they can be folded into the research process and lead to unique results. Whenever you end up in a less than ideal position, lean into the awkwardness of translation, and the extra effort and the perceived time loss. Lean into the otherness, and perhaps you will find something more real than a polished, professional approach would bring you. It is surely better than having to study German to receive some stuffy Hitler enthusiasts.

Jeroen Keip,
lecturer English

BETWEEN SUN AND SHADOW - 10 YEARS OF POWER OF IMAGES

by Maarten van der Burg
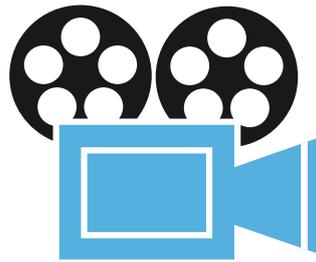
Camera Obscura

It was in 1826 that Joseph Nicéphore Niépce created the first photograph. He managed to make a photographic representation of the view outside his study. In 1895, Louis Lumière produced and directed the first real motion picture: 'Workers Leaving The Lumière Factory'. An amazing fact is that these first photographic reproductions of reality are documentary masterpieces. Later, both techniques were used for creating fiction.

In our course, Power of Images, we study this along with what happened when film and photography became mainstream ways of communication, and therefore very important elements of the human imaginary. Today, we see that images reign over an exclusive and powerful visual empire. Fiction movies and documentary films are part of the ways in which we see and experience the world, sometimes in such a powerful way that they constitute actual reality. The students and I discuss what makes cities different and how film contributes to that, knowing that film is a vivid mix of moving images, sound, and emotion.

The Power of Images Course

Throughout the module, the students create a final movie to show their expertise. During the first part of the course they learn how to become a cinematographer, and how they can use the filmic language to tell a visual story. We use the tools the students feel most comfortable with: smartphones, photo cameras, and mini video cameras. We create mini clips and give and receive feedback on each product. The students are amazed how simple a film looks when shown. Creating one, however, is a much more complex process, even compared to writing or mathematics, knowing that every shot we create leans on a combination of visual elements, sound, a topic, and of a representation of a source.

The second part is determined by the two trips that we make. In the first city, we start composing our story and start shooting in a skilled way. Most students work in teams of three. In between, we learn about the possible differences there are between the intentions we have when making a visual story and the effects on the perception of the viewing audience. When we travel to the second city, the teams almost have a story completed and don't have to do research anymore. We film the necessary shots for the final movie.

The third part is about narrative editing, adding sound and music, and titles. The final film is made nice and explicit for the viewers. Some final shooting takes place in Amsterdam. We close the course with the yearly Power of Images film festival, during which the films are projected on a large screen. Then, the students receive feedback from professionals from the industry.

The design of every Power of Images session is a starting film to address content and techniques, followed by exercises and then theory and feedback on student work. Our students mostly choose one of these three cinematographic forms: documentary, poetic film of comedy.

Looking into future: dynamics and challenges

In the coming editions of the Power of Images course, I gradually want to add more honours-level elements to the design of the course, so that the emphasis on research in film and with film is enlarged. We will be studying more fictional elements when reproducing the imaginary of a city. We will critically look at actual video platforms like Instagram. Furthermore, we will work on this important issue: the undeniable magnetism of icons that represent cities. Can mainstream landmarks be deconstructed or replaced? Why is their visual and narrative impact so dominant? Finally, we will always work within the main theme: Who and what represents a city?

At the end, we will honour and celebrate the sun for giving us Light as elementary material to work with, being aware that filming only can take place between Sun and Shadow.

● ●

The archive of Power of Images student films can be seen here https://vimeopro.com/scriptfactory/power-of-images-city-marketing-in-europe

A short movie about The Cities in Motion festival can be seen here.
https://vimeo.com/212373026

And inspiration for this article I got from

Vilém Flusser: Towards a Philosophy of Photography. European Photography, Göttingen, 1984
Walter Benjamin: Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit, 1936
Le Japon de Francois Reichenbach, 1983
'Paris, je t'aime', several directors, La Fabrique des Films, 2006

Maarten van der Burg,
filmmaker and lecturer

TECH & THE CITY

by Diana Müller & Simeona Petkova
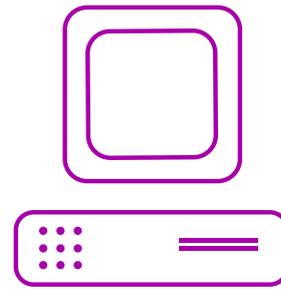
The founding of the International Virtual Consulting Firm (IVCF) in 2006 was inspired by the technological developments of the time, and the new world of possibilities opened by the advent of the Internet - the idea that it could be, in a way, an extension of our physical bodily senses to remote geographical locations (inspired by McCluhan, 1964). Most influential were the possibilities of video streaming and hosting video conferences with participants from different places - different cities - which enabled working together at a distance. In fact, LaSalle university in Barcelona, IVCF's first partner, was a pioneer and an inspiration when it came to using video streaming for the purpose of recording, publishing and watching lectures. As our inter-city cooperation with Barcelona, and later Paris, grew, it has enabled us to bear witness to the numerous changes in our cities on many levels. In this article, we will touch upon the scope and impact of technology on our social and urban environments.

In the last twenty years we have witnessed fast and vast technological developments: the rise and fall of the early (static) Web 1.0, the rise (and to some extend demise) of Web 2.0 that began with Google as a platform (O'Reilly, 2007), and continued with the growth of various social networking and content distribution sites, video/music streaming services, Voice over IP services (e.g. Skype), followed by the smartphone 'revolution' (with the first iPhone in 2007), wearable computing,

Internet of Things, augmented / virtual / mixed reality, and advanced machine learning systems (Artificial Intelligence). So if the invention of the Internet and the Web (and their underlying 'network effects') has unleashed waves of tech innovation, then the question becomes: how has this high pace of technological change and its interaction with society impacted urbanism? The answer is probably often filled in more than one way with paradoxes and complexities.

In the early years of the development of the Web, Moss (1998) predicted two common scenarios of the impact of the telecommunications on the cities. The first one is the decline of cities due to rapid developments in digital communications, making face-to-face interactions unnecessary; the business meeting, the concert, the shopping experience can be mediated through the phone line and the Web. The second scenario considers the opposite: telecommunications can facilitate the development of cities as additional layers of communication infrastructure (landlines, fibre optic cables, servers, data centres) are being added. Face-to-face interactions are of high importance even in a highly digitally mediated world. Cities thus could become highly connected hubs of different networks (communication, airlines, hotels, other amenities) that support residents, the business and leisure travellers.

Even though the second scenario became the dominant framework of referencing the ways digital technology and cities interact (and in relation to revalorization of city centers and peripheries) this has not happened without significant tensions between various urban actors and issues. Let's take two cases as an illustration: Toronto's Waterfront development by Alphabet's (Google's) Sidewalk Labs and cities on Instagram.

Simeona Petkova,
lecturer Digital Methods
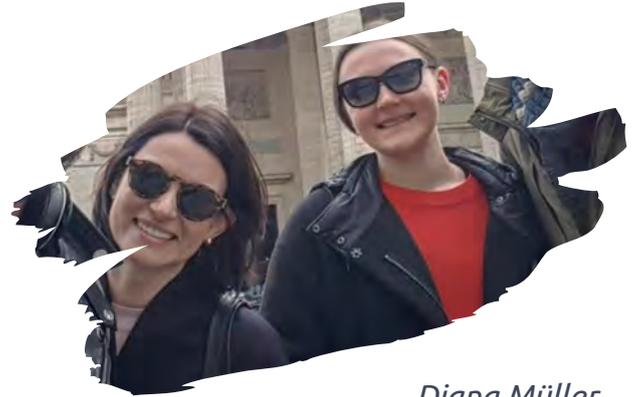
Diana Müller,
junior researcher Cities & Visitors

CASE 1: 'GOOGLE CITY'

by Simeona Petkova

Wikimedia Commons

'Google city' as a concept (and a market offering) enables droves of behavioural and sensors data that can be 'put to work' to manage a city (it's infrastructure, facilities, services, residents, visitors, etc.). Zuboff (2019) warns that under this umbrella of technological solutions, efficiency and convenience of tackling the urban "condition" lays the logic of the surveillance capitalism that turns public assets into raw material to be extracted, managed and packaged as a commercial offering. Sidewalk Labs became a business unit under the umbrella of Alphabet in 2015 and it took less than two years for it to find a ground for the experimentation and development of urban technologies (that can be later licensed to other cities) in Toronto's Waterfront. Currently, the project has been met with criticism from the civil society actors for having lack of transparency

(leaked documents revealed the project will be carried on a much larger plot than initially agreed on) and relying on technological promises of solving all urban problems with data while quietly privatising public services and shifting the governance of public domains to private entities. **This signifies the much needed turn in thinking the cities not only through (often hyped) technological advancements that are carried out on the urban grounds, but through critical knowledge exchange and cross-cities collaborations aimed at nurturing "smart citizens" (rather "smart cities").** In this sense, Toronto could learn from Barcelona's decision to enact a legal framework that 'sees' all data generated within the city's limits as publicly owned (in opposition to commercially exploited) (Mason, 2019).

CASE 2: 'INSTAGRAM CITIES'

How Instagram creates a disproportionate perception of reality.

by Christopher Gloger

Wikimedia Commons

What is a city trip worth nowadays without an obligatory tourist picture for Instagram? We all know it: we complain about people taking hundreds of pictures, only to edit, tag and share them on Instagram, looking at reality through the camera. But at the end of the day, we too end up posting something… For the 'gram! We share our lives for the world to see through Instagram, but so do we see the world through it.

Nowadays, over a billion people worldwide have an Instagram account. Add to this a constant connectivity to the Internet, 24/7, everywhere we go. We can post anytime, anywhere. But, does social media represent the world we live in?

In 2014 researchers analyzed the usage patterns and the digital social layer of the Northside Festival in Denmark, that is created on top of the physical event by the visitors of the festival that upload content to social media. They found out that the pictures with the most likes were made backstage. This is where the artists hang out, and the journalists are located as well. The researchers assume that the artists and journalists probably have the most followers online, enjoying generally more attention. This explains why they generate more likes. This shows us though, that the representation of the offline world on social media is quite disproportionate. While many users create content, only a few get most of the attention.

An interesting study conducted in Amsterdam maps the activity of Instagram posts within the city. The researchers used over 400,000 Instagram pictures that have been geo-tagged to create a heat map of the city that indicates the upload activity of certain areas. One can see that the activity is especially high in the touristic areas such as the historical city center and the surrounding canal rings, as well as the gentrified areas around the city center such as Jordaan and De Pijp.


Christopher Gloger, student City Marketing in Europe

While famous locations attract more people, they enjoy more attention online as well. This again attracts more and more online attention and visitors. Not only can we see a disproportion in representation of people, but also tangible places. The representation of the city created on the digital layer is thus inaccurate.

The researchers also point out that Instagram acts as a filter. We only upload and share content that we want to share, that we want the world to see. The success of Instagram probably goes back to the editing functions for pictures that were built into the app. Everything is made to appear perfect, beautiful, and even if not, then that's also by intention. But still, everyone talks about authenticity.

We can see that the digital layer that is created on Instagram only represents a small number of places and people. Attention draws attention, and thus the representation becomes more and more disproportionate. Further, not only do we filter out what we want the world to see, but we also only see what we want to see by following influencers and pages that we are interested in. This shapes the way we perceive a city and a certain lifestyle. As long as we keep using the social web, this will continue. Of course, most of us enjoy using Instagram and social media, but we should keep in mind that our perception is heavily altered and that nothing is purely authentic.
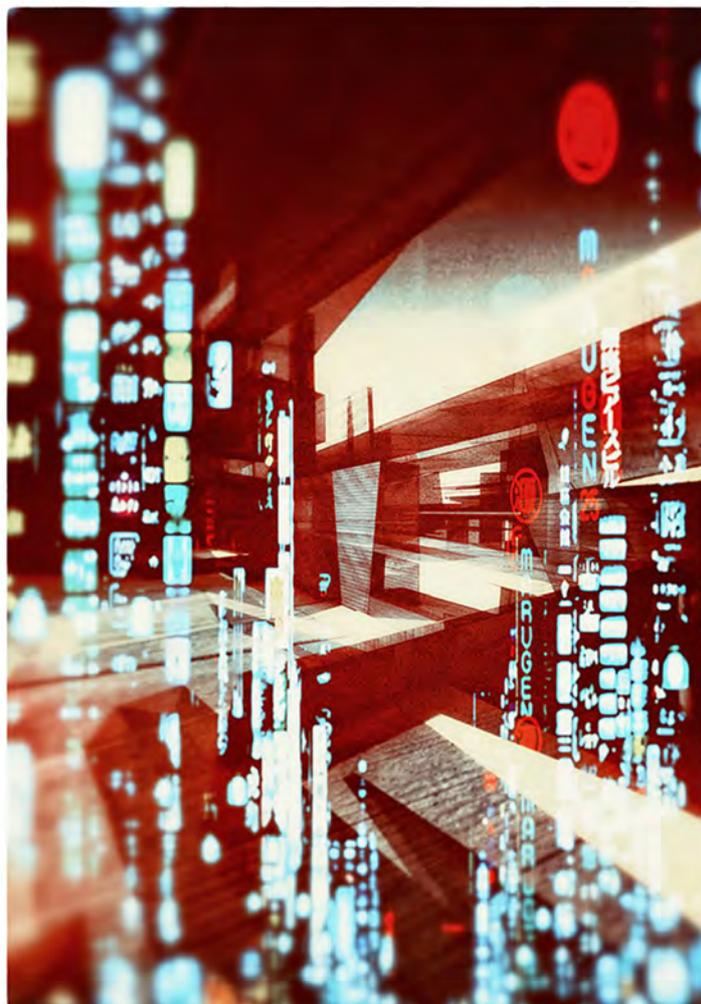
"GHOST CITIES / remix" by atelier olschinsky is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

THINKING THE CITY

DISCLOSING CREATIVITY

THE WEESPERSTRAAT

by The Creators / Christopher Gloger, Isabel Frikkee, Lewis Ingram & Ymke Dekker

The Weesperstraat is a main street in Amsterdam (picture 1). The road has been highly used as an expressway since the historical buildings in the area were demolished and the road was widened. However, there is practically no parking along the road. As one can observe, delivery trucks often stop on the right lane, causing traffic blockages (picture 2). The architecture of the area is modern, yet grey and unappealing. Also, there is a high level of traffic, which is a problem as many pedestrians use the road and many residents live there. Although trees can be found along the street, there are not enough to create cleaner air. Therefore, it can be stated that the problem in this area is the amount of air pollution caused by traffic and lack of greenery, which is unhealthy for the people passing this street.


(1) Causing traffic blockages (2) The expressway (3) Team The Creators / Isabel Frikkee, Ymke Dekker, Christopher Gloger & Lewis Ingram

The group of researchers created an image of how the ideal situation could look if the street undergoes positive changes (picture 3). The following story is about a possible persona - Adam, that follows the imagined ideal: Adam wakes up every day and takes the InterCity to get to Central Station in Amsterdam. He does not live in Amsterdam, but on the outskirts because it is cheaper, and he prefers the quiet atmosphere and greenery. Once he arrives in Amsterdam, he takes the metro to Waterlooplein and walks the last bit along Weesperstraat to his office, which is the routine he does every day. As he walks along the street, Adam starts thinking; he started to work in this area 10 years ago, back when this street wasn't nice. It was grey, dirty and loud! He can't believe how bad it was then compared to now. He stops for a moment and takes a deep breath. He starts to look around and sees flowerbeds at the street side full of tulips and other flowers, large trees and green facades on the buildings. This is truly amazing, a forest within Amsterdam! Adam is also amazed at the fact that despite there being many cars, it is so quiet! Thanks to the change from petrol to electric cars on this street, there is barely any noise and no pollution. The electric vehicles can also park in the newly created car parks underneath the buildings, and charge with solar power created from the power cells located on the roofs of every large building. Adam arrives at his work a little early, so he has time to get a sustainable coffee from a coffee truck located at the sidewalk in front of his office. He sits down on one of the many benches, joining other people sitting there. Everyone seems to be in a good mood and enjoying the nice weather. Adam gets out his phone and logs into the free Wi-Fi, to take a moment to read the news. After he finishes his coffee, he stands up, and is ready to start a productive workday.

INSPIRATION FROM A SQUARE

by Gustav's / Chantal van Muiswinkel & Kristy Bakker

During the IVCF case, a specific area in Amsterdam was researched in order to find a sustainable and creative solution for a problem occurring in that area. For our project, the Gustav Mahlerplein in Amsterdam Zuid had been observed and researched, and a few things on the square stood out the most.
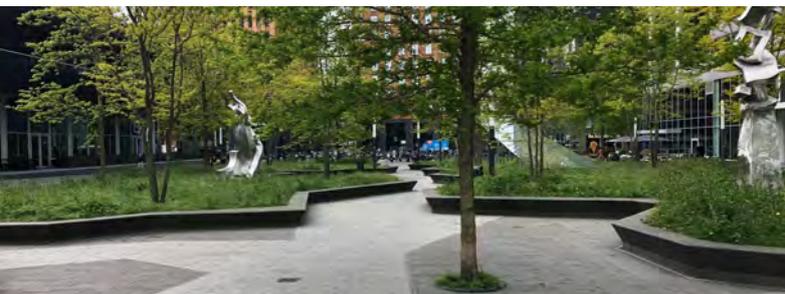
One point of improvement is that the square looks more like a stone area instead of a square with atmosphere, which it is supposed to be. Furthermore, the greenery on the square is different from how it was shortly after the reopening. The plants bloom for a short period each year, which means that the greenery consists of weeds for the rest of the year. Moreover, the greenery has changed from grass to seasonal flowers in a short period and it is not well maintained, hence the weeds.

There are two creative solutions around the square that have inspired us. One is the underground bicycle parking garage right under the square. There has occurred a problem such as having too many bikes, and at first you might think about placing the bikes in an area with space to park them. Moreover, building an underground bike parking garage is not the most obvious or cost-efficient solution, which is that makes it an even more creative and sustainable solution. During the mid-term congress in Barcelona, we explained this to the students and professors from Paris and Barcelona

and it was interesting to see how they could not imagine the problem of having too many bikes in the first place.

Moreover, the second aspect that inspired us is CIRCL - an initiative of the bank ABN AMRO to promote a circular economy - a hotspot with a restaurant, a rooftop bar and a variety of workshops and lectures open to the public. Everything they use is environmentally friendly - such as dishes made using local products and leftovers, and chairs made out of recycled refrigerators. This motivated and inspired us to create a green and sustainable solution for the square to extend the community of CIRCL to the Gustav Mahlerplein.

As a team, we have learned a lot about creative solutions and sustainability. The Gustav Mahlerplein has the potential to become a more green, relaxing, and inspiring square for people working around the square, and eventually residents of the area, since the number of businesses and residents in the Zuidas is increasing every year.

GUSTAV MAHLERPLEIN: IMPRESSIONS

by Gustav's / Elisa Hofmeister & Esther Dang
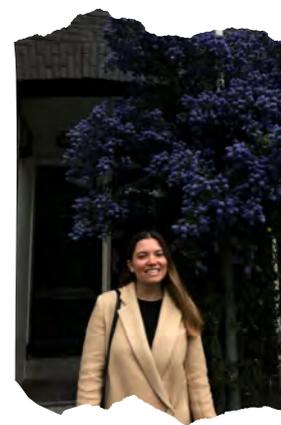
Elisa Hofmeister, student
City Marketing in Europe

With the theme of urban development and city marketing in mind, we evaluated a new and modern area in Amsterdam Zuid and came up with a problem in this area and a creative solution to this problem. The Gustav Mahlerplein is the current business square in the Zuidas area, but with this project we came to the conclusion that the square lacks in identity, atmosphere and color. (To read more on what things about the square stood out to us the most, check out the piece written by our two colleagues Chantal van Muiswinkel and Kristy Bakker). We will be focusing on how we felt in general about the case study and how the feedback received helped us come to the final product which will be delivered at the congress in June.

Esther Dang: "In general, the purpose of this project is to train the student with practical experience and skills for approaching urban development, defining relevant problems and drawing conclusions to them. From my perspective, this project is fairly useful and provides students with a chance for really getting to know the city. During the process, we conducted preliminary research by interviewing several stakeholders involved in the activities in the square, to help us understand the problem comprehensively by looking at it from different angles. During the mid-term congress of the minor, we had an opportunity to present our project to other students from Paris and Barcelona, as well as faculty and experts, and received feedback and suggestions for improvements to enhance the final results."

Elisa Hofmeister: "As an exchange student in Amsterdam, I believe this project was extremely interesting because it allowed me to discover the business district of Amsterdam and compare it to the one of my home country. Since my group and I focused our project on the Gustav Mahlerplein in Amsterdam Zuid, it was a great opportunity for me to explore the Zuidas which I believe is a very successful up and coming business district. With the current developments it is undertaking and ones that have been already implemented, I strongly believe it is starting to resemble bigger and more famous business districts such as Canary Wharf in London. From talking to the director of the Zuidas and asking him what kind of problems he sees with the square, as well as interviewing people who use the square on a daily basis, we found out that the solution we created is something that most people in the Zuidas would believe in. It was very motivating to hear from the residents as well as the municipality that this is a real problem and that people who use the square feel the same way we do, that it is too grey and improvements are needed. I am looking forward to see how the Zuidas in general changes in the future and how its plans to introduce more greenery help it to give the area an "escape from work-life" atmosphere which it currently lacks."

INTRODUCING THE CITY

A WALK THROUGH AMSTERDAM

OBSERVATIONS

...AS SEEN BY CHRISTOPHER GLOGER, BERLIN

In the following piece, I will describe three main observations I have made during the first visit of the week with the minor 'City marketing in Europe', and connect these to the literature of the week. This walk focused on the historical and present importance of European historical city centers at the example of the center of Amsterdam.

The first main observation I made was the collection of representative buildings and centers of different functions, such as religious, educational, cultural and governmental functions, throughout the city center from different time periods. This emphasizes the role of the city center historically not only being a meeting point but also serving a representative function for inhabitants and visitors, creating a distinct character of the city. This is in line with Kavaratzis and Ashworth, who state that places always have had the desire to create a distinct differentiation to other places for economic, political and socio-psychological aims. According to these authors, the effort of creating and promoting a specific place identity to internal and external target markets by governments has been an activity since the creation of government itself.

Furthermore, the growing importance of the parts of the city north of the IJ can be observed. According to locals, the central station always was considered to be the end of Amsterdam, creating a feeling of irrelevance of the north. This has been changing lately, and the city has had several efforts and projects promoting and connecting the northern parts to the rest of the city. This is visible on the one hand by several building projects creating a new skyline in the north, such as the A'DAM tower and the EYE museum, targeting different groups such as businesses, tourists and locals. Erik Braun describes these kinds of ventures as 'figurehead projects'. According to Brown, through the connection of city marketing activities with such monumental projects, conceptual ideas become more visible.

On the other hand, as another observation, one can see that the city has been creating increasing physical connections between the south and the north in form of more ferry connections and the newest metro line, the M52. Together with the figurehead projects and other policies of the city, these activities can be seen as frequent symbolic actions, as Anholt defines these. He states that activities of place branding need a mix of so-called substance, strategy and symbolic actions. Only together can branding endeavors be successful. The substance is the execution of a strategy of a government or municipality, which needs to be emphasized by frequent symbolic actions.

In a nutshell, my main observations during the first walk were first of all the historical and present importance of the city center for representation and image-creation; second, the growing importance of North Amsterdam visible in several monumental projects along the waterside; and third, the increasing physical connections between the north and the south through ferries and metro line M52 as further symbolic actions of the municipality.

...AS SEEN BY YMKE DEKKER, AMSTERDAM

In the following, I will explain three observations I made during the walk starting from Waterlooplein to the A'DAM Tower in Amsterdam. In groups, we walked past the recommended locations, looking at their age, interesting facts about them, their shape, and their history. The observations are linked to the literature of the first week.

Firstly, we noticed the Amsterdam city hall and opera house complex at Waterlooplein. This is located next to the river Amstel and the 'Blauwbrug' (Dutch for 'Blue Bridge'). The building was finished on September 23, 1986 and designed by Wilhelm Holzbauer and Cees Dam. Its nickname is 'Stopera', a shortening of the 'Stop the Opera' slogan that was used for years in protests against it. The building houses both the city hall of Amsterdam and the Dutch National Opera and Ballet. Referring to Kavaratzis and Ashworth, this name raises awareness among citizens and visitors because they receive clear information on what the building is about, which is an aspect of marketing. This building is quite modern because of the shape.

We continued our walk towards the Agnietenkapel. This building is the birthplace of the University of Amsterdam and is located on the southern half of the Oudezijds Voorburgwal canal. It was built in 1470 to replace another chapel, which was burned down in 1453. The chapel has stained-glass windows and a historical gate at the front. Although several renovations and restorations took place in the 1900s and 2000s, I had the impression that it is an important source for the history of Amsterdam among citizens. According to Hospers, this old educational centre shows an institutional shape that in turn shows as a symbolic shape of the city.

The last observation from this walk was the Arti et Amicitiae on the Rokin. The name of the building comes from a Dutch artist society established in the 1800s. This building was designed by architect J.H. Leliman. Furthermore, the building was completed in 1855. It is a private institution that offers a pension fund and a place for artists and social networking. According to Braun, branding is applied to this building because of its history, for example in the name of the building. The building was combined from two individual buildings and given the neo-classical architectural style. This building gave me the impression that it has been modernized over the years because of the modern look.

To conclude, during the walk three important observations were made. Stopera building complex at Waterlooplein. This was followed by the Agnietenkapel located on the Oudezijds Voorburgwal canal. The last observation was the Arti et Amicitae building on the Rokin. All of them have different historical backgrounds that gave special impressions.

Ymke Dekker, student
City Marketing in Europe

...AS SEEN BY BINKY VUUR, AMSTERDAM

Amsterdam was clearly not built overnight. It was shaped by multiple historical factors into the city we love so much and a real urbanized centre of attention and history. It might seem like place marketing is something big in Amsterdam, as it has been practiced in the last few decades, but this is not the case. Place marketing is a development process that can be divided into three phases. Amsterdam is globally known as being innovative, original and authentic. This is because of the fact that Amsterdam abides its reputation by enhancing the city with strategy (where do we want to go as a city?), a continuous flow of symbolic actions (Amsterdammertje) and staying in-sync with its history.

We started the walk at Waterlooplein metro station. The duration of the walk was around 1,5 hours. First we went to the academy of architecture to have a quick peek inside. Inside the academy we found some interesting pieces of art, such as a head sculpture and a gnome-sized clay model of what looked like a city. After our first stop, we continued our journey through the city, had a quick look at the second-hand market, which was not open due to the weather most likely. Right in front of the second-hand market there was a marble-looking building with a statue of Jesus holding a globe, which was quiet intriguing. After strolling through the second-hand market we headed straight to the Opera and Ballet house Muziektheater and the City Council building. The people of Amsterdam call it "Stopera" which is a combination of words; meaning Stop Opera. As an Amsterdammer, I never really knew about the original meaning of this word combination, but after hearing the reason it

had me thinking – why would they call it Stopera? According to Paasi there are four shapes a region needs to have in order to be a separate entity. The music theater, compared to Amsterdam itself, is blasphemous. It's humongous and ugly. It is not in line with Amsterdam's history and looks way too modernized to be around the centre of Amsterdam.

Continuing our journey through the city, walking around the City Council building, we noticed the statue of Spinoza. Surrounding this statue, I saw a lot of familiarities; modernized structures, classical Amsterdam houses and houseboats.
We ended our journey at the A'dam Tower in Amsterdam-North. After crossing the pond on a ferry to this location, I started wondering how the people of Amsterdam did this back in the day, and it brought me to the point that the canals in Amsterdam were the territorial border lines, and that they were being transported by boat to reach their destined location (before the arrival of trains).

Spinoza / Diana Müller

REPORTING THE CITY

WHO'S IN CHARGE OF ITS IMAGE?

REPORTING THE CITY - ALTERNATIVE STORY CARRIER

by Lewis Ingram

In this report I will be looking at the 2013 film 'Under the Skin', directed by Jonathan Glazer and loosely based on the book of the same name by Dutch author Michel Faber. The reason I chose this is because the film is set in Glasgow, Scotland - the city where I am from and grew up. The story told is a sparse one, focusing on an alien perspective of the human world. It involves an alien, played by Scarlett Johansson, disguised as a human female who drives around Glasgow and tries to lure unsuspecting men into her van. While the film is subtle and not forthcoming with information, the book gives more details such as the alien's mission being to kidnap humans and deliver them to her home-world, to be turned into food (the process is an unpleasant one, and the film is much more restrained and vaguer in explaining what happens). In the book, humans are referred to as 'Voedsels' by the extra-terrestrial beings, which is clearly an indication of the writer's origin as 'voedsel' means 'food' in Dutch.

Most characters in the film are played by non-actors and many scenes were filmed with hidden cameras; by filming this way, the director effectively portrays real people reacting to the situations they are put in. Glaswegians are renowned for being very friendly and open to strangers, and the city itself has consistently been voted the friendliest city in the UK. In 2014 it was voted friendliest city in the world by travel publisher Rough Guides, ahead of cities such as Melbourne, Tokyo and Copenhagen. I believe the scenes involving non-actors accurately portray Glasgow as a friendly and open place. Glaswegians (we're also known as Weegies) really do love to chat and tend not to be shy when meeting new people. The infamously hard to decipher Glaswegian dialect (aka the 'Glasgow patter') is on full display here.

Steven Mail, a Jacksonville, Florida-based investor in digital and social media companies whose global travels bring him regularly to Glasgow said, "In Glasgow it's less about the occasion and more about the ability to connect and to have a social relationship. It can be over drinks or lunch or dinner. The important thing is that you're able to bond".

The film does show the historical centre, as well as the modern infrastructure throughout the city. It also shows run-down areas with council buildings, however an interesting thing in this scene is that high-rise flats are actually being demolished. We can see from this that

certain areas in Glasgow are undergoing a process of gentrification. The film is set in 2013/2014 and this was an important time for Glasgow as the city was preparing for the Commonwealth Games in the summer of 2014, and many more run-down areas had their infrastructure improved, along with the building of new venues. Mention of The Commonwealth Games is also overheard when the main character is listening to the local radio, as well as a brief mention of the Scottish Independence referendum. The referendum was divided between the Better Together campaign (pro-UK, generally more conservative) and the YES campaign (pro-Independence, generally more socialist). Glasgow has a long history of being a traditionally working-class and left-leaning city compared to others in Scotland. This was very apparent during the referendum, as Glasgow was very proudly pro-Independence and was one of the four areas in Scotland that voted Yes in the referendum.

There is a scene which involves a long, single tracking shot following the main character as she walks through a busy shopping centre. The sounds and bustle of the shopping centre convey that Glasgow is a modern and cosmopolitan city. About halfway through the film splices in footage taken on the street showcasing people walking, talking, laughing, working – essentially just average Glaswegians going about their daily lives.

These shots also display the different areas of the city and the differences between them. While brief, we can see the

city centre is the most historical and cosmopolitan, the east is the most working-class and the west appears to be the most modern. However, there is also one scene which involves a gang of youths being aggressive towards the main character, and while Glasgow still has a somewhat overly exaggerated negative reputation with some people, this short scene does touch on the more dangerous side of the city.

So, to conclude, the film does not portray just one specific image of Glasgow – interestingly, it portrays several images. Glasgow comes across as a friendly city, a modern city, a cosmopolitan city, an exciting city, a historical city, and also a rough city. I feel that all these images are true of Glasgow for a variety of different reasons, and I think 'Under the Skin' did an excellent job of portraying the real city and the real people living there.

Lewis Ingram, student
City Marketing in Europe

PENOZA: A WOMAN LEADING THE AMSTERDAM ILLEGAL DRUG INDUSTRY

by Kristy Bakker

'Penoza' is a five-season crime series on the Dutch public NPO3 channel. It takes place in Amsterdam, and the main character is Carmen van Walraven. This series shows violence, drugs, and other criminal activity. Because it takes place in Amsterdam, it is interesting to see whether it influences the viewer's perspective of the city. This brings us to the main question: 'Does this television series influence the image of Amsterdam?'

The start of a career

The show's title is derived from the word 'Penoze', which denotes the criminal underworld. In this case they refer to Carmen van Walraven as the penoza, a woman in an environment that is tradtionally dominated by men. The story starts with Carmen finding out that her husband is dealing the hard-drug cocaine. After he is liquidated, Carmen is left with her husband's debts, and for that she is threatened. Instead of going to the police, Carmen decides that she is going to be the new leader in the organized crime industry so that nobody will ever hurt her family again.

The story illustrates the illegal drug industry of Amsterdam. Apart from that, the it also follows the lives of Carmen's three children. One of them is involved in the dance scene of Amsterdam, one is a creative artist, and the youngest child is attending school. In that way, there are different story lines in the series and the crime is not highlighted all the time.

Kristy Bakker, student
City Marketing in Europe

Amsterdam: a criminal city?

The series illustrate Amsterdam as a criminal city, which is undesirable for its image. It shows Amsterdam like this because of the drugs that are involved and the murderers that happen in the series. Nevertheless, among society in the Netherlands this could already be in the image that they have of Amsterdam, because of criminal activities that happened in Amsterdam in the past. For instance, a criminal like Holleeder is from Amsterdam and gets a lot of attention from media, meaning that this series might not influence the viewer's perspective of Amsterdam because it exists. On the other hand, the series also involves the lives of the children who are not involved in the drug circuit. This gives the viewer an insight into the daily life in Amsterdam.

Stereotypes

The tradition of this criminal image is that it is about a lot of money, that there are drugs involved, and poverty on the other side. This image could make people feel unsafe in Amsterdam, and it is important to be aware of that. In my opinion, this series does not uphold this traditional perspective of criminality. The family lives in a huge villa, and poverty is not shown to be a very big issue in Amsterdam. It is interesting that the big leader of the drug industry in this series is a woman, which might seem controversial.

All in all, the series show an interesting view of the city. It is a topic that many people, fortunately, are not involved in. For the viewers this industry might be a grey area, and for that reason it is an interesting series to watch. However, it does make Amsterdam look like a criminal city, which is undesirable for its image. Maybe it is an idea to watch the movie 'Alles is liefde' ('Everything is Love') afterwards to compensate.

Penoza / NPO3

CITY
CAMPAIGN

ENJOY & RESPECT AMSTERDAM

by Koen Scholten

The city of Amsterdam remains popular with visitors, as people from the Netherlands and far beyond come for the culture, architecture, atmosphere and restaurants. However, some of the visitors do not come for the city, but purely for partying and doing crazy things. Their behavior increasingly leads to major irritation among residents and entrepreneurs of Amsterdam. They damage the quality of life in certain areas and that is unacceptable. That is why Amsterdam Marketing launched a campaign to tackle nuisance caused by misconduct.

Anyone who thinks of Amsterdam thinks of freedom, the freedom to be who you want to be, to find what you believe in to say what you think. However, this freedom is not limitless, but is based on one important condition: Respect for each other.

The purpose is to increase awareness of what is and what is not tolerated in the city by presenting good behavior as a freedom of choice. From dealing with waste to public order, from drinks to toilet use.

But who are they talking to in this campaign? There is not one type of nuisance causer, but it is true that a certain group specifically comes to party and do crazy things. They mainly target male visitors between the ages of 18 and 34 from the Netherlands and the UK. The campaign is visible from the orientation phase, booking a visit to Amsterdam, in hostels and hotels, and when you're going out in the city. Communicating the right message at the right time is essential for the success of the campaign.

amsterdam & partners

BAN THE BIRO!

by Luca van Gaal

The Biro (c) Mango Mobility

It is fair enough that the scooter in Amsterdam is heading towards the road; however, it is not the city's biggest problem. The government has not been noticing a greater trend that has been growing at a greater pace than the scooter has ever done: the Biro. The best arguments in favour of transferring the scooter to the motorway are the overcrowding of the bicycle path, since scooters have difficulties in overtaking cyclists, and the difference in speed between the scooters and others using the bicycle path. The problem with the Biro is that it is wider than a scooter, and a Biro is allowed to go 45 km/h, while the scooter was only allowed to drive 25 km/h. The Biro is a bigger problem with its rapid growth in numbers and should not be allowed on the bicycle lane. The bicycle lane should be a path on which tourists feel safe, and that residents enjoy cycling to work on. Scooters did not contribute to that and had to be removed; however, the Biro should also be banned in that case.

Icon: *A person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of mentioning, and show great respect.*

Ever since 2015, Amsterdam has been disrespecting an icon by trying to get rid of it: the Vespa. Why am I calling the Vespa an icon? The Vespa is as contagious to the gentrified area as the first bird chirp is during the day, or the first worm that gets out the soil during a heavy rainfall. To me, a Vespa is the final step that confirms a blue-collar area has turned into a white-collar neighborhood.

Nowadays, the government is trying to get rid of the Vespa, basically by bullying and stating that the scooter should move towards the road, and obliging the riders to wear a helmet. Which is fair enough; I get that Amsterdam is a medieval city, which was not built with the idea of having motorized vehicles, and I get that even during the post-war period when bicycle lanes were being built there was no plan to have that many scooters. But can we please not overlook a bigger problem, which is growing rapidly in numbers and is becoming the new Vespa?

The disadvantages of the Biro are the following:

- The Biro is wider than the scooter is (by almost 20 cm)
- The Biro is electric, and thus has faster acceleration
- The Biro is allowed to go 45 km/h on a bicycle lane
- The Biro is less mobile than the bicycle

If we take a quick look at the spider-web of the city of Amsterdam, and to what extent the city wishes to prioritize some of those dimensions, we see the following aspects:

- City of culture
- City of canals
- City of meetings
- City of knowledge
- Residential city
- Business city

Another important factor, which is not taken into consideration by the city government, is mentioned by Kavaratszis: the sense of occasion. Amsterdam is an open world museum, especially the city center, which includes iconic locations like the Warmoestraat, or the Grachtengordel (ring of canals). Besides this, I would like to add that it is and should be within a city's strategy to always strive to exceed expectations, not only for the visitors, but also for the residents.

Going back to those six dimensions, and the fact that Amsterdam is already an open world museum, getting rid of the Biro will increase the spider's web in the 'City of culture' and the 'City of Canals'. While for the residents, since the Biro is very inconvenient, the city will become more of a 'Residential city', and additionally more of a lively city.

Applying Jane Jacobs' ideas, the city would become safer. I know this does not sound likely but bear with me. Jane Jacobs believes that for people to feel safe, there should be eyes on the streets. The Biro is now becoming iconic of gentrified and more luxurious areas, and those are widely bought by foreign investors. I have been to a street in London that was solemnly bought by foreign investors, and even though it was a beautiful area, I felt slightly unsafe. Banning the Biro will not solve the issue entirely; however, it will help a little

bit in solving the livability, at least in the day-to-day routine on the streets for residents, and visitors.

Unfortunately, my plea will not be sufficient. According to Erik Braun, these kinds of changes, not only as practical changes, but also as city marketing changes, are deeply intertwined with urban government policies.

Normally this works quite well; however, a large disadvantage of marketing needing to be intertwined with policies is that the process of changing something most of the time takes longer than the time the current government is elected. I understand that the trend of the rapid growth of the Biro was not foreseen three years ago.

Returning to the introduction with the policy of removing scooters out of the center of Amsterdam, the city creates a sense of incomprehension for the owners of a scooter who feel that they are being ignored while there is clearly a greater danger on the road, thus the city now is unable to exceed expectation for a large number of residents who are a bit irritated by these new policies.

To conclude, the Biro is a terrible invention, not only for being immobile, and banning of it would contribute greatly to the priority dimension Amsterdam wishes to increase in; however, it will also help increasing the number of eyes on the street. Most importantly, ignoring the Biro will be a help for the residents who own a scooter to gain a better understanding.

That is why I am pleading: from Reigersbos to Rokin, from NDSM to the Dam, Ban the Biro.

STUDENT SAFETY

WE AS A CITY NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

by Chantal van Muiswinkel

Amsterdam is a city with a variety of diverse areas, people and cultures, which makes the city special and beautiful. Every year, many people come to the city and the number of students is growing as well. It is important for the city of Amsterdam to consider all groups, including visitors, tourists, and local people when working on improvements in the city. Moreover, the students are vital for the future of the city because they will potentially work, live and maybe have families in Amsterdam. That is the reason why it is so important to solve problems that affect this specific group. Safety is one of these problems, and the municipality of Amsterdam should engage with this issue in certain parts of the city. This includes burglaries in student homes at some student campuses, such as the Spinoza campus in Zuidoost, as well as physical assaults and other incidents that makes students feel unsafe and vulnerable, in a city that is not dangerous in general.

Even though the municipality of Amsterdam has tried to engage with the students' needs by taking some actions, there was no story or strategy attached to these actions and the purpose was not clear. For example, street lights and security cameras were added in some areas, yet a specific connection has not been made between these actions and students' safety. It is crucial to create a

story or strategy to engage with this need effectively and in the long-term. According to Simon Anholt, it means that the strategy needs to be combined with substance and symbolic actions in order to affect people personally and change their minds about the safety of students. For this reason, a city campaign needs to be set up to raise awareness of safety issues for students and help them live as safely as possible. Furthermore, there is not one thing that works for every city with students but another city campaign about student safety could be used as inspiration. For example, in Manchester an international student safety campaign was created to inform international students on personal safety, health and well-being, and household security. The municipality collaborated closely with the police and other institutions to execute this plan in the best way. An international student safety guide that includes a lot of useful information with regard to safety and taking care of yourself was created and made widely available.

For Amsterdam, such a guide to enhance the knowledge of the people interested could also be created; however, creating a student safety guide is not enough. To create a common goal and engage people with the topic of student safety in Amsterdam, the creation of the safety guide could be accompanied by a

'symbolic' day each year dedicated to students' safety, reflecting on lifestyle and sharing experiences in order to become more unified.

Moreover, in this digitally hyperconnected era, the story needs to be present online as well. This could be in the form of an application to help students protect their places and life and help others with this information. Besides that, the application could include a map of safer areas to go to alone at night and a special group where people could publish information about the neighbourhood, both positive and negative. After all, the more knowledge you have about safety, the safer your life will be.

The student safety guide, application and symbolic day could be combined with actions, since these actions would be connected to the story of safety among students. According to Jane Jacobs, the more there is to do on the streets, the more people and eyes will be on them. For example, more playgrounds, benches, and shops create more liveability on the streets, and this makes them instantly safer for students and other pedestrians. After all, people in the city will know that actions are taken and know it is interesting and important to keep an eye on the life in the city. Eventually, a broad campaign could have such an influence on everyone in the city that they change their minds about safety, and be more careful. And, most importantly, students will feel safer and stay in the city.

Chantal van Muiswinkel,
student City Marketing in Europe

Amsterdam / Jeroen Keip
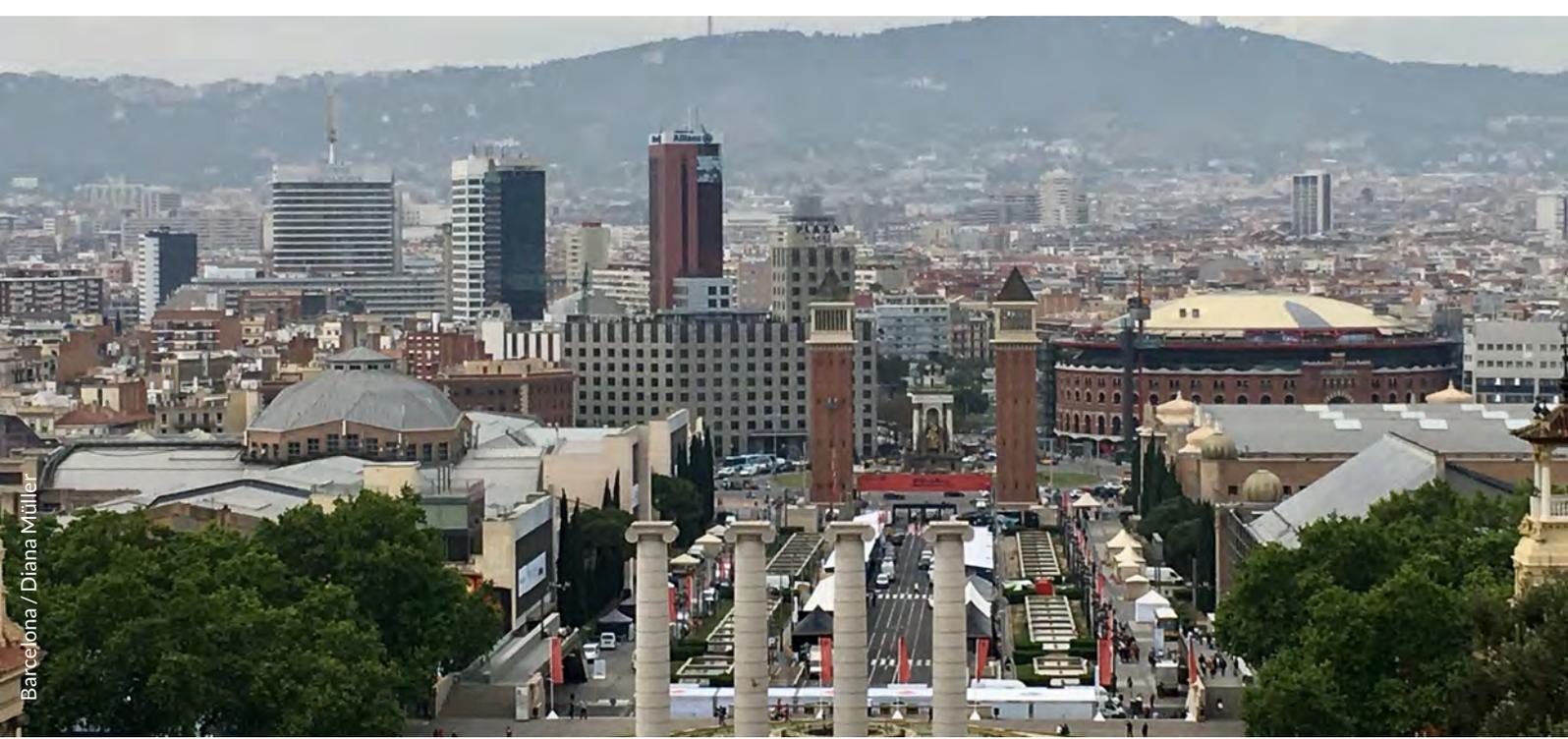
Barcelona / Diana Müller
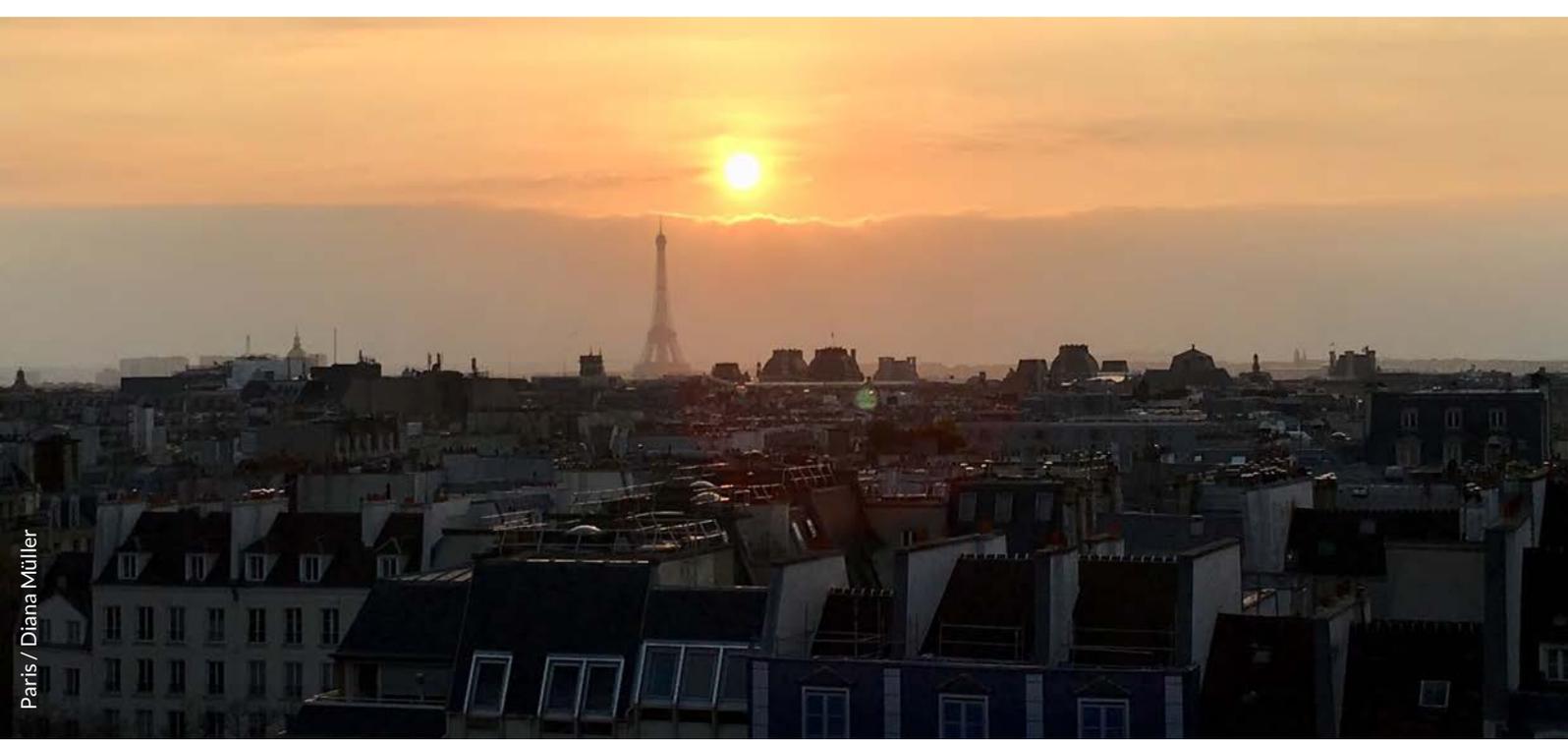
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