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Activating a regenerative urban tourism approach: practices and interventions via a lab setting in Amsterdam North

A theoretical and practice-based paper for all who are interested in regenerative development, urban tourism and living lab settings

Urban Leisure
& Tourism Lab
Amsterdam

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applied sciences

Content

How to read this paper

Depending on your interests, experience and knowledge, you might want to choose to do some cherry picking and just read specific pieces. As this paper is written for various stakeholders, here are some suggestions to get you started:

I just want to know how I could use a regenerative living lab approach in an urban tourism setting:
> Go directly to chapter 4!

What is regeneration all about?
> You'd better start at chapters 1 or chapter 3.

Why is it relevant to work from place?
> Chapter 1 might give you new insights.

Urban tourism, the Amsterdam case and interventions that stimulate positive impact is more my cup of tea:
> Chapter 2 and paragraph 3.3. might appeal to you.

However, if you are interested in cultivating your regenerative mindset a bit further, you know that fragmentation won't be very helpful. I know, reading more than 50 pages might take you a while, but you will notice afterwards, that you will be able to see a bigger *and* a smaller picture. You will be able to refer to both theoretical backgrounds *and* practical outcomes. And above all, hopefully you will learn and co-create with us along the way in the near future.

Are you ready?

Introduction

How to navigate your way through an era that is increasingly referred to as an era of poly-crises, where disparate crises interact in such a way that the overall impact far exceeds the sum of each part (WEF, 2023)? Some of the social, environmental and security risks described in the 2023 World Economic Forum year's report are close to a tipping point.

"This is the moment to act collectively, decisively and with a long-term lens to shape a pathway to a more positive, inclusive and stable world" (WEF, 2023, p 10). How do we move from poly-crises to a more regenerative and poly-potential rich narrative (Wahl, 2024) and above all, what is needed in order to start thinking and acting in such a way? By realigning our focus to poly-potential, we can help ourselves remain focused but also open to new possibilities.

In view of this growing sense of urgency and the need to bridge theory and practice in particular, a new way of carrying out a doctorate has emerged in The Netherlands: the Professional Doctorate (PD). It aims to translate research and reflections into actionable insights, not only for enriching applied educational study programmes, but also for industry practitioners (PD LTH, 2024). It is a national pilot that runs from 2023-2031. This paper is part of my PD-trajectory on activating a regenerative urban tourism approach in an urban living lab setting and will take until November 2029.

I. Aim of this paper

The aim of this paper is multifold. In general, theoretical papers propose new theories or models to explain phenomena within a field. They focus on developing frameworks that can be tested and applied in future studies. They often engage deeply with existing theories, identifying their limitations and suggesting new conceptual approaches. This paper also has a strong practice-based foundation and therefore closes with a model that combines theoretical and practical insights.

This paper brings together three main topics, namely: the challenge of the impact of urban tourism, regenerative (place) development and (working with) urban living lab methods. The paper ends with a conceptual model in which these three main topics are integrated, followed by possible paths in which it will be tested and developed further in the coming years. Regenerative design and working in a place-based lab setting is innately based on a variety of types of sources and
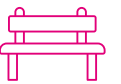
Picture on the left: Via the Lab Story Bench one can see icons of North and listen to stories of locals about their Amsterdam North.

practices. It encompasses a mix of sources based on tacit, academic, (personal) leadership, transition management, ancestral, pedagogical and intuitive knowledge and experiences. It touches on the stories of place, systemic and living systems design, personal development studies and much more.

II. Enquiries into regenerative tourism living lab settings

Initial Research
The first phase of this research was to collate a foundation of current trends, insights, tools, practices and methods that can lay a basis for the underpinning framework and proposed developmental model of this paper, the Lab Loops for Life. It brings the fields of urban tourism, regenerative place development and evolving place-based (urban) living lab methods together. This also entails facets of systemic change, placemaking, co-creation, communities and driving sustainable transitions.

Personal experiences and reflexive practices
Inholland University of Applied Sciences (UAS) has been running the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab (ULTL) since 2015 in Amsterdam and 2019 in Rotterdam. I am the founder and current lab lead of the one in Amsterdam. Right from the start, I have worked closely with a core lab team that consist of colleagues and students with various backgrounds (cultural and multidisciplinary). Five years ago, the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab in Rotterdam was set up with another team, so we now operate at two locations. Together we were, and still are, able to develop the lab further. The labs offer a rich source of place-based, situated and embodied experiences of co-creating interventions at various levels. Key insights have been disseminated via books, chapters, papers, tools, lab methods, lectures, exchange programmes, interviews, podcasts and (inter)national conferences. As long as we maintain a lab setting, our learnings will keep on expanding and deepen our reflections.

Feedback loops
Since this theoretical and practice-based paper touches upon several topics and perspectives, a wide variety of experts were approached for feedback and co-learning, it intended to grow capabilities for all. These sessions lasted for at least one hour or more, with an exception to one session that lasted three hours in a row. Professors in the field of tourism, design thinking and societal impact, regenerators, tourism professionals, lab team members and students, tourism and city district policymakers and many more gave their input. Often more than once, between April 2024 – January 2025.

Acknowledgements to all those who gave their helpful feedback and were open for co-learning on (parts of) this paper. In alphabetic order, a warm thank you to

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Iterations
The publication of this paper is part of a Professional Doctorate that will run until November 2029 and can be considered as a starting point for the interventions, future studies and other publications that will follow. The study will take place via research through design methods, continuous collective learnings with the conceptual framework (Lab Loops for Life) in this paper and continual feedback loops on the intended impact. In any case, the overall aim is to keep working from potential and to contribute to an innovative ecosystem in which collective learning and experimenting is a key characteristic. It is to search and co-create tourism interventions that initiate mutual benefits to all in the city of tomorrow. A shorter and (Dutch) version of this paper will be published around the summer of 2025.

III. Reading Guide
This theoretical and practice-based paper contains a plurality of sources, pays attention to different perspectives and bridges insights from theory and practice. Therefore, each chapter starts with a short outline on the content, followed by examples, whether this be a model, a tourism product, a quote or concrete output from the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab (ULTL). When available, this is in turn related to (inter)national, regional, city or hyper local level layers of place.

Chapter 1, *Place Matters*, covers the relevance of Place, as this is one of the key foundations of regeneration: working with and caring for the uniqueness of a certain area. Each place is made up of layers and flows, a few are highlighted; the ones that are most relevant to the context of this study, such as its communities, natural areas and a preliminary overview of regenerative leads. It introduces the current site of where the ULTL in Amsterdam North is located and the need for participative approaches.

Urban Tourism & Interventions are discussed in Chapter 2 that dives deeper into the context of tourism in cities and its implications. During last decade, there has been a growing awareness of those implications and various measurement have been taken. The rise of urban living labs in general and the foundation of the Urban Leisure & Tourism Labs in Amsterdam and Rotterdam specifically, are considered as interventions. Interventions via which the complexity of (new) urban tourism is explored and more deeply understood.

A quintuple helix is applied, meaning that five different perspectives are all considered: the end-user, (social)entrepreneurs, knowledge institutions, policymakers and the more than human perspective.

Chapter 3 focuses on *Regeneration as a possible pathway for change* and connects the wicked nature of urban tourism and underlying regenerative principles that feed the way of working, thinking and doing at the ULTL since the end of 2022. Especially regenerative development and placemaking principles and methods seem to fit our aim the best.

How this is implemented and actually looks, is shared in Chapter 4 *How? Lab loops for activating a regenerative tourism approach*. The ULTL combines many methods, tools and (research) questions in order to activate a regenerative tourism approach, practices and interventions. By visualising this process, it seems to come down to 'entering the lab loops' and by doing so, creating conditions for a continuous evolving local ecosystem and open-ended collective learning. The process is called the Lab Loops for Life and forms the main conceptual framework that underpins this paper and starting point of this Professional Doctorate. This developmental framework will be tested in many ways in the coming years.

Chapter 5 *Next steps* therefore hints at which next steps will – or might - be taken: after all, an open mind for emerging quests and situations could influence the way this study proceeds. It is also an open invitation to you dear reader, to join us. At this point, I will deliberately switch from I to we, since this paper is about a collaborative journey about the future of our cities.

A list of all used sources can be found at the end.
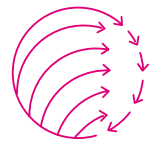
The Urban Leisure & Tourism lab combines many methods, tools and (research) questions in order to activate a regenerative tourism approach, practices and interventions.
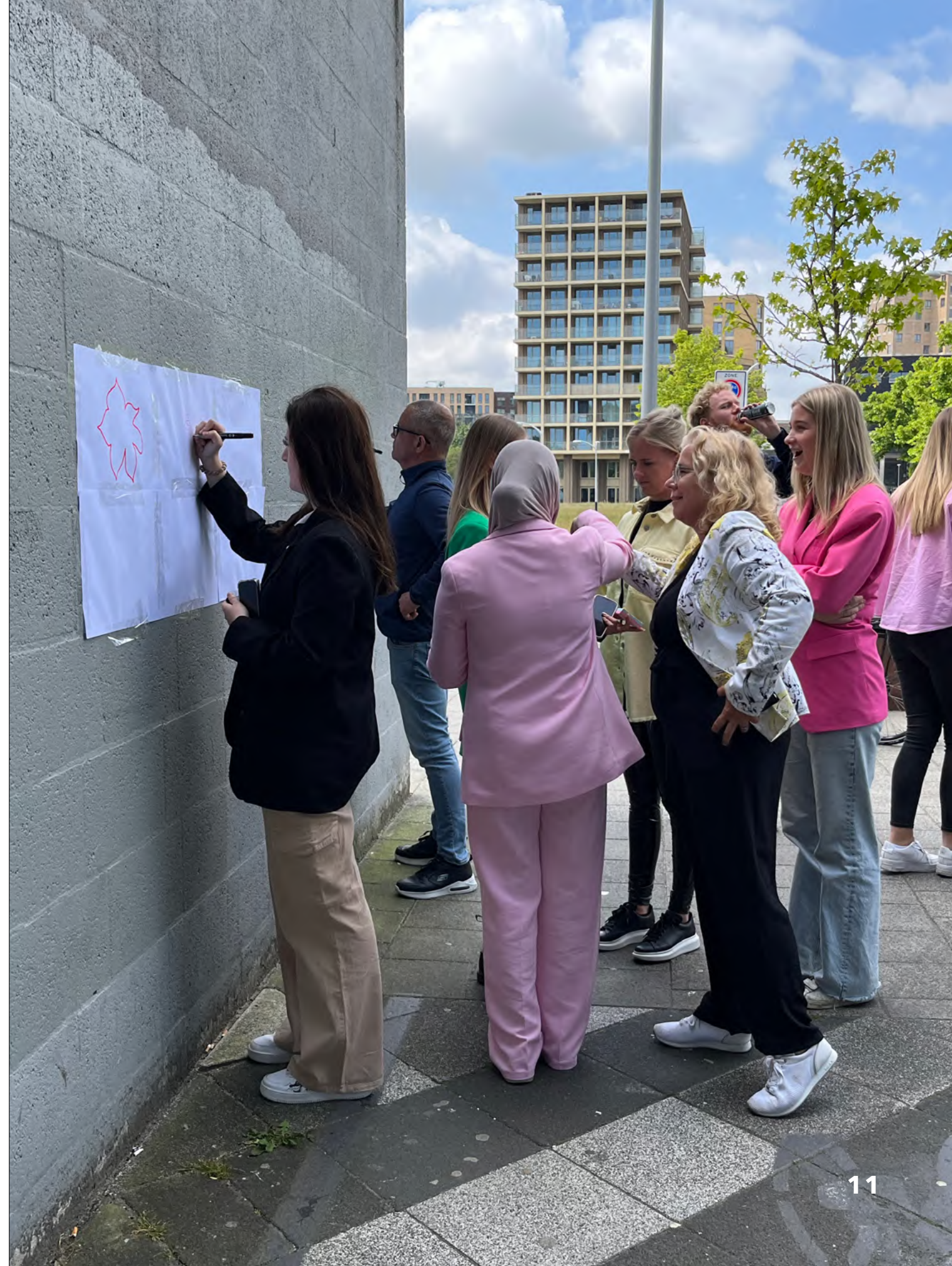
Place is where the natural and human systems connect most closely. We can transform our places. One by one.
If we transform the places of the world, we transform our planet.

The Really Regenerative Centre, 2024

1. Place matters

1.1. The Place Paradigm

Regenerative Tourism was spotlighted in November 2024 during a four-hour session at the latest World Travel Market (WTM) in London. A key prompt came from one of the current leaders in this field and facilitator of the session, Ms. Tina O'Dwyer, who framed it as a shift from "the Numbers Paradigm, to the Place Paradigm" (The Tourism Space, 2024). A call for viewing tourism within a wider interconnected ecosystem was also shared by other regenerative front-runners (Pollock, Dens, Clarke, Holmes, Caroll, Sigurjonsdottir): "as this encourages protection, conservation and respect for the place, and will help build place resilience to climate change" and "regenerative tourism goes beyond leaving the place better than how we found it and aims to make destinations whole again, reducing fragmentation, so places and communities can flourish. Involving locals as "guardians" of their places is essential, as they bring valuable insight and care" (Mills, 2024).

Before we will dive deeper into the ins and outs of regenerative (place) development and tourism in the next chapter, let's first focus on what we might mean by (layers of) place, local stories and communities of place and the place that is taken as the starting point of this study, namely Amsterdam North. The aim of this paper is to gain a deeper understanding into how we can activate regeneration in specific urban areas. We will therefore rely on the work of known regenerators, who have worked in such place(s) and have described in which ways places are connected to other areas.

Place is defined as the unique, multilayered network of living systems within a geographic region that results from the complex interactions, through time, of the natural ecology (climate, mineral and other deposits, soil, vegetation, water and wildlife, etc.) and culture (distinctive customs, expressions of values, economic activities, forms of association, ideas for education, traditions, etc.) (Mang & Reed, 2012). Urban places are seen as living organisms that include built environments at different scales, encompassing residential, commercial, tourism or industrial developments, neighbourhoods, regions, towns, or cities. All living systems are nested within other interconnected systems and are interdependent (Bellato, 2024).

Being nested can also be considered as a mutuality of interest among the different levels, based on the energies that are exchanged up and down between them: "If the health of one level of system declines, it affects the health of the other levels. In living systems, natural forms are arranged in nested 'holarchies' of wholes, or 'holons'. Each such holon is at once a whole in its own right, but a part of a greater whole and is therefore semi-autonomous or interdependent with other holons, as well as self-organizing and emergent. Just as holarchies are central to the sustenance of natural form, so holarchies of households, neighbourhoods, villages, towns, cities, and regions are also key to establishing sustainable patterns of everyday life. Nestedness is inherent in all living systems. […] We are organized, in embedded or nested degrees of increasing complexity. Each whole becoming part of a greater, more complex whole. […] Places, when healthy and contributing to the future, are alive, vibrant and viable. The first step to understanding place sourced potential is to learn how a place works as a living system" (Andersson, 2025).
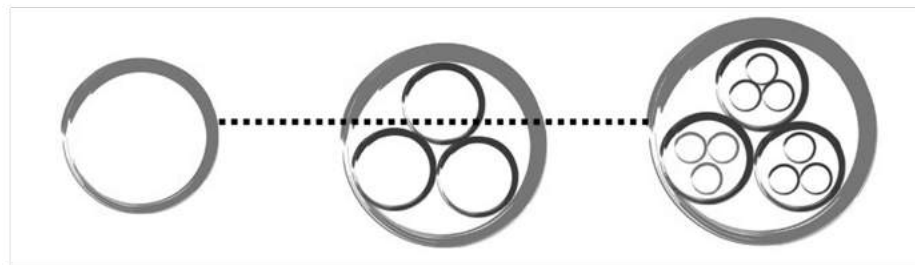

Figure 1. Image from Power of Place course (Really Regenerative Centre, 2024)

The essence of any regenerative project is its contribution to the ongoing health and evolution of the whole system (Hes & Du Plessis, 2015). We must create places that support the future of cities. Places designed for living, working, creating, and contributing, combined with strategies that incorporate nature integration and the non-human aspects of life critical to all local ecosystems (Hes & Reed, 2021).

1.2. Amsterdam North
For this Professional Doctorate, Amsterdam and specifically, the Amsterdam North city district will be used as a case study. This case study is of interest because of the rapid developing nature of this city district. Whereas only about 20 years ago Amsterdam North was still seen as a rather empty space that was set apart from the city of Amsterdam, currently it is a rapidly developing district with rapidly increasing resident numbers, as well as visitors. At the same time the area is still very much in transition, which means that different issues for place development, including tourism can be observed in a relatively unexplored area.
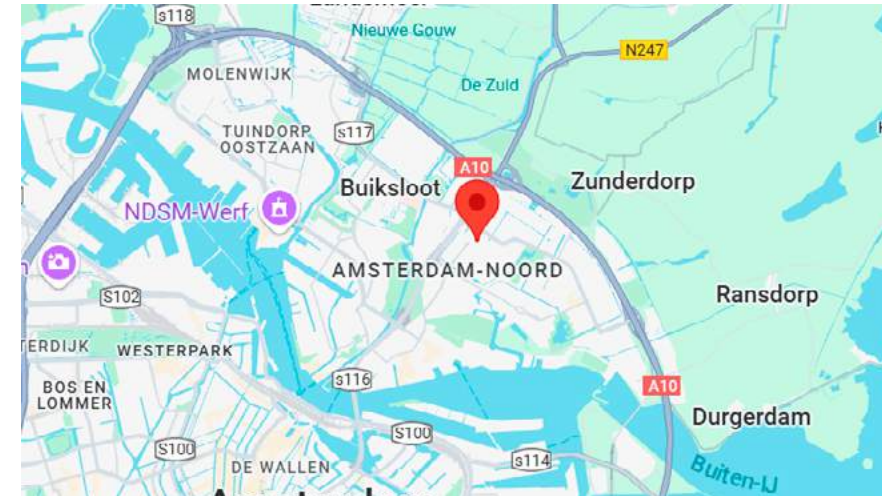

Figure 2.
Image 1: area and CAN (central area North), city district Amsterdam North and river 't IJ that divides North from the rest of the city of Amsterdam (Google maps)

Image 2: Amsterdam (Google maps)

Image 3: Metropolitan Region Amsterdam (Google maps)
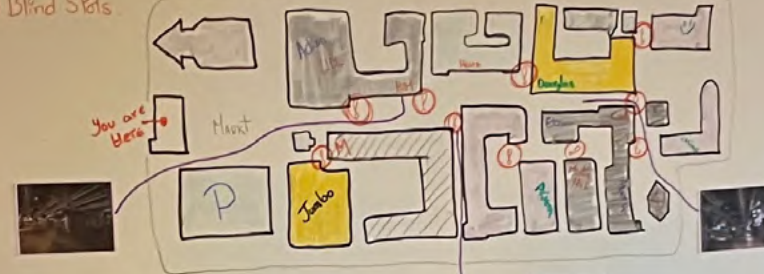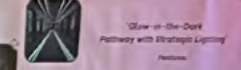
Inholland's Amsterdam Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab location (see Image 1) is physically and socially embedded at the Buikslotermeerplein-area and its direct surroundings. In a feasibility study of the municipality of Amsterdam (2023) this area is regarded as a place with much potential. It frames its future as a transition from a square to a hub: "Amsterdam consciously chooses a multicore development to create more balance in the city and region and provide new space for growth and innovation. Amsterdam expresses its desire to relieve the centre and indicates that it wants to contribute to the various cores developing into distinctive, complete and compact urban areas. In the coming years, the Amsterdam municipality wishes to turn North into a destination and let Buikslotermeerplein develop into a lively heart of North. In recent years, the residential area around Buikslotermeerplein has long been a less attractive part of Amsterdam. The developments on the Northern IJ banks and various (cultural) initiatives, have changed North in recent years. Consequently, Amsterdammers increasingly see North as a destination. As for the connection to the city centre and other important hubs like the Zuidas and Schiphol Airport, Buikslotermeerplein is already equipped with a metro station. The end/beginning point of the North/South line that now makes the square very easily accessible from all over the city (and, because of the stations at Central and Station South, from all over the country)."

As the images show (Figure 2), the northern part of Amsterdam borders on more rural areas, in which small villages and towns are located. This peri-urban mix, offers a potentially rich area to explore for visitors. According to Monsson (2013), the peri-urban can be seen as a mosaic, in which not only adjacent rural areas with low population density but also established small and medium-sized towns that are under a strong influence from the urban city are captured.

In the coming years, the Central area Amsterdam North (CAN), with the Buikslotermeerplein-area in particular, is facing a massive transformation on a social, cultural, economic and infrastructural level. In the Vision Document Visitor Economy Amsterdam 2035 (Gemeente Amsterdam b, 2022), we read the following ambitions: "We are also working on a new cultural cluster (including film, theatre and night culture) on and around the Buikslotermeerplein [in Amsterdam North] [...] These parts of the city will also become more attractive for Amsterdam residents and visitors. All these places will become vibrant city centres, faster than we might think possible". Amsterdam as a whole wants to develop itself into a multicore city in which – for instance – a flow of visitors to the suburbs is encouraged. This vision links with the municipality's approach to create vital neighbourhoods for which want to strengthen (both existing and yet-to-be-developed) neighbourhoods proportionally based on their own qualities and identity, increase accessibility and amenities, and connect them more. This forms the basis for the development of the entire city (Gemeente Amsterdam c, 2024).

Amsterdam North as a whole is known as a very green part of the city. "Amsterdam's greenest, most vibrant, species-rich and biodiverse landscape. It has more
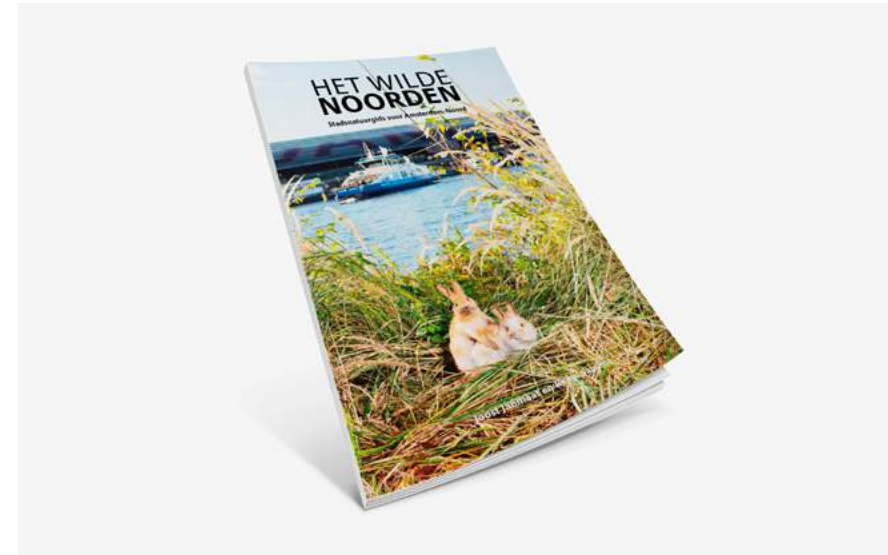
Figure 3. A guide on Amsterdam-North's nature expeditions: The Wild North, "a place where people live as well" – (Janmaat & Saouma, 2022). Amsterdam North is known for its green areas and parks, which are under pressure due to the housing construction, new infrastructure and other non-nature purposes. Ideas of calling Amsterdam North a National Park.

different types of plants than National Park Texel Dunes, more different trees than National Park de Hoge Veluwe and the North Sea Canal is one of the most biodiverse waters in the Netherlands. It may sound crazy, but Stadsdeel North is a Nature Reserve." (Tolhuistuin, 2021). Over 100 parties – the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab included – signed a manifesto for treating Amsterdam North as a National Park. Unfortunately, the green areas in Amsterdam, North included, are under threat due to housing construction (Parool, 2024). Worries about the decrease of nature in the city, has also led to a referendum through which the residents of Amsterdam have expressed their concerns and demand for more certainty that this process is put on hold (Gemeente Amsterdam d, 2024).

A special masterplan: the North Approach (*Aanpak Noord*) was established by the municipality in 2022 and will run for 25 years: "Amsterdam North is changing fast. A lot of construction is going on and more housing is being added. Not all Northerners are benefiting from this. The difference with the old neighbourhoods is becoming more and more obvious. Something needs to be done. Residents, entrepreneurs, organisations and the municipality are taking action together. […] Many residents have little trust in the municipality and other organisations. That is why we are solving the problems in a new way. Together, equally and with respect for each other" (Gemeente Amsterdam e, 2024). The plan is organized around six main themes, such as housing, inequality of opportunities, local economy and green spaces. In the masterplan, tourism and leisure are hardly mentioned. The ULTL is in contact with those who are responsible for and executing this masterplan. We are exploring ways to integrate the potential of tourism and leisure development in the Approach North.

BOX 1. Preliminary mapping of regenerative leads in Amsterdam North

Amsterdam North: leads that might turn North into one of the most regenerative city districts of the future? A preliminary ecosystem mapping of Amsterdam North shows many concrete leads of (temporary) organisations and places that focus on (aspects of) regeneration of the soil, buildings and social-cultural practices. To name just a few:

• **Circular economy & living:** state-of-the-art sites as: Schoonschip: "the most sustainable and floating neighbourhood of Europe"- Schoonschip – Amsterdam and De Ceuvel: "a city playground for innovation, experimentation and creativity where we aim to make sustainability tangible, accessible and fun" https://deceuvel.nl/en/. Both places attract visitors from all over the world to experience and learn more. North also has several repair cafes and thrift shops, like one of 2000m², the second largest of Amsterdam and countless (small) giveaway boutiques/cupboards. A popular attraction is the biggest flea market of Europe, held every month at the former NDSM-ship wharf, https://ijhallen.nl/en/index.php.

• **Green & Food:** Apart from being called the greenest city district of Amsterdam thanks to the parks, North also hosts most community & allotment gardens of all city districts: 10 that are part of the official union Bond van Volkstuinders and various others that are smaller and run by volunteers. All these green hotspots offer opportunities for biodiversity and activities such as walking and cycling. Some sites combine urban farming with leisure activities such as a café, hosting yoga lessons or an adventure park for kids and possibilities for volunteer work: https://noordoogst.org/, https://hetgroeneveld.amsterdam/en/ and https://deverbroederij.nl/. Many (new) restaurants hardly serve meat anymore and almost all try to serve locally / bioregional grown food. Serving mainly plants like at Lowlander Botanical "maxi-

mum taste, minimum waste" and vegan dishes are available in more and more restaurants. Twelve different 'green groups' of volunteers, spread out of the whole city district are in contact with the North Approach team and co-created an Ecological Map of North. It shows what is needed to improve city nature and the board of city district North adopted the ecological map in June 2023, see: https://www.amsterdam.nl/stadsdelen/noord/ecologische-kaart-noord/

• **Water:** there is a rich variety of water leisure activities on offer, in clean (open) water, such as: swimming, canoeing, supping and pools for toddlers to play in. Also maritime leisure activities such as sailing are increasing. Boats can be moored in one of the new harbours and via the main city river 't IJ, one can either sail towards the hinterland or via sluices to the North Sea.

• **CO_2 neutral mobility:** thanks to (newly) constructed cycle paths, many Northerners and visitors are using (e)-bikes, e-scooters to move around. The metro is electric and most busses are as well and the amount of e-cars increases too in North.

• **Storytelling, art and debate:** Tolhuistuin – a "cultural oasis and free space"- has a comprehensive offer of festivals, exhibitions, movies, documentaries, interventions, debates and more that is aimed at raising awareness on topics like climate change and regeneration, such as via the first Regeneration Festival in 2023, https://regeneratie.org/event/regeneratie-festival-2023/. In front of their door people are invited to sit on the Climate Bench: an upcycled bench that shows us how high we will have to sit if the earth continues to warm and water levels rise further (see photo). Storytelling about North and by Northerners seems to be increasingly popular.

Art: The Climate Bench shows us how high the water will rise due to climate change. Initiated by the Climate Museum in 2022. The bench is right in front of Tolhuistuin, at the river 't IJ and offering a view at the Central Station.

https://www.klimaatmuseum.nl/klimaatkunst/klimaatbankje/

Sharing stories of place matters and helps us to gain a deeper understanding of local characteristics such as patterns, local customs and memorable moments. Storytelling nights are often prepared and programmed in order to bring people together and buid up mutual understanding and trust. The Modestraat Cultural Hub, hosts several storytelling activities in close collaboration with Mezrab storytelling school and Stadspodium North (a theatre yet to be built), https://www.modestraat.org/kunst. Many books have been written about North and naturally, tour guides use various storytelling techniques too, so visitors are also becoming more immersed in the complexity of this multi-layered part of Amsterdam. Two museums focus their exhibitions and tours exclusively on Amsterdam North: Amsterdam North Historical Museum https://hcan.nl/ and Museum Amsterdam North, https://museumamsterdamnoord.nl/.

• **Regenerative wellbeing, hospitality & tourism:** In the examples above, already a few places that residents and visitors visit during their leisure time, are mentioned. During the last decade there has been a rise of conscious leisure activities that aim to increase one's personal wellbeing (yoga, meditation, healthy drinks & food) and that of the larger community and surroundings. A few new hotels were opened only recently and explicitly have an offer that is also meant for local neighbours, like: BOB W https://bobw.co/amsterdam?lng=en with on the top floor Strech& Fold offering: yoga, a café and rooftop swimming pool, www.strech&fold.com and Poppies, www.hotel-poppies.com. Tour operator Tours that Matter is based in North and offers tours with a focus on regeneration (also in other parts of the city), https://www.toursthatmatter.com/.

Tomorrow's tourism will be rooted in local communities. In neighbourhoods, villages and cities that are thriving. Flourishing places. Therefore, places like that are eager to welcome visitors. A flourishing destination is firmly connected to its place, where people work together, visitors can come home, and residents and entrepreneurs cherish and pass on their love for the place.

With this vision of the future in mind, Tourism Flanders launched the Travel to Tomorrow project in 2017

1.3. Communities & participation

The lab is at the Buikslotermeerplein-area and hosts a variety of communities. Co-creating thriving places with these communities is pivotal. However, what do we mean by communities and are Amsterdam's communities still willing to co-design with other (local) stakeholders?

Communities can be place-based, identity-based or issue/interest-based. Communities formed geographically have a shared living environment, such as a neighbourhood or a district, where people come or live together. The way people perceive their living environment in their neighbourhood experience, such as having a sense of place or feeling a loss of sense of belonging, affects their self-image and social relations, and can create a sense of community, but at the same time exclusion, as people experience the same living environment in different ways (Kaulingfreks & Matthijsen, 2024). In one particular living environment, moreover, several communities of people can be present who feel connected by different identity characteristics, interests or concerns. The social interactions between members of a community, and between different communities, nowadays take place not only in the physical living environment, but also online. The combination of off and online contact can strengthen social connections, but also strengthen social tensions (Kaulingfreks & Matthijsen, 2024). Social media have become important platforms for residents to engage with their neighbourhood. Dialogue via Facebook communities is found to be thoroughly affective (Breek et al., 2020) and is based upon the study of online communities in Amsterdam North. It mediates feelings and urgency to engage, it bonds participants and impacts the social and political landscape within the neighbourhood.

Amsterdam North has faced and will continue to face far-reaching transformation in coming decades. Urban renewal might lead to different communities facing different levels of well-being. The way they give meaning to their living environment can come under pressure (Kaulingfreks & Matthijsen, 2024) as their living environment is rapidly changing with the arrival of new residents, businesses and infrastructure. These changes do not always do justice to everyone's interests. New residents do not always feel involved in the same way with local communities as residents who have sometimes lived there longer, in a particular neighbourhood, and have different stories, norms, values and interests. Communities with a 'majority' identity are often better able to find their way to local institutions and governments, and thus better able to represent their interests, than communities with minority identities, a socio-economically disadvantaged position or weaker connections with government representatives (Kaulingfreks & Matthijsen, 2024). Unfortunately, it is often the communities of people who are institutionally disadvantaged who benefit the least from urban regeneration. When cities develop in alignment with different existing place-based, identity-based as well as issue-based communities, renewal processes can strengthen the social capital of these communities, but when this does not happen, social cohesion and social capital can also be undermined (Heath, Rabinovich & Barreto, 2017).

Feelings of not being involved (enough), is exactly what we hear on a daily basis from the local communities we co-create with. Hence, within the ULTL we are asking ourselves: how can we support communities to strengthen themselves and move beyond possible polarization(s)? How can we build bridges among communities via an appropriate tourism and leisure offer? How can we work more from communities and place sourced potential? How do we hold space for place grief (Bouw, 2024)?

Figure 4. Locals activists from Save Amsterdam North started a sub-group about "OUR Buik-slotermeerplein-area is being transformed and turned into a tourism destination"

Participation processes are more than ever part of Amsterdam's way of 'designing a better city together' (Christof & Majoor, 2021, Gemeente Amsterdam f & g, 2018 and 2022). Amsterdam is not the only city doing so and comparative research among cities shows that each local ecosystem of networks has their own characteristics (Gerritsma & Stompff, 2023). It was Löw (2013) who coined the term Eigenlogik or Intrinsic Logic. This refers to the specific patterns of interpretation and ways of doing things that evolve, which in turn shape the identity, the state of mind and perceptions of the city's inhabitants in different ways. She recently discussed (Christof & Majoor, 2021) that this intrinsic logic of the city is also regularly reproduced through the dominant local planning practices and routines, including participation opportunities and forms of participation that are strongly dependent on the intrinsic logic of a city.

Within the realm of social, health and urban planning sciences, the interest in participation is fuelled by Arnstein's seminal 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969). Her work is very often referred to and quoted when it comes to models on participation. Arnstein's typology presents participation as a metaphorical ladder, with each ascending rung representing increasing levels of citizen agency, control, and

power. She includes a descriptive continuum of participatory power that moves from nonparticipation whereby experts decide for others (no power) via degrees of tokenism (counterfeit power) to degrees of citizen participation (actual power) whereby citizens decide for themselves.

Intrinsic Logic helps us to better understand what is called the *Amsterdam Approach*: it focuses on the collaboration between citizens, civil society, the private sector, knowledge institutions and the municipality to address social issues (Florian, 2020). "The city has steered towards more market-oriented approaches and citizen participation. (..) the city's possible Eigenlogik of (overly) pragmatic cooperation and consensus-driven solutions become visible." (Christof & Majoor, 2021, pp 41). However, it is also Amsterdam where participation fatigue (e.g., Helleman et al., 2021; Welschen & Veldboer, 2019, Gerritsma & Stompff, 2023) was observed in relation to participative urban planning and tourism policy making, as residents and other stakeholders felt they were not treated as serious partners and participants got frustrated with the process and limited outcomes.

Citizen participation in Amsterdam mainly concerns the first two rungs of Arnstein's ladder (1969): 'manipulating' and 'co-production'". Yet, stimulating and facilitating residents' active participation in policy making and urban planning trajectories are a focal point for the political parties in power and explicitly mentioned in their coalition agreements (Gemeente Amsterdam f & g, 2018 & 2022). As Christof & Majoor (2021) describe, Amsterdam has given some space to an empowered civil society to steer developments themselves. The latest study on participation via The Court (Rekenkamer, 2022) shows that involving all stakeholders actively whilst creating new policies is not yet taken for granted: "We see that officials often vaguely describe what they have done about participation. This does not necessarily mean that nothing or too little has been done with Amsterdammers.(..) Perhaps they do make a lot of work of participation but have not written it down properly. But it could also be that they do not do enough to involve Amsterdammers." The mayor and aldermen shared The Court's analysis and will work on reviewing the so-called participation paragraph.

Participation is also considered as an important starting point for the development of the Buikslotermeerplein-area (Projectteam Buikslotermeerplein Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024, p.11) and isn't taken lightly: "We did this in different ways, through information meetings for local residents, interested parties and the entrepreneurs. A large 'City conversation' was organized in the cinema and over 400 interested parties attended. The conversation was often about the type of housing and amenities. This was the first time when residents could see the plans of the already concrete initiatives and the initiators could check their ideas and first elaborations could be tested. In the weeks preceding the City Talks, we held 528 'coffee conversations' at various locations in North. We told casual passers-by about the plans for Buikslotermeerplein and we invited them to come to the City Conver-

sation. This was part of an extensive communication campaign to invite 'broad North'. […] By March 2023, there was so much agreement, that we could already show the plans to interested parties at two walk-in events. Also at these walk-in moments, we showed the large 3D model of the area. […]

Some 110 interested parties visited the walk-in moments. At both walk-in meetings we generally heard the same signals. On the one hand, hopeful for the improvement of the area; on the other, we also heard concerns about the effects of the new building on the surrounding area. At the large annual information market in station North about all developments in the central area of Amsterdam North, we informed interested parties about the process, the rules of the game and they could look at new concrete plans. […] In 2022, 2023 and 2024 there will be various ways of communicating with the surrounding area. Once every fortnight there will be a walk-in consultancy at the InfoStek information point on the square. In addition, a digital newsletter is sent out every two months and is communicated through residents' letters where necessary." The project team is currently preparing a project on greening the area with the local activists of Defend Amsterdam North (Red Amsterdam Noord) (figure 4) too.

In the next chapter we will focus on the rise of (new) urban tourism, its impact, measurements and interventions that are taken with the aim of maintaining a healthy balance for all in Amsterdam.

Figure 5. Every semester, the new Urban Leisure & Tourism lab students are given a talk by one of the urban planners and/or project managers from the municipality's Buikslotermeerplein-area project team. The 3D large model at Infostek literally helps us to get a glimpse of future.

Tourism is known and blamed for a variety of socio-economic issues at locations, including crowding, crime and noise pollution. On the other hand, tourism is touted as a promising means of creating jobs, meaningful encounters, and adding value to inhabitants' overall quality of life. In other words, tourism can make or break a place.

Isaac et al., 2024

2. Urban Tourism & Interventions

2.1. Urban tourism and New Urban Tourism

Cities and urban agglomerations are in general defined by complexity and characterized by: a relatively large size, high density, segmentations and specializations, diversity of individuals and functions, a relative absence of intimate personal acquaintances, increased mobility and insecurity (Wirth, 1938, Jacobs, 1961). More recent studies have shown that cities are often the cradle of culture and creativity, liberal lifestyles, politics, innovation, progress and decline, connectivity and consumption (Zukin, 1995, 2010, Landry, 2000, Sassen, 2001, Florida, 2003, Urry & Larssen, 2011, Sennet, 2018, van Engelen, 2024). In other words, cities represent highly complex, multilayered and dynamic entities. Cities have been attracting people ever since they came into existence. Since the 1980s, they also have become a popular destination to visit, to wander around as a 'weekend break'. Since the late 1990s and particularly after the economic crisis of 2008, tourism was viewed as a possible engine for urban recovery and renewal. Tourism governance aimed at accommodating economic growth and limiting possible governmental barriers (Russo & Scarnato, 2018).

Urban tourism is a relatively new field of study. Due to its nuanced nature, urban tourism lacks an agreed-upon definition (Li & Wu, 2024). However, it is generally referred to as tourism in towns and cities and is distinguished from other types by several features. In urban contexts, tourism is one of many economic activities, and it competes with several other industries for resources. Its development is restricted more by cultural heritage and residential needs rather than by natural environmental factors. More importantly, residents and commuters are also significant users of attractions and infrastructure in urban areas. Although making a strict distinction between rural versus urban areas might be debatable and now discounted by planning and geography research, this dichotomy is still present in tourism studies (Jörgsen et al, 2024).

Apart from urban tourism studies and practices, the scope of this theoretical paper also touches upon New Urban Tourism, which can loosely be described as the 'tourism of everyday urban life' in neighbourhoods or areas that are not (yet) on the mainstream tourism trail, such as Amsterdam North (Koens, 2021). "New Urban Tourism's unique focus and characteristics make it useful as a place of analysis and experimentation with regard to the place-based, co-production of tourism that can

foster ideas in response to the question of 'how' to reinvent tourism as well as the opportunities and issues that come with this"(Koens, 2021, p.5). The term 'new urban tourism' was originally introduced by Roche in 1992, who linked it to large-scale events, however Maitland and Newman (2004) paved the way for a wider understanding of the term, as they started to investigate urban areas that were not purposefully designed to attract visitors. These are city districts in which tourism grew more or less organically. This is often caused by 'off-the-beaten track tourism' in which visitors are in search of the attractiveness of the everyday life of the local residents; the so-called real and 'authentic life' (Maitland & Newman, 2009, Füller & Michel, 2014). Discovering new places and facets of a neighbourhood and taking part in local life (including using local shops, cafes, infrastructure, etc.) can be rewarding for the city users involved, but can also lead to conflicts (Colomb & Novy, 2017, Frisch et al., 2019).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, however, most tourism cities were confronted with a severe decline in incoming visitors. Many stakeholders asked themselves and in the public arena whether this would lead to a reinvention of urban tourism. Could this be the moment of doing things differently; take back our streets and redesign tourism offers that would support a more inclusive, just and sustainable future? As we know now, two years after the pandemic, the desire for a systemic redesign of (urban) tourism is still present. However, it also became apparent that the number of tourists and day-trippers in cities, also in Amsterdam, is similar and even higher than before Covid-19. Forecasts show that this won't change in the near future. "By 2023, there were more than 22 million overnight stays in Amsterdam hotels and accommodation such as campsites and rental properties. All scenarios assume that this growth will continue in the coming years, but slowly level off (Gemeente Amsterdam i, 2024, p.4).

Urban tourism research has highlighted the negative impacts of excessive tourism levels, particularly in tourist-historical cities, including impacts on quality of life, well-being, tourist experience, and social, environmental, and economic justice (Milano et al, 2019). This backdrop, combined with swelling evidence of the tourism industry's devastating - and growing - contribution to the climate emergency (Gössling et al., 2024), has led to calls for transformational and innovative solutions, and a fundamental paradigm shift in the tourism industry (Hajarrahmah et al., 2024). There is a need to rethink (new) urban tourism and set in motion a transition towards a more resilient tourism that revitalizes and regenerates city destinations and enhances their quality of place and quality of life for all city users (Ensut, 2024). Both the terms urban tourism and new urban tourism are used in this paper, in which urban tourism refers to tourism in Amsterdam as a whole and the development towards new urban tourism refers mostly to (in this case): Amsterdam North.

2.2. Impact of tourism on place and the rise of measurements - Amsterdam
The Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions (NBTC) created an impact monitor that indicates economic, social and ecological impacts. Most graphics are

There is a need to rethink (new) urban tourism and set in motion a transition towards a more resilient tourism that revitalizes and regenerates city destinations and enhances their quality of place and quality of life for all city users (Ensut, 2024).

about the whole country, only few on the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. One graph shows Amsterdam area is encountering the highest intensity of tourist overnight stays on the number of residents: 4,23 on 100 residents, which more than double compare to the rest of The Netherlands, (NBTC, 2023).

The impact of tourism in the Netherlands in certain popular areas and cities has been far-reaching. Needless to say, these cities encounter change on various socio-economic, ecological, cultural, infrastructural and many other layers. And yet tourism, also in Amsterdam, is often intertwined with several urban developments in every possible way and we should therefore not consider urban tourism as a completely separate phenomenon (Engelen, 2024). Unfortunately, this also underlines the complexity of measuring and trying to manage urban tourism. And yet in some places (such as narrow and frequently visited streets), at certain moments during the week/year and for some stakeholders, the impact of visitors is quite evident, hence a wide variety of measurements to manage tourism are taken all around the globe.

As this study mainly focuses on Amsterdam North, the wider context (the nested system) of the city of Amsterdam as a whole is a defining element for the local lived reality. As such this section contains a brief overview of the influx of visitors, its impact, the main new policies and measurements taken during the last two decades of the entire city of Amsterdam.

Extract from: Pappalepore, I., Inkson, C. and Dolezal, C. (2025). Tourism Degrowth and Postgrowth Transitions for European Urban Destinations. In Salvador, E. and Pappalepore, I. (eds.) *Responsible Consumption and Production in the Cultural and Creative Industries*. London: Routledge. Chapter 7. (forthcoming June 2025)

Tourist numbers to the historic city of Amsterdam have grown more than 250% in the past twenty years (Gerritsma & Stompff, 2023), reaching 22 million overnight stays in 2022 (Het Parool, 2024). Its international arrivals per resident ratio makes it the worst-off city in the world in terms of tourist overcrowding (Economist, 2024). Overcrowding, anti-social behaviour, gentrification and touristification of the retail provision are some of the major negative tourism impacts affecting the centre of Amsterdam (Gerritsma & Stompf, 2023). While Amsterdammers have traditionally been proud of their liberal and welcoming culture, which led to the city's success as a backpacker and gay capital of Europe (Gerritsma, 2019), over time residents have become

increasingly tired of poorly behaved tourists and have developed a negative attitude towards overcrowding caused by tourists.

In the 2010s, a number of civic and activist organisations started to openly protest and lobby to have a greater role in the development of tourism policies (Gerritsma, 2019). As a result, in 2015 Amsterdam City Council initiated a City in Balance (Gemeente Amsterdam j, 2015) programme aimed at redressing the balance between tourism development and liveability. Following the implementation of the City in Balance programme, Amsterdam saw a number of new policies. Actions included policy to reduce the number of event days and noise levels (Richards, 2024),

a ban on new tourist shops in the city centre, and restrictions on holiday rentals and new hotel licences (Gemeente Amsterdam j, 2024). The shift also meant greater involvement of residents and local businesses in the co-creation of tourism policies (Gerritsma, 2019). As part of the programme, research into the carrying capacity of Amsterdam's neighbourhoods has been carried out every two years since 2019. The research identifies specific indicators of excessive tourism pressure as well as indicators of unfavourable liveability, which include nuisance due to pollution, nuisance due to drunks in the street, perceived lack of safety and (lack of) variety in the daily grocery offer among others (Gemeente Amsterdam k, 2024).

In a tourism context, more than 100 stakeholders were involved in codesigning a post-pandemic tourism action plan (Amsterdam & Partners, 2021) that would take into account the city's economic dependence on tourism while planning for a more sustainable and resilient future (Gerritsma & Stompf, 2023). A group of residents meanwhile collected 1200 signatures in support of a proposal calling for a cap on tourist numbers of 12 million overnight stays a year (Gerritsma & Stompf, 2023).

The City Council decided to adopt their recommendations only in part and opted for a maximum of 20 million overnight stays, with 18 million as a warning sign for action. A new Tourism Vision followed in 2022 (Gemeente Amsterdam b, 2022) where the balance between economic growth and residents' wellbeing seems to shift in favour of the latter for the first time.

A focal point of this vision is the need to correct the stereotypical image of Amsterdam, often sold by tourism entrepreneurs as a city of 'unlimited possibilities', which is interpreted by some visitors as being a place where freedom means a lack of morals (Gemeente Amsterdam b, 2022). To implement this ambition, Amsterdam City Council invested in a 'Stay Away' communication campaign. A more subtle campaign, 'Renew your view', was launched in 2023, aiming to encourage more conscious and off-the-beaten track tourist experiences (amsterdam&partners, 2024). Cruise ships were banned from the city centre in 2023, to reduce overcrowding and pollution (BBC, 2023). A plan to cut the number of flights from Schiphol Airport to curb pollution, on the other hand, will see a less drastic reduction than expected (NL Times, 2024).

According to Pappalepore & Inkson Dolezal (2025), Amsterdam is transitioning to Raworth's Doughnut Economics (2017), stimulating regenerative tourism and tourism degrowth through a vision of the city as an ecosystem (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2022;). To date however, there is still little evidence of successful tourism contraction, post- and degrowth strategies. On the other hand, post-growth tourism strategies tend to integrate a more sustainable growth of the visitor economy with social wellbeing dimensions and established visitor management techniques (Pappalepore &Inkson Dolezal, 2025).

2.3. Tourism interventions for positive impact
Few studies have been conducted on the various types of interventions and the ways in which these can steer tourism towards positive impacts (and/or prevent negative impacts) at the destinations where tourism is taking place (Isaac et al, 2024). The existing studies show a growing kaleidoscope of examples and methods that are led by or aim to have an impact on different stakeholders. The studies

themselves show some variety as well, some focus on reviewing literature, others rely on quantitative data analysis or testing specific methods. Mitigating negative tourism impacts and measuring it is neither simple nor straightforward. One could also argue that there are hardly any integral longitudinal urban studies on tourism interventions available, as mass tourism in cities is a relatively young phenomenon. According to Isaac et al. (2024), a tourism intervention can be defined as: a purposeful action planned and carried out by public institutions, NGOs, private organisations, local community actors, and individuals. Or any form of collaboration/partnership among them, that, in the complex framework of tourism management, either proved to contribute or was designed to contribute (or is still designed to contribute, if ongoing) to the socio-cultural landscape. Following this, an intervention can be a policy, but it can also be a strategy, action, event, business idea, collaboration, or partnership. When designed well, future interventions in the tourism ecosystem contribute to mutually beneficial interactions (Nawijn et al, 2024, p.248): "Active involvement of local residents in development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions, integrating their perspective, situational knowledge, and contextual insights, is key for developing tourism experiences that are ethical, authentic, meaningful (for both tourists and residents), and (long-term) sustainable." Transforming the way we co-design the (tourism) cities of the future, including the use of specific interventions can help us in order to do so. "I would argue that, in spite of the many visions that have been floated, there are still few ideas and strategies on 'how' to rebuild urban tourism in a sustainable and resilient way, yet these may be needed to persuade stakeholders to commit to change in these uncertain times" (Koens, 2021 p 4). One of those specific interventions that aim to create positive impact, is the Urban Leisure & Tourism lab of Inholland UAS and will be properly introduced in the next paragraph.

2.3.1. The Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab as an intervention
Historically, a laboratory, or lab for short, was a facility equipped for carrying out scientific experiments and procedures in controlled environments e.g. in psychology (Stevenson, 2010). In the early 2000s, the idea of lab-based working was extended to engage more with societal challenges, by bringing stakeholders together for collaboration and collective ideation either in physical or virtual environments (Hossain et al., 2019).

Labs started to pop-up (inter)nationally, gained interest and were considered as one of the latest innovations in higher education as of around 2010. A number of different names emerged such as: field labs, urban living labs, studios, social design labs, hubs, etc. Urban living labs are still increasingly popular in discussions on co-creation, destination design and education, particular in regard to their potential to deal with so called 'wicked problems' (Koens et al, 2024). Contributing to the transition towards a sustainable and resilient society is one of Inholland UAS' core objectives and matches well with various lab approaches in order to do so. As the number of living labs grew at Inholland UAS, the need to define what they actually were, became more urgent. Therefore, the following taxonomy was created (figure 6):

A more subtle campaign, 'Renew your view', was launched in 2023, aiming to encourage more conscious and off-the-beaten track tourist experiences (amsterdam&partners, 2024).
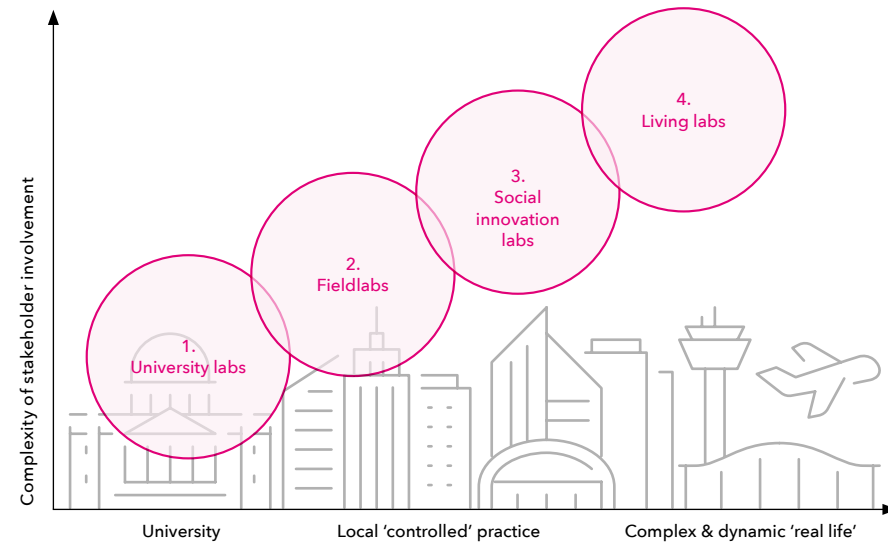
As this theoretical paper is addressing a living lab setting, we will focus particularly on type number four (see figure 6): Living labs are user-centred, open innovation ecosystems based on a systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings (ENOLL, 2017). They focus on designing, testing and learning about social and technical innovation in real time and take a systemic perspective (Steen & Van Bueren 2017). Activities include prototyping & testing as well as scaling-up innovations & businesses to provide joint value to the stakeholders involved (ENOLL, 2017).

Living labs are inherently transdisciplinary, which makes them particularly well-suited for dealing with issues in tourism (Koens et al., 2024). In addition, they are set up to be more flexible than a traditional 'scientific' research approach would allow. For example, objectives and goals may change, and research agendas emerge rather than being developed beforehand (Luijten, et al., 2018). Instead of looking for quick solutions (i.e. solutionism), the emphasis is on the development of local capacities for participation and having a meaningful role in decision-making (Horgan and Dimitrijević, 2018).

Living labs have evolved and playing are well-suited to play a part in an era of poly-crises as higher education responds to the uncertain and changing world and between students from different disciplines (Hee, van de et al., 2024). At the end of 2015 one of the first urban living labs of Inholland UAS was founded by the Domain Creative Business Research Group (nowadays referred to as ARC – Applied Research Centre). It was initially called the Field Lab Amsterdam North (FLAN), but quite rapidly reframed as the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab (ULTL) Amsterdam which expressed more clearly the field we are operating in and by doing so, made the name more applicable in any urban surrounding. Five years later, ARC opened a second one in Rotterdam.
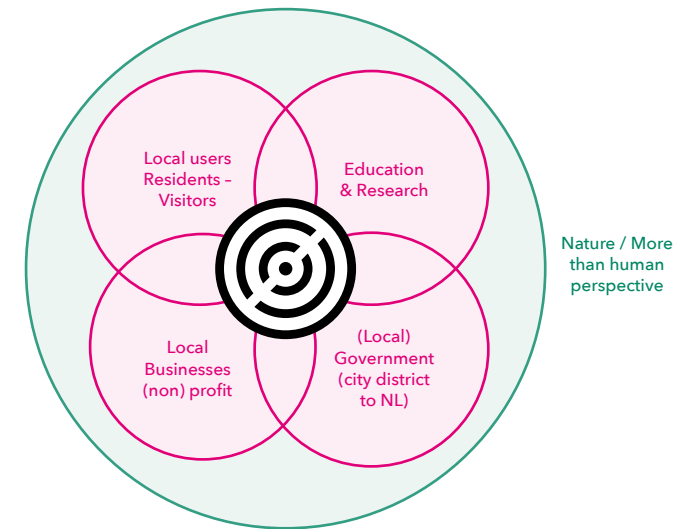
All co-creation processes with the ULTL take different perspectives into account (see the Lab Flower below, Figure 7). This practice is referred to as including the quintuple helix. Quintuple means working from five main stakeholder group perspectives: 1. Local users (here: residents and visitors), 2. Local businesses (profit and non-profit), 3. Local government (from city district level to national level) 4. Education and research (vocational, higher education institutions and academic institutions) and 5. Nature – the more than human perspective. The Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab was founded in Amsterdam North with a reason. Back in 2015 we knew we were pioneering and had to design new educational programmes and research approaches. We needed to build trust, connect with locals and create our

BOX 2. The Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Amsterdam and Rotterdam of Inholland being accredited

ENOLL is the European Network of Living Labs and accredited the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab of Inholland in 2023 as an official member of their network: "ULTL shows a strong and inclusive governance model, engaging a wide range of stakeholders effectively. Also, a solid track record in running living lab projects, with a focus on urban leisure and tourism is presented and it demonstrates as well a clear interest in regional and international innovation. Their considerable experience in living lab operations is supported by compelling proof", (Tourismlab, 2023).

Researchers from ULTL are participating in the Living Labs & Research work group and by doing so, learning outcomes are put in a broader context of living lab approaches across Europe. https://enoll.org/, https://www.tourismlabamsterdam.nl/en/, https://www.tourismlabrotterdam.nl/en/

Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Amsterdam

Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Rotterdam

narrative first. Therefore, it did not feel very logical and safe to start a lab in an - already at that time - increasingly contested tourism area, such as the inner-city. Especially after the jubilee year of 2013 (re-opening the Rijksmuseum and celebrating 400-year-old canals), tourism was increasingly seen as a negative development for the city, and it seemed to provoke a tipping point in 2014. Briefly summarized as: "Amsterdam is dirty, filthy and crowded" (NOS, 2014), notably written by the director of that same Rijksmuseum, Mr. Wim Pijbes.

During the last decade, Amsterdam North has grown and changed tremendously, predictions include that the population will grow from 100,000 to 150,000 between 2023 and 2030. Tourism numbers have also risen sharply, and Amsterdam North is increasingly known as a city district with a growing leisure and tourism offer and ranked as one of the hippest neighbourhoods in the world. The Lonely Planet (2018) calls North the coolest neighbourhood of Amsterdam: "From shipping hub to creative quarter, the ever-changing Amsterdam Noord neighbourhood has cemented itself as one of the Dutch capital's coolest spots. With a new Noord/Zuid metro line supplying quick access, this once obscure 'hood is gaining traction as the innovative hotspot of the Dutch capital". As mentioned in the chapter before, not everyone is content with this reframe and trend. North is (potentially) becoming a contested tourism area as well. At the ULTL we are keeping our finger on the pulse of these issues and try to react accordingly. Our relationships with partners have changed: rather than working with them on short-term projects, we expressed our wish to collaborate on a much longer term. Thinking more in years, instead of months. All current lab team members mainly learned this by doing and reflecting. Our methods are constantly evolving as we respond to emerging (local) events and act as an incubator for innovation.

In the next chapter, one of our latest major developments is described, namely the turn towards regenerative (place) development and how this might fuel the activation of regenerative urban tourism.

BOX 3. Changing the way in which tourism is narrated, perceived and discussed

"A key-message is changing the way in which tourism is narrated, perceived and discussed. In the last 10 years, several 'developments' and 'excesses' have shattered the 'image' of tourism as a 'clean sector'. Issues like carbon impact, plastic waste, "overtourism", exclusion and displacement of residents have arisen connected to or as a result of tourism. This has led to a major focus on how to mitigate negative impacts. Understanding and amending excesses is critical, but it is also crucial to focus on the potential of tourism to create better destinations. It means that we should be focusing and exploring possibilities for creating better places for all: residents and tourists", (Expert Group Advancing Sustainable Urban Tourism, 2024).

Regeneration is a shared journey with shared objectives. Each stakeholder – local communities, tourism businesses, visitors, and policymakers – has a responsibility to contribute to a destination's health and vitality. We're all part of a larger ecosystem, and this shift in mindset calls on each of us to take ownership and make choices that support a flourishing, sustainable world. Radical collaboration is key to success. Destinations are everyone's business and regenerative tourism is a tool to make destinations whole again.
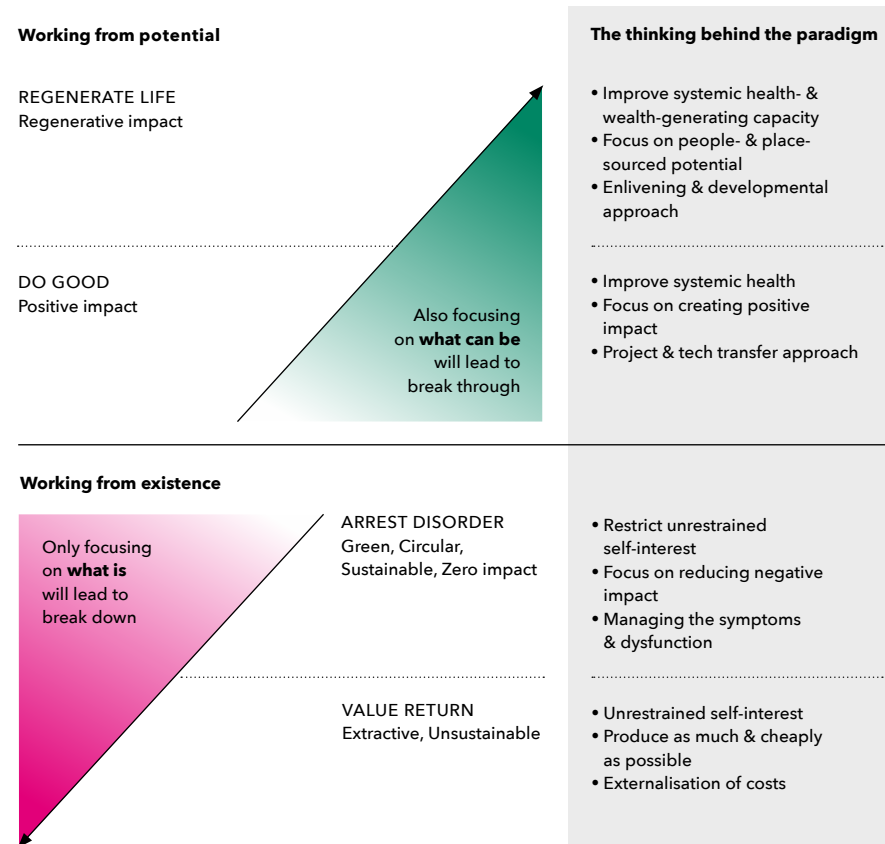
Sustainability Leaders
United, 2024

3. Regeneration as a possible pathway for change

3.1. Regeneration

During the last decade, the interest in regeneration amongst actors in various sectors has been rapidly growing. One of the first and foundational papers on regenerative design is written by Mang & Reed (2011) and describes how regenerative approaches seek not only to reverse the degeneration of earth's natural systems, but also to design human systems that can co-evolve with natural systems. Thus, evolving in a way that generates mutual benefits and greater overall expression of life and resilience. The field of regenerative development and design, which draws inspiration from the self-healing and self-organizing capacities of natural living systems, is increasingly seen as a source for achieving this. Mang & Reed kept on updating their frameworks (2020), based on the many regenerative design processes they were leading throughout the world via their company and educational platform Regenesis.

A recent extensive research, commissioned by the Belgian Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment (Gorissen et al., 2024), shares the Levels of Paradigm Framework (see below) and highlights in which paradigm some of the current economic discourses can be situated. "Transcending the paradigm in which one operates requires advanced skills, e.g. to deal with ingrained cognitive biases, to overcome cultural conditioning, to work with paradoxes and from potential, to avoid path-dependency, to become a systems enabler, and to develop new capability, new roles, and new collaborations. It fits in with the shift towards working from potential ('what can be') instead of working from problems ('what is'), the wish to control and solutionism" (Gorissen et al, p. 43).

Figure 8. Levels of Paradigm Framework (Gorissen et al., 2024) – adapted from Sanford & Haggard (2020) whose framework is a powerful tool to explore the levels of paradigms that influence current thinking and discourse.

The new roles and new capabilities that are needed, ask for a new kind of (personal) leadership and business goals. Short-termism is no longer a viable business proposition for organisations wishing to thrive in the years ahead (Hutchins & Storm, 2019). This is a radical change in the perception of business and its work ethic - from being a means to an end to dedicating our time, resources, and creativity to initiatives that serve life. Regenerative Business transforms our role and purpose from an essentially acquisitive 'what's-in-it-for-me' approach to a mind-set of collaboration, co-creativity, and contribution. Regenerative Leaders bring vitality and wellbeing to all our living systems for ourselves, our local neighbours, our global citizens, our children, and our more-than-human kinship (Hutchins & Storm, 2019).

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As tourism is one of the biggest global sectors of the world (UNWTO, 2024) a huge potential lies ahead. Within the current (academic) professional tourism field, most regenerative practices that are referred to as good practices, seem to be localized in relatively small and often, but not exclusively, rural areas.

Whereas regenerative tourism practices or design principles in urban areas seem to be at the brink of development. A study on urban regenerative placemaking (Hes et al., 2021) laid the groundwork for the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab to start working with a different perspective and mindset. It made us realize that we needed to practice the art of 'cultivating the soil'.

Via interventions in (semi) public space and in a constant co-creative dialogue with the local community, before we could activate any explicit tourism activity. Besides that, the attitude towards tourism among residents in North has become less positive during the last decades, on the assumption that it is created as 'something for Others, not for us' or that tourism might cause negative impacts such as can be experienced in the inner city (Boekel, 2025).

BOX 4. From doughnut economy to a regenerative economy

Economist Dr. Kate Raworth is transitioning from her world-famous model of the so-called Doughnut Economy towards a regenerative economy – hear her on this podcast on Mindful Economics via Plumvillage:

"Let's recognize that the economy is made of complex systems. It can't be reduced to mechanical interventions. We need to create economies that are distributed by design, that share
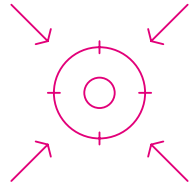
resources with all, that are regenerative by design, that regenerate the living systems and that go beyond growth."

Mindful Economics: In Conversation with Kate Raworth (Episode #74) • The Way Out Is In (spotify.com) (Plum village, 12.09.2024).

3.2. Posing questions as a cornerstone regenerative practice

A leading publication for regenerators is *Designing Regenerative Cultures* (Wahl, 2016), in which the undeniable importance of asking questions is explained and applied in detail, such as living the questions and deep listening to the answers on those questions: "We need to ask the deeper questions of why we are worth sustaining. Our answers will inform how we ask the more operational questions and implement tentative answers and solutions. Such deeper questioning will shape how we might initiate wise actions that help us to transition towards regenerative cultures. Starting with the why will help us to understand our deeper motivation, purpose and goals. We need to question the beliefs that shape our worldview. Only by starting with the *why* we inspire to change our behaviour and to co-create regenerative cultures (Wahl, 2016, p16).

What matters urgently is that we do come together to have conversations about what future we want for humanity. We need to reflect on how we *will* have to change individually and collectively to create this future. By asking questions together, we may come to understand that we *will* have to collaborate as one species and learn to transcend and include our differences if we want a thriving future for all […]". The following two questions by Wahl (2016) gave fundamental input for our place-based living lab: "How can we collaborate in the creation of diverse, regenerative cultures adapted to the unique biocultural conditions of place? How can we create conditions conducive to life?

Within the work of regenerators – and I have met and/or read the work of regenerators from many different places - posing questions is one of the key practices they all have in common. […] My course leader, Laura Storm: "A Regenerator constantly asks: How could I help create conditions for more life to thrive here? What would nature do? How can I align with life? How can I restore health and vitality within me and around me?" (Storm, 2022).

I was able to bring in this skill during a Stories of Active Hope community of practice session (14.11.2024) via the Australian The Tourism Colab and hosted under the guidance of Josie Major and Debbie Clarke. Both are from The Centre for GOOD Travel and creators of the influential podcast series GOOD Awaits on regenerative tourism. Using a fishbowl methodology, they started to ask questions about why this questioning practice is so relevant. Collectively we were able to highlight several aspects of the why, how and what. In short:

- Generally speaking, asking questions allows people (the regenerator included) to reflect and understand more deeply; yourself, the context and place you are operating in.
- Starting with a question is like throwing a stone in a pond: they are always followed by more questions. It is open-ended. As long as you are curious, you are posing questions. Following our curiosity may take us to unexpected places and

Starting with the why will help us to understand our deeper motivation, purpose and goals. (Wahl, 2016, p16)

removes the control we usually find in conversations and processes that are intended for specific outcomes.
- In line with our work from a developmental (living systems) perspective [i.e. towards (positive) change], we are asked to pose questions that might unveil the potential of a person, a place or a community etc. It is all about uplifting potential rather than trying to solve a problem.
- It is a practice that needs to be practiced, cultivated, and reflected on constantly, because we are so often taught to ask questions in order to seek an "answer" or "solution". Taking the approach of seeking potential through questioning and allowing us to stay in the messiness of not having a solution immediately, requires a lot of ongoing work and reflection.
- Some questions can be very open and others have a more specific goal, for example: purposeful questions ("What am I trying to achieve over here?") or focused on a possible future ("What if ……" / "How will this place evolve?", "How would this place look like, if you had a magic wand?")
- Regenerative change-makers work in a living ecosystem, with various stakeholders that all have their own experiences and perspectives. Posing questions can accelerate collaborative critical thinking, reflecting and learning.
- Creating connections (inwards and outwards) and stimulating trust and a safe space, can work well via posing each other questions. We can't emphasize enough the importance of creating a safe space, of holding space for not-knowing and feeling comfortable hearing a 'no' or 'not yet' as an answer to a question. People should not feel judged in a negative way.
- As a regenerator you not only need to train yourself in posing questions, but also in deep-listening and hearing. What is (not) being said? Using verification questions might be needed to fully understand.
- We have to unlearn too. Avoid jumping to conclusions for instance and relating answers to our own worldviews. For various reasons, certain questions might be answered in a more indirect way. Sometimes, intercultural and/or social differences play a role, especially in cities where cultural diversity is common. Being sensitive to these differences is also part of cultivating a regenerative mindset.
- It takes a lot of training to be able to 'feel' as a regenerator which questions seem to be the most appropriate to pose when and to whom.

In chapter 4, more concrete examples of questions for each phase of the Lab Loops for Life model are given. Below, box 5, is a demonstration of using 'a window of opportunities' whilst asking questions to the local community about the redesign of a playground:

BOX 5. Offering 'a window of opportunities'

How could this place look?

Through applying the concept of community design, the Imaginarium emerged via a plexiglass panel as a canvas for the community to imagine and visualise a redesign of this playground. Participants were provided with equipment to draw (e.g. trees, playground, shade, music shell & café). Conversations with community members were annotated whilst they were drawing. Invented and carried out by students: Andy Choi, Bonnie Gordon, Meg Varley, Aleksandra Nikitina, Kevin Sutanto of the University of Melbourne Place Agency lab (2019).

What is your wish?

The Wishing Wall – Any passer-by (resident, visitor, local-student, employee, etc.) was invited to write down what he, she or they wished for. The Wishing Wall was co-created and realized by students at the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab in Amsterdam North in 2023. It was based upon their research in which it became apparent that many of the residents did not feel their needs and wishes were heard.

The Wishing Wall:
On one of the walls of the Bowling (23.08.2023)

Here is a video of the making of the Wall and its use: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WIPQrg-AFVk

Chairs:
The first few months, volunteers at the Bowling would put a chair with chalk outside (08.06.2023)

Posters:
The poster activates the passer-by to share his/her/their wish and scan for more information (05.06.2023)

3.3. Regenerative place development and placemaking

Place is positioned as a foundational element of all things living, including its cultures and human relationships. Regenerative development regards place as a central organizing concept from which interventions are designed to maximize intended systems' transformational effects (Bellato, 2024). Regenerative development is a practice-orientated paradigm that weaves Indigenous, Western, and place-sourced approaches. While the phenomenon of regeneration has existed since life began, regenerative development has emerged relatively recently (Bellato, 2024). In contrast to dominant Western views of the world as linear and nature as separate from humans, regenerative (place) development practice involves a non-linear, ecological and complex worldview (Hes, 2017). Regenerative development moves away from an anthropocentric view that positions humans as controllers of the world and towards humans cultivating sufficient humility and receptivity to the idea that all living beings have their own agency and purpose. Regenerative development is a transformational process that facilitates capability development and co-evolution of humans and natural systems to "renew, sustain and thrive" (Hes et al., 2020).

Whilst the term of *regenerative* placemaking was coined a few years ago, the practice of placemaking has been around already since the late 1970s. Globally well-known placemaking agency, Project for Public Spaces describes it as: 'placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution' (PPS, 2024). Furthermore, community-based participation is at its core and capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and resulting in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and wellbeing.

"In an effort to create thriving living environments, the regenerative development framework has gained recognition as a creative and reflective process that emerges from the uniqueness of a place to activate and support living systems. Another approach that has a strong engagement with the particularity of place is the concept of placemaking, a process of developing places through the active participation of the citizens that conceive, perceive and live in that place" (Hes et al., p. 53). Hes et al. (2020) created a new model for place development by bringing together regenerative and placemaking processes and called it: regenerative placemaking for continual co-evolution. Their model (figure 9) combines practices and core principles that work hand-in-hand to move beyond their three main differences:
1. Understanding of a place: regenerative development is a socio-ecological framework that brings in the importance of both social and natural systems to create vibrant and resilient places, whereas most placemaking practices focus on cre-

ating a people-friendly environment and place is considered as 'a final product'. Whereas a regenerative approach considers a place more as a means and agent of co-evolution.

2. Temporal and spatial scale of place: both frameworks comprise an ongoing and adaptable process constantly revisiting what is working and what is not. However, regenerative development works on much longer timeframes and detailed understandings of systems. Placemaking activation is often carried via a project-based setting, with clear goals and roles, project management and resources.

3. Working from potential: while placemaking identifies opportunities through community consultation, regenerative development finds potential within a living system through observation of patterns. Managing uncertainty is often something that needs to be managed for placemakers, whilst a regenerator tries to respect uncertainty without 'sticking to a worked-out plan with fixed goals and outcomes'.
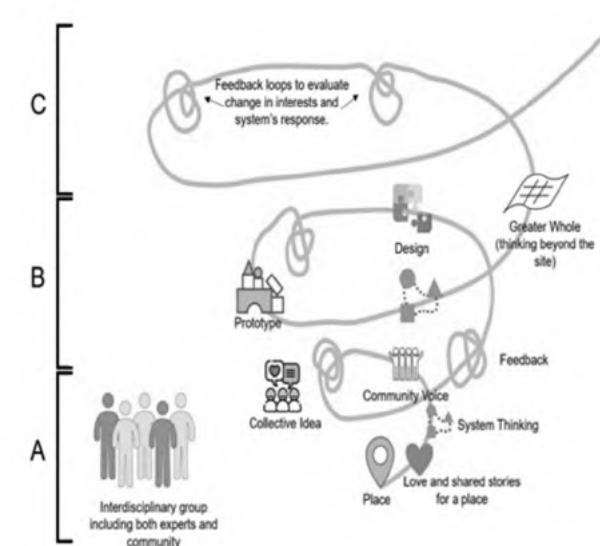
3.3.1. Regenerative placemaking and the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab

The ULTL started to adopt and use more explicitly, regenerative placemaking principles in 2022. Both ULTL Amsterdam and Rotterdam lab leads reflected on that first phase (Gerritsma & Horgan, 2024, p.132): "While we are actively involved with international placemaking networks, and organisations such as the European Placemaking Network and share various known placemaking models with our students, we are cognizant of community criticism of placemaking. We noticed that the word placemaking can provoke connotations of stimulating gentrification and social exclusion – particularly in dialogue with some local activists who see the practice as adjacent to neoliberal urban governance. […] In the tourism area,

placemaking and regenerative development are two compatible approaches that centre on unique local attributes as part of a change process. […] Through their combination they offer a model for holistic, systemic change in tourism towards sustainable, locally owned interventions. Regenerative placemaking has thus emerged as a guiding theoretical basis for connecting our research and practice in the living labs, marrying concepts of regenerative development with place-based processes. […] The model proposed by Hes et al. (2020) understands placemaking as a temporal activity, nested within regenerative development pathways, but allowing the potential of the place to reveal and manifest itself."

In seeking to develop durable and nuanced relationship with local partners and networks in order to activate regenerative (urban tourism) practices, both labs have built meaningful relationships with local partners. In the Amsterdam case these are for instance: the municipality on a city (district) level, amsterdam&partners (Destination management organisation), shopping centre Boven 't Y, status holder foundation Warm Welkom, tour operator Tours that Matter, cultural hub Modestraat, vocational education ROC van Amsterdam, and many more. These stakeholders serve as project sponsors, helping students to navigate the local context - sharing their tacit knowledge of a situation to plant the seeds that encourage a cross-pollination of ideas, for which a lively learner-population is a vital ingredient. Assisting with brokerage into the local community as a strategy towards widening engagement, participation and visibility is therefore core to the work of the lab (Jernsand, 2019). Inholland's unique urban leisure and tourism living labs use themes such as regenerative placemaking to guide students, using design thinking to develop responsive propositions that can be devolved to local entrepreneurs and changemakers (Koens et al, 2023).

"Our work as regenerative placemakers is to play a role as catalysts of systems evolution to allow the full future potential of people, places and the systems in which they sit, to emerge." – The Really Regenerative Centre, 2024

Within tourism, the need for reflective practices is increasingly argued for, particularly in the context of resilient and regenerative tourism practices (Bellato et al., 2023; Bellato and Cheer, 2021; Koens et al., 2021). In order to embed this way of working to our learning community, a set of bespoke lab tools were developed (Gerritsma & Horgan, 2024). The Place Exploration and Sense Making Map (Gerritsma, 2022) helps to reveal local tacit knowledge about place, and the Co-design canvas was intentionally adapted for use in lab settings to widen participation and open evaluation (Smeenk, 2023). Across the practitioner landscape, there is consensus around the need to 'translate' regenerative design concepts better and amplify their potential as place-based interventions (Gerritsma & Horgan, 2024). This theoretical paper and related future studies have the objective to do this and share concrete evaluation methods in order to show possible regenerative impact.

3.4. Regenerative urban tourism
One of the underlying thoughts of the ULTL approach is that by working fromplace and via regenerative placemaking methods, we can weave in and activate a regenerative tourism approach. There is a growing interest amongst city DMO's (destina-

Recent developments in Barcelona and other cities that encounter the impact of too many visitors, emphasize the urgency for a transition towards a further redesign of the visitor economy. It is about improvement of the quality of life (social and ecological) and the well-being of residents and tackling the many other challenges we face. What helps is a vision and unity about the desired approach instead of a too-often fragmented commitment of stakeholders involved. Travelling for pleasure or for work is simply part of our lives and can contribute to the desired change. In fact, this is already happening also within our city, with many good initiatives.

LinkedIn post of Managing Director Insights and Marketing Strategy, DMO Amsterdam&partners (Janssen, 2024)
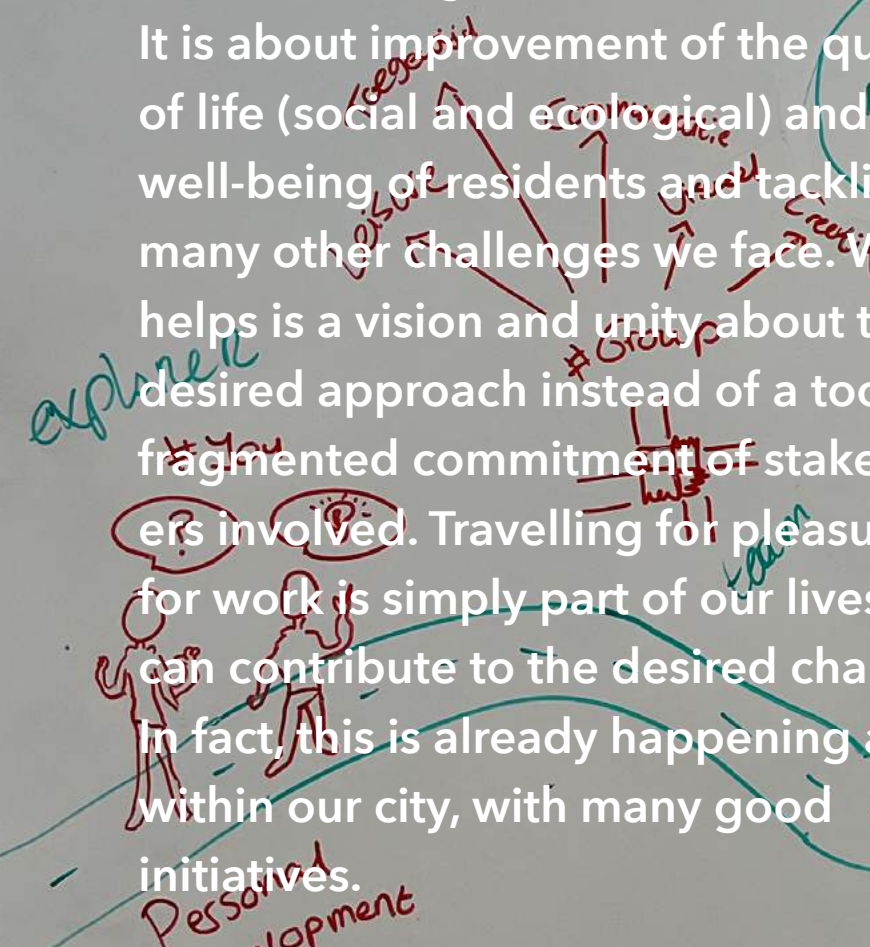
tion management organisations), entrepreneurs, regenerators, academics, etc. in exploring ways to stimulate (parts of) regenerative tourism. Although the Dutch national tourism and convention board (NBTC) doesn't use the term regenerative tourism in their vision document Perspective on 2030 (2019), nor in later updates of related research and activities agenda's (2021), they do express a turn towards more sustainable and place-based approaches too.

Generally speaking, regenerative tourism is a type of tourism in which hospitality services are co-created on a scale and in a manner that delivers positive *net benefit* to all participants (commercial and non-commercial hosts and guests). In fact, we go further, believing that tourism has the potential to become an agent of positive transformation that can contribute to a better quality of life for all (Pollock 2019). In other words, "regenerative hospitality" represents a shift from sustainability to active renewal, where hotels and resorts act as stewards of local ecosystems and community well-being (Wiegerink, 2024).

Regenerative tourism is regarded as an alternative development approach that "promotes tourism innovations by embedding tourism practices with local communities and ecological processes that elevate human and non-human well-being" (Bellato et al., 2023:1027). Rather than looking at structural forces behind the transformation in the urban environment, the emphasis is on small-and-micro scale actions that prioritize "equitable and inclusive co-creation in multiple domains and harmony with economic development" (Bellato et al., 2023: 1035). A regenerative tourism approach sees tourism as a potential partner that cultivates reciprocal relationships rather than considering communities and places as a resource for tourism (Bellato & Cheer, 2021; Pollock, 2012).

Destination Management Organization (DMO) Canada published an extensive report in 2023, in which their regenerative approach towards tourism is described, substantiated and illustrated. The report is written by regenerators Bill Reed and Michelle Holliday. To explain the shift from traditional or transactional exchanges (oriented towards extracting as much value as possible from an exchange) to reciprocal exchanges and building new kind of relationships, they designed figure 10. "Reciprocity is based on the idea of mutual benefit, where our exchanges are intended to grow the vitality and productivity of a whole system. Trees in a forest are linked together in symbiotic relationships with fungi, soil bacteria, and other trees. The resulting webs of mutual support make such trees healthy and long-lived. They work together to benefit the whole, rather than competing to extract the most value for themselves. The community network we develop in this spirit is then the foundation for the ways we practice hosting guests, offering integrated experiences of the unique essence and hospitality of this place" (Destination Canada, p 20).

Working with the local community is a core element of regenerative (urban) tourism: it is about asking the community first what they value and wish to share, rather than starting with visitor preferences. The community's vision sets the foundation
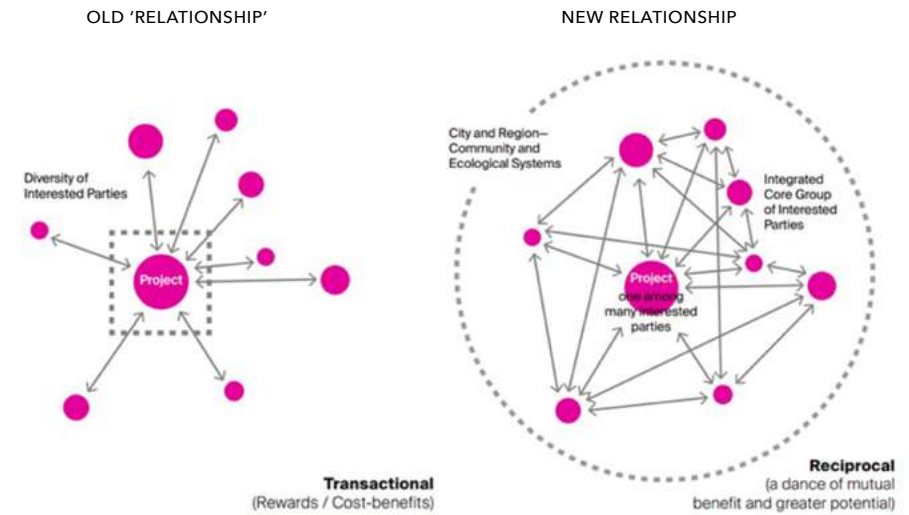
A regenerative tourism approach sees tourism as a potential partner that cultivates reciprocal relationships rather than considering communities and places as a resource for tourism. (Bellato & Cheer, 2021; Pollock, 2012)

for a tourism experience that aligns with local priorities and its environment, which then becomes the default for visitors. This approach ensures that tourism not only respects the needs of the people and the place but also offers guests an authentic experience shaped directly by the people who know it best (Sustainability Leaders United, 2024). In addition to this, visitors can also activate revitalisation of cities. Often visitors have fresh eyes that build pride for locals, reinvigorate traditions and cultural practices, bring new things that the place can use to enhance its vitality and evolution (Bellato, 2025)

A small but growing number of cities in Europe are placing (at least in principle) the residents' wellbeing ahead of economic growth, as objectives for their tourism strategies. Often this involves prioritizing local small businesses, encouraging greater engagement with local cultures for tourists, and tourist activities for residents. This is partly a process that developed with the Covid-19 pandemic, when many destination management organisations were forced to adopt a new hyper-local approach that prioritized residents as key markets for tourism activities and marketing and favoured slower, more localised forms of leisure (Pappalepore and Gravari-Barbas, 2022).

Next to querying cities' intentions, there is some criticism we can detect on the ins and outs of (urban) regenerative tourism. Some critique how vague and far-reaching it is. Others are worried about the lurking elitist and exclusive mechanisms that might be caused by regenerative design. "The issue with the concept of regeneration is that it is tough to define. This ambiguity is both a strength and a weakness. […] it makes it really hard to grasp, and even harder to put into practice. Regeneration sounds inspiring, yes, but for many people, the concept feels vague and can seem like something out of reach. One of the biggest criticisms of regeneration in
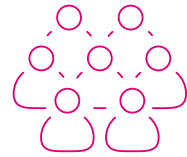
tourism is that it can feel exclusive. It is true that many tourism options linked to regeneration are expensive and often described with fancy (or confusing) terms. This can make it seem like regeneration is an elitist option […] This view on regeneration is a big challenge in the democratisation of the concept […]" Eurakom, 2024. Some regenerators respond publicly via LinkedIn to these kinds of comments, like one of the authors of the aforementioned Canadian regenerative approach: Michelle Holliday: "At the level of the whole destination, Zac Gribble of Destination Stratford (Canada) talks about his work as being "an incubator for community well-being." If it's not making people's lives better, why do it? At the (free!) winter Lights on Stratford light festival, roughly half of visitors are locals. That's by design. And not only is the community involved as local visitors, Destination Stratford's approach to community engagement creates opportunities for people to create new forms of expression and to connect with each other in meaningful ways. […] Things like this are not only a fleeting feel-good moment; they cultivate the soil of community, creating more cohesion, connection and care. This is vitally important at a time of polarization and social isolation. The point of a regenerative approach is not to make things more expensive or to attract only those visitors who are willing to pay more. The point is to connect local people in shared care for each other and their place so that harms may be healed and so that new things become possible, including offerings at many price points and for many types of guests. It is the very definition of inclusion". On the other hand, there are also regenerators who are worried about 'regen-washing'. Such as for instance, rebranding tourism products and services that were previously known as sustainable (green washed?), now as if they are regenerative. Another take on the criticism is that there might be confusion between the regenerative tourism approach versus the types of tourism offer. Finally, low cost tourism often equals extraction, whereas a regenerative tourism offer rather let visitors pay the real costs of visiting a place and ensuring that the place is not harmed as a result.

A paradigm shift simply does not happen overnight and it might take years before we more or less agree of what is meant by different types of (urban) regenerative tourism. New concepts and practices will appear, and others will be left behind. It involves giving other words to what is emerging as a possible new future and replacing the dominant discourse. As Clarke and Major explained during their Stories of Active Hope (The Tourism Colab, 2024) course: we are not operators nor destinations but hosts in places and communities. […] We need a shift in mindsets, shift in discourse and try to overcome the stories of separation. We need to have a more holistic view and remain aware of the interconnectedness of everything and be mindful not to consider tourism as in a separate silo.

To this day, there aren't that many examples of *entire* cities, in which co-creating and executing an integral urban regenerative tourism strategy over a long period of time, is taking place. However, we do see an increase of cities, bioregions or countries that share their intentions and ambitions of wanting to do so and/or at least stimulating this. In addition, and in line with a regenerative way of working,

We need to have a more holistic view and remain aware of the interconnectedness of everything and be mindful not to consider tourism as in a separate silo.

this is set in motion in small-scale initiatives and causes inspiring ripple effects all around the globe. See some inspiring examples in the box 6. As one might understand, activating regenerative urban tourism requires a different mindset and way of collaborating, as it calls for systemic change. In figure 11 below (Koens, 2021), urban tourism is considered as a force for regenerative place development in cities. This model is a variation on figure 8 (Gorissen et al., 2024) and various similar models, it shows a continuum of degeneration versus regeneration. Tourism is a trans-sectoral phenomenon, that touches many different, yet interconnected systems, such as mobility, energy, food, waste and housing. Therefore, catalysing change within the tourism sector entails a large potential impact. Back in 2021, the highest achievable seemed to be: "Visitor flows and experiences as an integral part of the urban system" (figure X). To achieve this, an ontological transformation or paradigm shift is required. By which we mean: a change of perception and intention towards the role and function in (urban) societies (Devitt et al, 2012; Pollock, 2019, Koens, 2021).
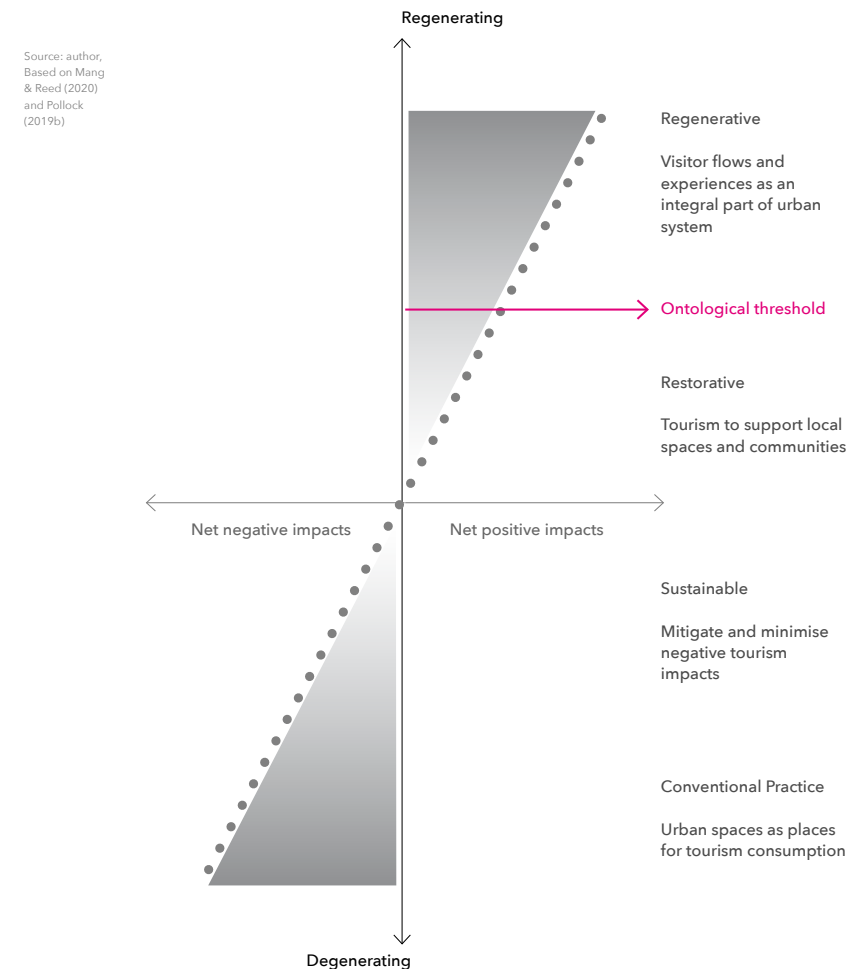

Source: author, Based on Mang & Reed (2020) and Pollock (2019b)

Regenerating

Regenerative

Visitor flows and experiences as an integral part of urban system

Ontological threshold

Restorative

Tourism to support local spaces and communities

Net negative impacts | Net positive impacts

Sustainable

Mitigate and minimise negative tourism impacts

Conventional Practice

Urban spaces as places for tourism consumption

Degenerating

Figure 11. Trajectories of Urban Tourism System Design, Koens (2021), based on Mang & Reed (2020) and Pollock (2019)

BOX 6.

Examples of regenerative tourism practices that activate a regenerative mindset and behaviour among locals and visitors.

"How positive would it be if tourism had as its central goal not to extract economic wealth to be distributed elsewhere, but to nourish local places, their environments and communities so that they could flourish? The paradigm shift to regeneration, the transition from scientific thinking to integrated intelligence, will transform tourism. It is already happening in many parts of the world in small, ground-up ways that are gradually connecting into a wave of change", (Dredge, 2022).

This overview is not meant as a complete list, consider this more as a taster:

Australia:
The Australian tourism board provides an overview of various kinds of regenerative experiences that can be explored Down Under. It wants to show how travel in Australia can be a force for good via rebuilding wildlife habitats, cultural connections or assistance for the marine world (Beasly, 2024: https://www.australia.com/en/things-to-do/sustainable-travel/regenerative-travel.html).

In the northern part of Tasmania, Flinders Island ran a two-year long project (2021-2023), called: the Islander Way. It was carried out in order to co-design the future of tourism with the community using regenerative tourism principles and practices. The project sought to work with the community to identify, co-design and incubate innovative, place-based and community-driven projects. On their website we can still find a record of their journey: https://www.islanderway.co/. The project was facilitated by Dr. Dianne Dredge and Sarah Lebski. Dredge is also the founder of the Australian The Tourism Colab: an (international) education, coaching and capacity-building agency that wants to bring regenerative tourism forward: https://www.thetourismcolab.com.au/

Canada:
In 2023, the DMO of Canada presented '*A regenerative approach to tourism in Canada*' describing that around the world, and in Canada, there have been growing calls for tourism that prioritises communities and the environment, in what is often referred to as a 'regenerative' approach. These calls are coming from many stakeholders: from communities, travellers and the tourism sector itself, with Destination Canada offering an important rallying cry in its recent public strategy documents and with its support for this report.

Denmark:
The Visit Copenhagen Tourism Board launched *CopenPay,* that would run for four weeks during the summer of 2024. The intervention wanted to reward visitors (and residents?) who made (more) conscious decisions that would do less environmental harm, like using public transport, helping maintain the city or volunteering at an urban farm. Rewards like a free lunch or cup of coffee were provided by 24 organisations. It got global coverage, https://www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenpay

Guyana:
Throughout Guyana, several Indigenous communities own and operate their own eco-lodges. Rewa Village is one of them. Tourism economically benefits every community member and enables the community to protect the ecosystem it depends on, which has a local and global benefit. The community preserves a pristine rainforest ecosystem which absorbs more than 70,000 tonnes of CO_2 per year. Each traveller who visits generates about 2.8 tonnes of CO_2, including international and domestic flight emissions. With 200 travellers per year, this equates to 560 tonnes of CO_2 per year. [...] The regenerative aspect here, is that this goes beyond sustainability and generates a positive total impact. (CBI – part of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022: https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/regenerative-tourism

Iceland: Nordic Regenerative Tourism: is a project led by the Iceland Tourism Cluster, aimed at developing and providing relevant, interesting, and accessible tools for small and micro-sized tourism operators in destinations in the Nordic countries. The project covers a lot, including an academic programme, a series of podcasts and many events. The Nordic Council has defined a vision for 2030 framed by the statement: '*The Nordic Region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world*', https://www.norreg.is/

New Zealand:
Tourism New Zealand, the country's official tourism body, invites all visitors to take the Tiaki promise. This is a promise to care for New Zealand – to care for the people, the culture, the land, the sea, and nature. The pledge reads: 'While travelling in New Zealand I will care for land, sea, and nature, treading lightly and leaving no trace; travel safely, showing care and consideration for all; respect culture, travelling with an open heart and mind.' (World Travel and Tourism Council, 14.06.2024 - https://travelhub.wttc.org/blog/what-is-regenerative-travel

The Netherlands:
Amsterdam (mainly outside to North):
Tour operator Tours that Matter (2024), is on a mission to make the world a better place with tours that contribute to a thriving, sustainable and inclusive city. Via their tours you can meet local change-makers, learn about the multi-levels of a place and participate as a volunteer. For instance, helping in a community garden, cleaning streets or working in a food bank that is run by local volunteers, https://www.toursthatmatter.com/. Similar goals being achieved via boat tours in the canals during which tourists use a scoop net to remove plastic out of the water, https://plasticwhale.com/. Hotels like Jakarta https://hoteljakarta.com/ and Zoku https://livezoku.com/amsterdam/ explicitly designed an extra offer that is available for and is based upon needs of their direct surrounding communities. Like a bakery, a swimming pool, a restaurant or hosting a lobby for all users, whether local freelancers or hotel guests. Province of South Holland – A first exploration whether regenerative tourism might be a helpful approach, was commissioned by the province of South Holland (Nieuwland, 2024). Their overall aim is to balance the pros and cons of tourism and strengthening the positive impact of tourism (Dutch version only).

A change of mindset and intentions is a good way to start (systemic) change, how-ever, this might not be enough. What is needed is a clear and coherent strategy that can help move stakeholders beyond an imagined vision, dream, or projection by giving them an idea of how to achieve it e.g. through place-based approaches, learning by doing, continuous evolution, etc., (Koens, 2021). In addition to Koens' statement; this paper aims to contribute to this quest. It wants to express the need for place-based experimenting and is based on almost 10 years of learning by doing via an urban living lab setting.

Right from the start, we were confronted with various types of inclusion and exclu-sion mechanisms and the rise of super diversity in Amsterdam (North). Being aware of in and exclusion and learning how to address this, became part of our own and our students' professionalisation. At the ULTL we therefore developed the Inclusive Design Toolbox (Collin & Gerritsma, 2018 and 2022). Some of these mechanisms had a clear link to leisure and tourism and prompted the ULTL partic-ipation in a 3,5 year-long, European Horizon2020 research and design project from 2020-2023 (Smartdest, 2020, Gerritsma & Stompff, 2024). Presently, our lab methods are also enriched with knowledge and skills that are based on the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and IDGs (Inner Development Goals).

Accordingly, we increasingly became aware that we operate in a contested area, a place in which we need to behave delicately and listen deeply. We learned to focus on creating suitable conditions for regeneration and for holding space for an inno-vative local ecosystem and initiating small-scale interventions with students and local stakeholders. Via collaborative and open-ended learning journeys we try to find ways to pass the ontological threshold. Hence, the whole next chapter is meant as a possible pathway on the "but how?"- question and shares a practice framework of how we run this within our Urban Leisure and Tourism Labs setting.

Anna Pollock, who is often referred to as one of the founders of regenerative tour-ism, wrote on LinkedIn: "Thankfully, under the radar, around the world, mindsets are shifting; communities are waking up to the need to come together and take shared responsibility for designing the future they want. Hospitality providers are finding purpose in connecting, convening and caring for the people and places where they operate. The metric is not more but better - in the form of enriched experiences for guests and deeper, more varied, complex benefits to hosts" (2 October 2024).
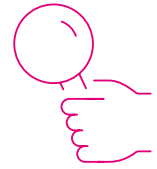
Via collaborative and open-ended learning journeys we try to find ways to pass the ontological threshold.

We are either stealing the future or healing the future. […] Beliefs do not change our actions. Actions change our beliefs.
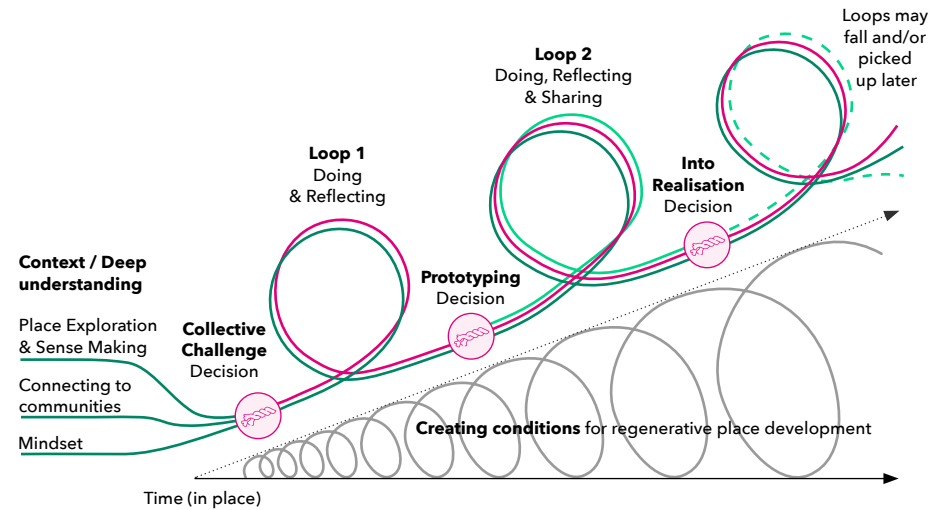
Hawken, 2021, p .9 and 11

4. How? Lab Loops for activating a regenerative tourism approach

Especially in a city such as Amsterdam, that is considerably impacted by tourism and where we can experience types of tourism that lead to place extraction instead of place contribution, it is time to turn the situation around. But how?

As elaborated in previous chapters, regeneration isn't set in action via an unambiguous ticking box, nor a one size fits all method; it needs a tailor-made approach that matches with place uniqueness. The Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab started to investigate whether activation via a regenerative approach could help reverse the tide. Our place-based living lab setting in combination with various tools, design thinking methods and the quintuple helix (see figure 7) turned out to match well. It is in this hyper-local lab setting that we co-create pilots, stimulate innovation and work on community capacity building. On the other hand, this setting – the Buikslotermeerplein-area - isn't separated from the rest of the city, the hinterland and the bioregion MRA (Metropolitan Area Amsterdam). Influences from various systems are emerging and taken into account once the lab community defines the wicked problems and challenges, we seek to understand deeper and question thoroughly.

In the current ULTL we have the following roles: lab lead, learning director, community manager and lab coach. The team is supported by professors, a team manager (for multiple lab teams) and a logistical coordinator. Each semester around 25 (inter)national Bachelor students from a variety of study programmes join the lab as a lab learner, forming five or six design groups and a maximum of 5 Bachelor or Masters students carry out their individual graduation research and design. Until 2025, lecturer-researchers were equally connected to the lab and since 2023 a PD Candidate. The lab commits itself for 3 to 5 years to a certain area and rents fixed spots in order to host lab learning in situ. We always rent spaces where multiple groups come together, such as residents, freelancers, artists, volunteers, etc. Our current location is at the DAT!School (theater and dance school for youngsters) and the cultural hub Modestraat. In addition, the lab uses classrooms and facilities in the university building on the other side of the city.

Figure 12. The Lab Loops for Life Model. Collaborative and open-ended learning journey (Gerritsma, 2025)
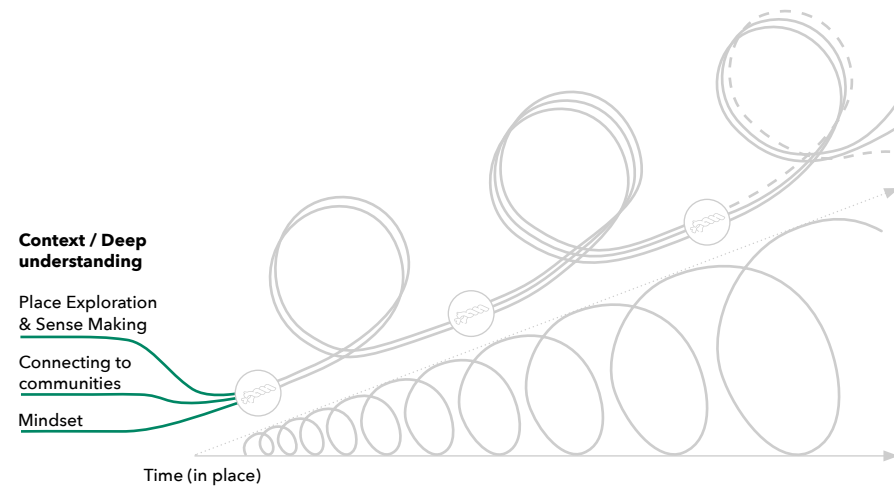

Figure 13. Different strands form one rope. The Lab Loops consist out of strands that look like a rope, they are build up cumulatively as long as necessary.

4.1. Model: Lab Loops for Life

Based upon all insights gained, experiences and feedback, an underpinning framework as the representation of the developmental process of the ULTL has been designed. For this, the lab as whole is taken as a starting point. It is called the *Lab Loops for Life* and will be explained in more detail in the paragraphs below. That said, reality is much more complex than a model and what its visualisation can encompass. In practice, we work simultaneously on multiple loops and the given examples are an abstraction of a diffuse landscape of tourism products and services. Regarding its regenerative premise and aim, it is therefore referred to as the Lab Loops for Life. In short: Lab Loops. It is an integrated and abstract overview of the activities we carry out and phases we tend to go through. In response to the reality of place, these phases aren't strictly separated, nor fragmented. They are linked like our DNA or a rope. The strands are independent but also interlinked throughout the whole process. It expresses an ability to run consecutively, yet interdependently and cumulatively. At specific decision moments we encounter "knots", and they are part of this open-ended process too.

Multiple loops can co-exist, however are always interdependent to a certain degree. Also, various loops can be taken simultaneously as some activities last longer, shorter or represent the next iteration of a loop. Whether the next iteration is feasible, depends on different conditions, such as: resources, a receptive innovative ecosystem, community capacity, capacity of our lab team or lab learners and mutual trust. The intention is to build up these conditions by using a regenerative approach and co-creating tourism products and services.

The interlinked activations are given names that do not always refer directly to known developmental models. It is an attempt to tweak certain existing frames with a regenerative layer and also refer to (more) known methods, regenerative

development and design, tourism and living lab practices. Moreover, the current ULTL has firm roots in design thinking, but wants to move further, especially as there is an increasing criticism on design thinking as being still rooted in solutioning, even when trying to apply regenerative thinking where potential over solution is a key principle (Andersson, 2024). From 2025 onwards, we want to start incorporating systemic design and/or systemic perspectives (Jones & van Ael, 2022, Smeenk, 2021) more explicitly in our lab. The lab lead initiates and brings in the collective challenges ("the assignment") for the loops that run for a semester long. Initiating does not mean controlling or having the last say in how the collective learning process will unfold. Activities like reflecting and co-creating are always carried out with the whole lab team and the lab community involved (e.g.: students, residents, visitors, entrepreneurs, activists). (Inter)national students form a multidisciplinary group and take part of a Loop by subscribing for a minor or follow an individual graduation trajectory for just six months only. However, t*he lab as a whole* is embedded in a certain place for at least 3 to 5 years and is able to run several Loops consecutively. Moreover, lab researchers, the lab lead and community manager are also contributing to the Loops through their analysis and weaving (new) lab partners into the Loops and holding space for innovation. Altogether, via the Loops, the lab intends to continuously create conditions for co-creating thriving places and help building up regenerative capabilities and an innovative ecosystem.

In the paragraphs below, each bundle of activities or loop is provided with a short description of what is aimed for, and which questions we could ask in order to get a better understanding of what it implies, encompasses and/or wants to ignite. These lists of questions are non-exhaustive, and everyone is kindly asked to add more. Some inspiring examples, links and tools are shared too. As a growing body of information, methods and cases will emerge in the coming years, therefore the making of a separate (online) catalogue will be considered.

Context / Deep understanding

Place Exploration & Sense Making

Connecting to communities

Mindset

Time (in place)

4.2. Context: Activating a Deep Understanding

During this phase we connect the grand narratives with the local situation and vice versa. Initial reasons for (system) change can often be found via going through this process. However, gaining a deeper understanding of the place we are aiming to contribute to is key. In fact, gaining this deeper understanding never ends, not even after several years: this is an ongoing cumulation (*it adds up*).

When we first start exploring a place that we will work from via a living lab setting, some basic knowledge to start with is necessary. Using a mix of intuition and cultivating a regenerative mindset is also foundational. This is part of our inner work. Understanding the wishes and needs of the local communities is an inherent part of this phase as we will design everything with them.

Although we tend to work on concrete activations on a (hyper) local level via a lab setting, it is important not to forget that this place is also embedded into a bigger whole. This 'bigger whole' does not only refer to adjacent geographical characteristics, but also to economic, social, cultural, political and ecological circumstances and belief systems, frames and narratives.

This is a non-exhaustive list of principles and agendas the ULTL is related to:
• Global level: the SDGs Expertise/UNOPS, the IDGs https://innerdevelopment-goals.org/, UN Tourism https://www.unwto.org/
• European/Country level: EU legislation on tourism, mobility, sustainability, National Tourism Policy, Click NL research agenda https://www.clicknl.nl/en/ for HEI https://www.vereniginghogescholen.nl/, DUT https://dutpartnership.eu/ NBTC https://www.nbtc.nl/en/site
• City & city district level: Amsterdam Visitor economy policies https://www.amsterdam.nl/bestuur-organisatie/volg-beleid/toerisme/publicaties-programma-stad-balans/, Master plan Amsterdam North https://aanpaknoord.nl/over-aanpaknoord/

• ENSUT: Urban Tourism: A call to action (2024) https://www.ensut.eu/projects/urban-tourism-a-call-to-action/

Questions we could ask ourselves:
1. In which ways is our place interconnected with global, national and/or local principles and agendas?
2. Which themes are popping up over and over again that are related to our place?
3. Where do we hear, see, feel those 'bigger themes' in the reality of our place?

4.2.1. Place Exploration & Sense Making

A place-based living lab is located in a specific area, we call it: place. But what is it's Story (see chapter 1)? Places know many different layers and several entry points to start exploring:

Questions we could ask ourselves – and keep using follow-up questions like: Why? Why now? Why here?
1. How do we (including the local communities) define the geographical borders of this place?
2. Which ecological patterns shaped how humans live in this place?
3. Timelines: which key-insights are relevant to its Past, Current Situation and Future?
4. Who inhabits this Place?
5. Who is using its (semi) public space? Who can we easily encounter here, and who not?
6. Which activities do they carry out?
7. Which differences are there during week and weekend days, nighttime and daytime?
8. Which areas do residents take their visiting friends to?
9. Which areas do local communities consider as thriving and which ones are best to be avoided? What do you think yourself?
10. Who feels a sense of ownership in this place and how is it distributed?
11. Are there any signs of Place Grief (mourning about what once was) and/or Place Belief (celebrating this area)?
12. What wants to be born here and wants to grow?
13. What does Nature in this place tell us?
14. Sense making is about identifying the place's essence (unique qualities and character) and potential (the capacity to evolve): how would you describe them?

Extra sources or tools:
The ULTL made a special tool for this sub-phase and it can be found here: Place Exploration & Sense Making Tool - Expertise Netwerk Sustainable Urban Tourism

Video:
Here is an example of ULTL-students output based upon the tool: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNTgk8JuV7s. Students made this during their first week in the Buikslotermeer-area.

When working from place, a few core questions should be considered according to the **Really Regenerative Centre** (2024):
1. What is the place in which our project is nested; what is the larger place or system in which the place sits?
2. What are the dynamic relationships between those different layers - or nests?
3. What is the essence of this place - or its bio-cultural uniqueness?
4. What have been the patterns and processes over time that have created ongoing vitality and viability in the place?
5. How can we image those patterns and processes moving forwards into the future in the context of the present?

4.2.2. Connecting to local communities
The local community consists of several sub communities (see chapter 1) where mechanisms of in and exclusion can play a role. A crucial design principle is not to design for the communities, but *with* them.
Questions we could ask ourselves:
1 How do communities describe themselves?
2. What connects the community?
3. What are their rituals, beliefs and practices?
4. Which needs and/or wishes do they express about the Place?
5. Who can we consider as leaders/keypersons/change-makers within those communities?
6. How can we revitalize and energize the culture in these local communities?
7. How do we collectively become a regenerative force for good?

Regenerator Laura Storm (2022) mentions the relevance of ecosystemic leadership and formulated several key questions in order to do so. We share two of them below:
1. How can my/our actions create positive ecosystemic ripple effects that improve the resilience and carrying capacity of the ecosystems I/we influence?
2. How can I/we leverage the entire ecosystem towards regenerative transformation to ensure win-win-win situations?

Tool(s):
Inclusive Leisure & Tourism Design Toolbox (Collin & Gerritsma, 2018): The Inclusive Design Toolbox - ENSUT Toolbox

4.2.3. Mindset
"What is a regenerative mindset? At its simplest, to 're-generate' is to renew, reinvigorate or replenish. The regenerative mindset is underpinned by an ecological or living systems worldview, the goal of which is to create the conditions for all life to renew and restore itself (Reed, 2007; Mang and Reed, 2011). In this holistic view, humans and nature are not separate categories, but instead, they are connected and intertwined" (Dredge, 2022)

One of world's leading regenerative tourism voices, Anna Pollock (2024), describes regeneration not as a thing that can be defined, but as a state of being, a process of flourishing, becoming, and evolving. To regenerate is the same as to revitalize - to bring back to life that which was ailing in some way. She even says it is a verb not a noun.

Clearly, developing a mindset that is aware of the interconnectedness of systems, of seeing Living Systems as a foundation, wanting to do good to all, including yourself in a healing matter, is helpful in order to focus and show perseverance as a regenerative change maker. Cultivating your regenerative capabilities can be carried out in many ways and is basically never finished. There are no 'rules' on which is the best road to take. Buchanan (2024), who is a mindset researcher and regenerative practitioner, underlines that one's mindset isn't something that we develop in isolation and isn't only an individual matter. On the contrary, a mindset is embodied *and* relational, existing within and between a person and the people around them, having a mental, emotional, body and social dimension. Dredge (2022) wrote about the mindset shift, systems change and boundary spanning practices that are needed to transition to a regenerative approach in tourism and transition to a regenerative paradigm. She states that simple tools are unlikely to solve complex dynamic challenges. "The real challenge is rooted in our social-ecological consciousness and our capacity to evolve our thinking from "me" to "we" and to develop compassion, empathy and collaboration (Meadows, 1999; Pollock, 2015; Reed, 2007)".

Talveras-Dalmeau (2024) is the first scientist who connected the Inner Development Goals to Regenerative Tourism practices and explains that the IDGs (Inner Development Goals) highlight that current sustainability strategies often overlook the abilities, qualities, or skills needed to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals. Similarly, the abilities, skills or qualities needed for regenerative practice have not yet been identified in Regenerative Tourism. Given this and other gaps related to inner transformation in Regenerative Tourism, she introduces the *Inner Regenerative Development* that fosters regeneration from inside-out (see full article in the box below).

Below you can find some of the sources that might be enriching. The intention is to focus on activating regenerative urban tourism and placemaking.

Questions for developing a (more) regenerative mindset and capabilities:
1. What inner qualities do I need to develop to become the regenerator I want to be?
2. Who am I and what are my core beliefs, values and world views?
3. Where can I grow and learn?
4. How could I hold space for regenerative ways to emerge?
5. How do I cultivate my inner being and build a relationship to the nature (or: more than human) around me?
6. How can I practice the art of questioning?
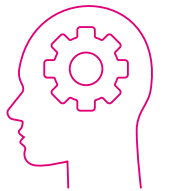
What inner qualities do I need to develop to become the regenerator I want to be?

7. Who and/or which sources do I need in order to cultivate a regenerative mindset?
8. In which ways I can teach myself to start thinking from potential instead of problems?
9. How can I learn to use my intuition and become aware of what is emerging?

Extra sources:
What is regeneration and how to apply this? How to cultivate a regenerative mindset? Books, chapters, blogs, papers, podcasts of the following regenerators might be helpful. There are many more sources available. Her is a start:
• Designing regenerative cultures: https://www.danielchristianwahl.com/
• Regenerative Cooperation – network (also in The Netherlands): https://re-generation.cc/en/
• Regenerative leadership: https://gileshutchins.com/
• Regenerative leadership: https://laura-storm.com/
• Regenesis - Regenesis Group | Transforming the way humans inhabit the Earth
• Really Regenerative Centre - About - The Really Regenerative Centre
• Regenerative Tourism and design: https://www.thetourismcolab.com.au/
• Regenerative Tourism – podcasts: https://goodawaits.podbean.com/
• Systems change and leverage points: https://donellameadows.org/

Mindset:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380791903_A_systematic_review_of_mindset_theory

Framework – Inner Development Goals:
https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/resilience-toolkit-turbulent-times-laila-martins-suwef/

Full article:
It's getting personal: exploring our inner world in the regenerative paradigm shift
https://www.systemischcodesign.nl/2024/12/18/esc-idg-hub/
IDG Hub at Inholland UAS: from December 2024, a new hub around systemic thinking and the inner development goals will be launched and new tools will be developed for (lab) students. Contact person: philippa.collin@inholland.nl

At the end of this phase, the *collective challenge* will be brought in by the lab lead and taken as a starting point to work on collectively. Initial conditions such as time, money, use of data or use of locations etc., should be discussed beforehand. The same applies to managing expectations of what possibly can come out as a result of the first Loop. The overall aim is to build on and contribute to receptive conditions in place, to activate a regenerative approach and co-create regenerative tourism products and services. Some concrete output during this process is proven to be necessary, it helped us to gain support among stakeholders for the more abstract goal of regeneration. It will take us to the first loop of Doing and co-learning via feedback sessions.

Figure 15.
Loop 1 Into Doing
and Reflecting
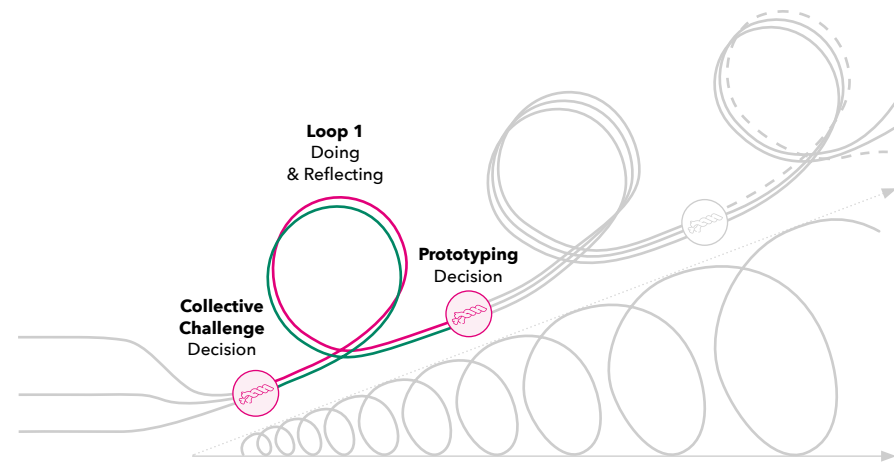
4.3. Activating Loop 1: Into Doing & Feedback

Within a lab setting we are *learning by doing* to a large extent. That is why this phase is called: Loop 1. Into Doing & feedback and spans various activities. At the current ULTL, students are following a design thinking trajectory that includes regenerative placemaking, co-design and prototyping methods. Creating a personal roadmap in order to strengthen their inner work is also part of this. As our work is place-based, it allows us to hold space for embodied learning too. With embodied learning we refer to engaging with head, heart and hands, in sensory and physical, often arts-based activities, but also to involving all aspects of the individual in a dynamic exchange in a social and material environment, in both visible and invisible physical interactions (Collin, 2022).

Asking for and giving feedback are intertwined in our co-learning and reflection activities and are applied at several moments and in multiple ways. Feedback loops are part of our systematic and cyclical process in which information, opinions and suggestions from the quintuple helix are collected, analysed and then used to inform co-design decisions and if needed, adjust our lab practices. Working in a lab setting often implies that we take some steps forward and one step backwards or sidewards. Once the divergent steps are taken and the focus is on the making of and testing of prototypes, a certain acceleration is notable. The loops therefore represent a process of slowing down and speeding up forwards. Main activations and coherent questions in this phase, although not intended as an all-encompassing list:

1. Activating dialogues with local communities in relation to the local challenge, uniqueness of place and its potential: what are their wishes and needs?
2. Delivering the Design scope: which design criteria are vital to take into account?
3. Activating co-creation sessions: who will we invite to join and why? Who is missing? Where are we going to host them?
4. Turning our concepts into prototype making and testing and what if we produce this for real, what does it imply, ignite and contribute to?
5. How does our implementation plan towards collective owner/stewardship look?

6. To what extent are our mindsets aligned with the regenerative development intentions of the Loop we are in?
7. In which ways are we gathering feedback, reflecting upon and incorporating it into our way of working?

Tools and sources:
Students at the ULTL are guided via a detailed study handbook, workshops and in how to apply several methods/tools. Below you can find some main sources. Students are invited to share their insights and sources too:

Lab education:
Detailed background information, pedagogical outlines, practical cases about labs and learning exercises, can be found it this book:
Learning in a Living Lab – knowing what to do, when you don't know what to do, (2024) Hee, vd M. et al. The book is co-authored by two of the ULTL-lab coaches and is intensively used during the Loop learning journey.

Co-design:
The Co-Design canvas 2023 (English) (inholland.nl)
www.systemicdesigntoolkit.org (Smeenk, 2023)
The co-design canvas as such can be considered as a feedback tool as well and can be used several times to check and reflect on the learning and design process.

Regenerative placemaking:
Regenerative Placemaking: Creating a New Model for Place Development by Bringing Together Regenerative and Placemaking Processes (2020), Hernandez-Santin et al https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-030-54686-1_4
PlaceAgency – Imagine, Inspire, Connect, Create.
Activating regenerative urban tourism practices and interventions via a lab setting in Amsterdam Noord – context, theory and method – extended version (Gerritsma, 2025)

Feedback & Reflection:
Asking questions is vital and a core practice in regenerative design. For each subphase in the loop a set of reflection questions is needed. Current feedback forms are only accessible via an Inholland account and are currently in review.

Lab loops end with a 'knot' and symbolise a thoroughly co-created and tested tourism related prototype. This knot also represents another decision moment: are conditions such that a next iteration is feasible, desirable and contributing to a regenerative development of a thriving place and its communities? Igniting agency and collaborative ownership, or rather, collective stewardship are sought for, right from the start. As lab team we take time to explore to what extent we 'keep' the products and services we want to foster and/or can hand over to local stewards who will look after it and develop it further.
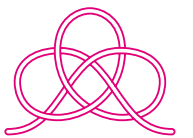

Lab loops end with a 'knot' and symbolise a thoroughly co-created and tested tourism related prototype.

Using the co-design canvas. By using this tool, we can quickly notice any omissions. During the years we have learned that it worked better with our students to add various extras, like Lego, gum and post its. (session carried out by and photo credits: Claudia Mayer, researcher Societal Impact Design).
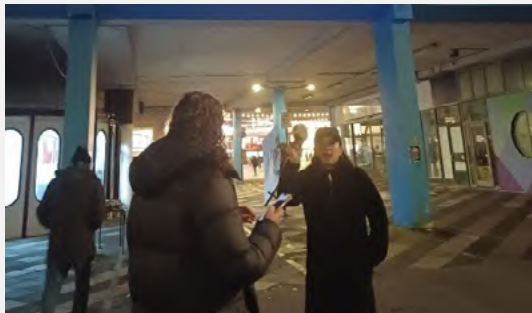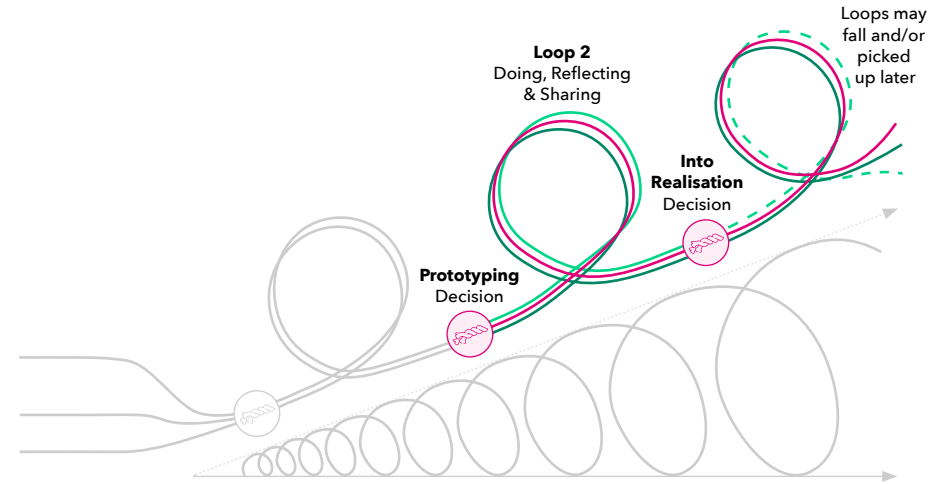

Prototype-testing during the evening: asking passers-by what they think of projecting images on the empty walls of the former Bowling. Would content provided by Northerners be appreciated? Who would like to support this concept? At the end of Loop 1 the lab will decide, based upon input of many, whether further development is feasible.
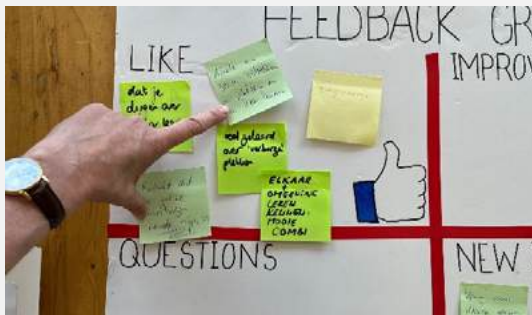
Each student group thinks of additional ways of harvesting feedback, this group made a board on which stakeholders could let them know what: they liked, want to see improved, want to add as new ideas and have as possible questions. In this example, one of the stakeholders wrote about their tour "I have learned a lot about hidden places".

The lab team is collectively taking time (26.11.2024) to reflect on
1) the quintuple helix and planning,
2) fundamental questions,
3) making an overview of what to Add, Drop, Improve and Keep. A follow-up meeting is planned for the end of January 2025.

Loops may fall and/or picked up later

Loop 2
Doing, Reflecting & Sharing

Into Realisation
Decision

Prototyping
Decision

Figure 16.
Loop 2 Doing, Reflecting & Sharing

4.4. Activating Loop 2: Into doing (next iteration), reflection and sharing

Like the first Loop, the second loop ends with a 'knot' that represents a decision moment, feedback loop and check on the current conditions. Collectively, possible next steps will be discussed and might lead to new loops. A topic of discussion might concern the collaboration with (new) partners who have shown interest in the tourism products and/or services that have been developed so far. Such a follow-up step might also represent an application for a (new) grant.

It takes approximately five months to go through the first loop. It is only seldom that the first loop can end with an implemented leisure or tourism product or service. Most of the time, a second or even more loops are necessary in order to realize a concept. This is often carried out by a student who was part of loop 1 and comes back for his, her or their graduation trajectory that subsequently takes place. Sometimes we have potentially rich concepts on the shelf, waiting for (more than) a year for the right conditions to be picked up again and brought to fruition. The second loop has similar milestones as loop 1, like co-designing, testing and organizing many feedback loops.

However, as this loop is focused on realizing (making/producing) and/or handing over, the lab founded a special Production House through which the designer (lab-student in the lead) is supported one-on-one. As we work with young professionals, we noted they could use an extra hand in selecting materials, choosing co-producers and weighing the costs. When possible, the Production House provides extra funding too via subsidies or calculated micro budgets of the lab itself. It is stretched out over a period of approximately five months too. Various moments during the whole process can be considered as relevant to start sharing about one's insights, stories and outcomes. It really depends on decisions such as: who, when, what, where and so on.

BOX 8. The Big Neigbourhood Book from idea to collective ownership

Photo 1.
Taken during the prototype fair (17.11.2023) as part of Loop 1: the Big Neighbourhood Book for those who do not use digital media. The test version was made from paper, attached to a simple wooden pole and was shown to passers-by. Valuable feedback was given by residents, the lab team, a representaive of the municipality and the manager of the Boven 't IJ shopping centre.

Photo 2.
Graduation student Jasmin Westerhof was supported by the Production House and at the end of Loop 2 the Book standard was made by a craftsman fitted with plants at the bottom, filled with leaflets of the local entrepreneurs and taken care of by a local shop. The shop (Blokker) took the responsibility to put the Book in and outside every day.

Photo 3.
The implementation of the Book got special attention in the regional newspaper Rodi (07.05.2024) via an interview with the manager of the Boven 't IJ shopping centre, Mr. Woudhuysen, who explained the collaborative journey we went through.

The ULTL has a LinkedIn page on which many steps are shared, for example: presentations, prototype tests, the making of a video or special workshops we have hosted. Having consent to take pictures and use quotes from all that are involved is obviously key, not only from an ethical research perspective but even more importantly for maintaining a certain level of trust within the lab community. The community manager is responsible for maintaining our social media channels and information sessions to colleagues and future students.

Sharing is also carried out by lab leads and researchers of the New Urban Tourism research group, who reflect, compare and analyse the ULTL's processes, mechanisms and outcomes. This is done via diverse channels such as: (inter)national conferences, communities of practice, books, papers, (inter)national media (newspapers, radio and television), tooling and not to mention expert sessions for students. Telling all these lab stories helps us to better understand the field we are operating in and show and measure the impact we are having. Questions on the sharing of the co-design process. Output and outcomes of Lab Loops:

What & who?
Which message(s) do we want to share?
Who exactly is the "we" and on behalf of whom are we sharing?
How can we stay focused on the potential and positive side of the process and (possible) outcomes?
What new regenerative capability has been created as a result of this co-design process?

How & when?
Which channels best fit our message(s)?
When is a fitting moment to share a message?
Which (hyper) local level channels are available?
When are other levels – beyond the local level- suitable?

Consent
Do we have consent from all those who are involved to share, for example: quotes, images and names?

Community of Practice (CoP) – both academic and non-purely academic CoP's Which CoP suits a regenerative approach and might be mutually beneficial when sharing practices of the lab?

The ULTL- lab uses various channels:
Linkedin: "tourism lab amsterdam" | Search | LinkedIn
Instagram: urbantourismlabamsterdam
Website: https://www.tourismlabamsterdam.nl/en/

Sharing is also carried out by lab leads and researchers of the New Urban Tourism research group, who reflect, compare and analyse the ULTL's processes, mechanisms and outcomes. This is done via diverse channels.

Internal newsletter
Banners and flags when we work in (semi) public space, such as when we host a prototype fair.

Conferences, Publications and interviews by various Media
The ULTL story is shared via (inter)national conferences, podcasts, publications and mainstream media.

Researchers from the New Urban Tourism Research Group are increasingly found and contacted by (inter)national media and asked for what they think about issues like: the impact of tourism and the current measurements that are being taken by the government. Whilst explaining that this concerns a wicked problem, we also try to take a moment to mentions everyone's own responsibility as a tourist too and the urge for experimenting and activating regenerative tourism practices.

BOX 9. Reflecting on & sharing our stories
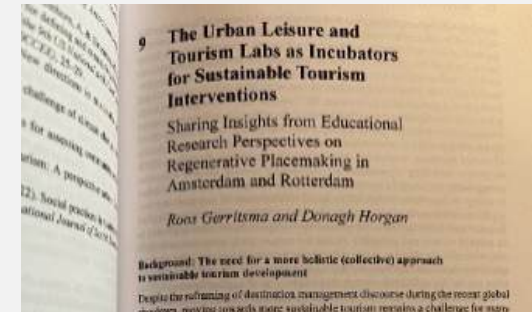
Book
Chapter (pp 129 – 140) written by both Urban Leisure & Tourism lab leads Roos Gerritsma (Amsterdam) and Dr. Donagh Horgan (Rotterdam) – published in a book on Tourism Interventions – making or breaking places, Isaac R. K. et al (2024).

Presentation
during the European Placemaking Week, 25.09.2024. Regenerative Placemaking – together towards change in a lab setting. A collaboration between Dr. Dominique Hes (labs in southern Australia) and Roos Gerritsma (ULT labs Amsterdam and Rotterdam).

Use of posters and banners
with a captivating message and lab logo, (photo credits Jeroen Jager, December 2024).

Interview in National magazine for professionals in the Hospitality & Recreation sector NRIT (#03, July 2022). Both learning director Zac Woolfitt and lab lead Roos Gerritsma were interviewed and shared methods, vision and future development of the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab - Amsterdam. The interview closes with the statement that a lab is never finished, for a city never is either.

Figure 17. Creating conditions for regenerative growth

Time (in place)
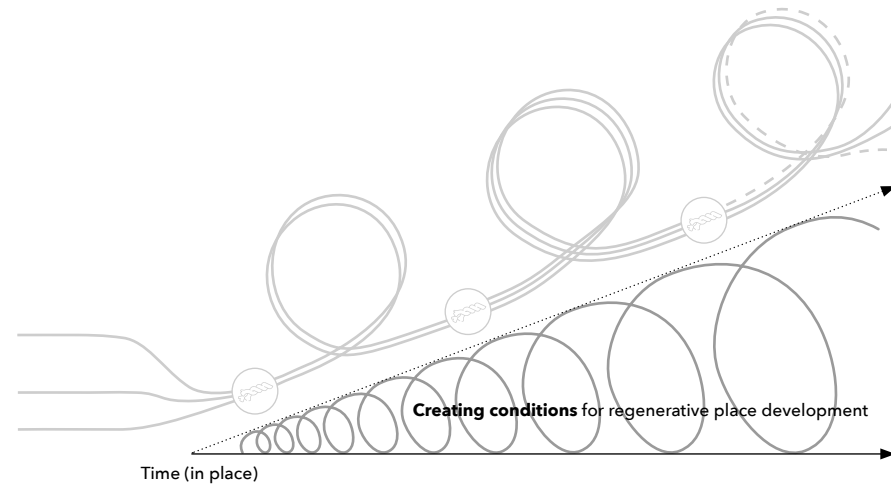
4.5 Co-creating conditions for regenerative growth

Toward the right end of the Lab Loops for Life model, we see a cumulative building up of conditions for activating regenerative growth. Within the lab team we pose ourselves questions such as: what wants to grow in this place that is conducive for regeneration and how can we help stimulate this (more)? By spending time (read: years) in a certain place via the urban living lab setting, we aim to build up a local innovation ecosystem. The intention is to foster community capacity building and strengthen the community, collective learning and experiment via co-created products and services, fertilising the soil and building up mutual trust. It is towards co-creating thriving places and stimulating collective stewardship via regenerative tourism practices, products and services.

Working as regenerative practitioners involves a lot of communication skills. Regenerative stakeholder engagement and the importance of moving beyond polarization is described as follows by Andersson (2024): "When you invite people to convene around a shared purpose which is meaningful to them and to the place they inhabit, you help to bring a field of energy into being that might be capable of withstanding challenges of long-term change. Creating the conditions for multi-stakeholder groups to sustain collaboration over the long term, always demands a constant process of harmonizing as a group and project evolve and develop together. Reconciling and harmonizing diverse perspectives is one of the most valuable ways in which regenerative practice addresses the paralysis that often occurs when we confront complex challenges together." The network of the ULTL is growing constantly. From the ecosystem around us, we have approximately 25 to 35 core partners and approximately 45 connections that are actively involved on and off, depending on the topic and their availability. Since September 2025 the ULTL has its own community manager as building up and caring for our network is of vital importance.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph: sharing and storytelling about the why of the ULTL, our outputs and its never-ending process is crucial to keep fuelling the transition in the place we work from.

The regenerative tourism storytellers of the GOOD await (Clarke & Major, 2024) explain why: regenerative stories can replace the dominant and mainstream stories, such as the growth story, extract value from visitors, nature and communities, work in silos, etc. In the end this makes the tourism sector isolated and vulnerable. We have to come with new stories, shift from the dominant paradigm to a regenerative paradigm and even come with new guiding stories. We need an uplifting, adaptive, diverse and a living story that captures the imagination.
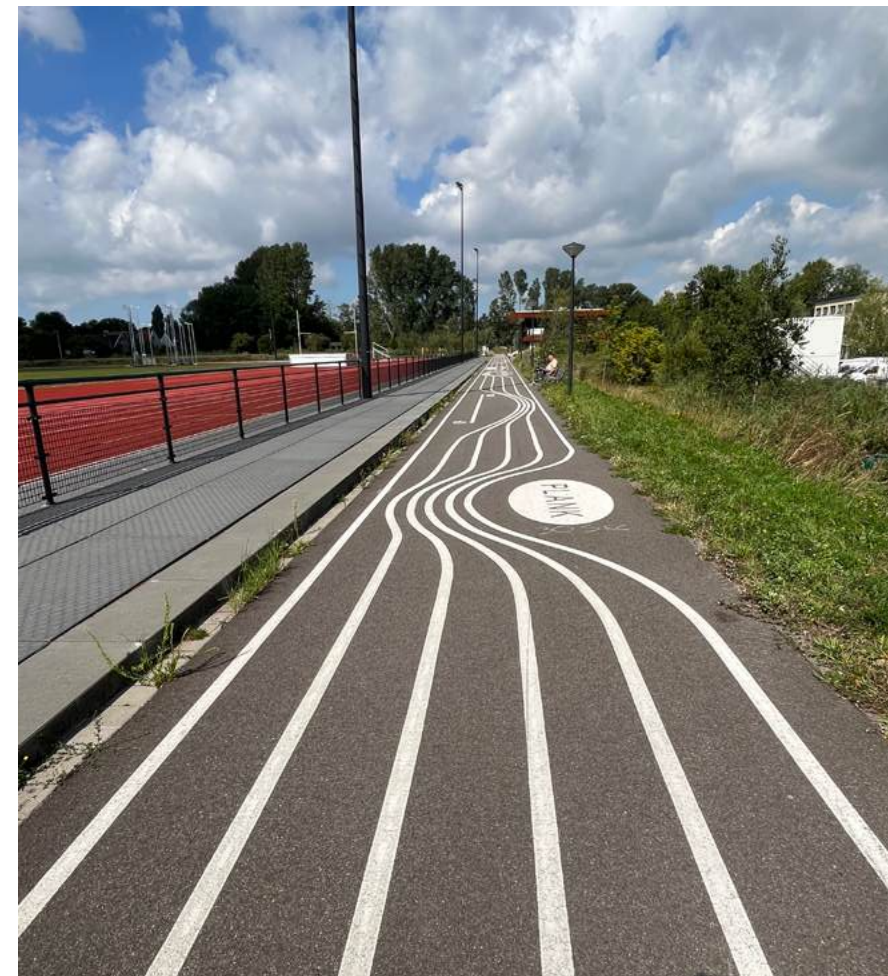
Regenerative stories can replace the dominant and mainstream stories, such as the growth story, extract value from visitors, nature and communities, work in silos, etc..

A regenerator's main focus is to create conditions for life to thrive in one's unique circles of influence that can then create powerful regenerative ripple effects.

Storm, 2022

5. Next possible steps

The greater part of writing this theoretical and practice-based paper was written during the fall and winter of 2024. In many cultures, fall is symbolically considered as a period of letting go what is less needed in order to grow further, followed by entering a phase of wintering, stillness and contemplation. In the northern hemisphere, nature is literally showing us how the fallen leaves on the ground, protect and nurture new life. By doing so we, as part of nature too, can prepare ourselves for another bursting spring season in which seeds can sprout. Whether these are typically Dutch tulips, new leaves on an oak tree or a next iteration of our Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab.

As it happens, the lab team is preparing itself for a thorough redesign when it comes to the lab minor (our semester long educational study programme). During the spring semester of 2025, first alterations will be made, and a more fundamental change will be implemented as of the fall semester in 2025. A student version and additional lectures of this paper will also be implemented. And a short Dutch version will be made for a wider audience. Within the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab, the educational, research and societal programmes, action plans, research and design agendas are not considered as separate realities, but as intertwined. First possible future research and design steps, as part of my Professional Doctorate, are given below and will unfold more into detail, along the way. Priorities will be made based on feedback from the quintuple helix stakeholders, my supervising team and emerging developments.

Within the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab, the educational, research and societal programmes, action plans, research and design agendas are not considered as separate realities, but as intertwined.

5.1. Testing and adjusting the Lab Loops for Life model via small-scale interventions 2025 - 2026

Although there is a fair agreement about the current model, it is only likely that, whilst applying it, more nuances and/or alterations will emerge. The group of lab learners that will start in February 2025 will be the first group ever who will get to know the model and work with the proposed questions, tools and sources. Will it resonate for them, but also for the stakeholders we co-create with? Are various types of the model an option? Are the current visualisations clear enough and helpful in order to express what we are doing and aiming for to achieve? The collective challenges in Amsterdam North will be taken as a leading thread in testing the model as we keep on intervening, at least with the current lab team, until September 2026. In 2025 the challenges will focus on: Feeling at home in a changing North, building bridges via leisure and tourism, co-creating a part of a new exhibition at the Amsterdam North Museum – The Unheard voices (April – September), the 24Hour North event (September) that will be organised and co-designed by amsterdam&partners

with local stakeholders and the 10th anniversary of the ULTL-lab Amsterdam itself (October). The exact challenges for 2026 aren't known yet but will be still in relation to the Buikslotermeerplein-area. The following underlying questions might be of use in order to better understand how we create conditions for regenerative tourism interventions. These questions are based on the needs of the two work field partners of this Professional Doctorate, namely DMO amsterdam&partners and the municipality of Amsterdam. In addition to that, some knowledge questions from the initial action plan of this Professional Doctorate are mentioned as well.

Finally, questions are formulated on the basis of evolving insight:
a. Which approaches can we add in order to gain a deeper understanding of the capabilities, wishes and needs of the local community in relation to a regenerative urban tourism development?
b. An understanding of what drives negative perceptions and negative reactions in the context of contemporary urban tourism will be key to developing sustainable policies and strategies (Oskam & Wiegerink, 2020). Knowledge development and experience development on participatory design trajectories within the urban tourism domain is therefore needed. To what extent can a living lab setting play a role in this?
c. What potential can be tapped into, how to frame this and how do we connect this to existing promising (entrepreneurial) tourism initiatives and the social/cultural fabric of Amsterdam North/Buikslotermeerplein-area?
d. How do we find a good representation of stakeholders from the local area to co-design an area (moving beyond articulate people with a clear opinion)?
e. How do we ensure something is done with the outcomes of local stakeholder engagement (acknowledging feedback is the minimum, but co-decision is the goal) and whose responsibility is this?
f. How do we ensure transparency about process, role, mandate etc.?
g. Which functions and qualities can make the area livelier for all, in a previously under-touristy part of the city by using regenerative placemaking principles?
h. How can public spaces be designed to be inviting for (different types of) residents and visitors?
i. The transformation of the Buikslotermeerplein-area will take at least 10-20 more years, which means years of building sites and changing surroundings in a heavily used urban area. What can be done to maintain liveability in the meantime?

5.2. Assessing interventions & lab approach and its impact (on-going)
There is an enormous amount of ULTL-output available. A rich source of many different types of substantiation. The lab uses varies ways of gathering feedback and co-learning, however, not yet based upon the Lab Loops of Life. This will be implemented gradually as of 2025. Accordingly, it would be interesting not only to indicate (hyper)local impact, but on other levels too, like the bio-region or even further. And not only geographically speaking, but to which extent can we even generate impact on transitions at a future system level? There already are models and tools that have

been developed on; Multi Level Perspectives (De Vicente Lopez et al, 2018), systemic (co) design journeys (Jones & van Ael, 2022) or on 'scaling up: from labs to systemic change' (De Lille & Bergema, 2022) that might be helpful to apply. Also specifically designed models for universities of applied sciences by professors Dr. Van Vliet, Dr. Niessen and Dr. Andriessen and the impact they generate will be used.

Questions that could be asked are:
a. In which way can we co-create and organise feedback loops in a (more) regenerative development and design way?
b. To what extent could small-scale collaborative interventions in a living lab setting influence the system change that is longed for (i.e. no extractive tourism, but regenerative tourism)?
c. How can the impact of the ULTL be assessed and described in terms of impact generated specifically for universities of applied sciences?

The ULTL will also continue to share its stories, via different channels. The community manager will deepen his contacts with for instance; (local) media, the local council and grantors. As PD candidate and lab lead, I will continue to (co)-write papers, chapters and give presentations at (inter)national conferences. The lab is also subject to research and publications in a more indirect way: it is taken as (one of the) an example(s) of innovative education and/or design.

Questions that are related to sharing the activating regenerative tourism practices and interventions via a living lab setting:
a. Which target groups are most relevant to reach and why?
b. Which channels are most fitting in order to get the story out and, in return, might lead to feedback we can learn from and create relevant impact?
c. How can we increase our impact and which type of impact is needed most?

5.3. The labs limitations and possible ways to overcome them
The ULTL is confronted with various limitations, such as: resources, specific capabilities, time, university schedules and so on. It might be useful to take time to analyse our weaknesses and threads in order to reposition ourselves and take action when feasible.

Professionalisation of the lab team, students and network partners?
Our lab is a university lab, and this implies (in the current structure of the lab) that the output is partly generated by students. Students are still growing into their role as junior professionals and inevitably they still need to learn various skills. Many students for instance, are having difficulties in approaching people they do not know, they tend to avoid or delay that 'scary' encounter as much as possible. The lab provides a scala of possible leads for them and we will rethink of how we can improve this process of connecting faster, in a safe way. Most of the time, their output still needs to be checked (language, facts, etc.), supported (Production House) or
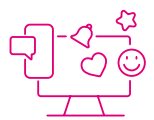
The ULTL will also continue to share its stories, via different channels. The community manager will deepen his contacts with for instance; (local) media, the local council and grantors.

adjusted (parts of their input can be relevant for researchers to weave into a bigger story). At the same time, our students are often praised for their creativity and out of the box thinking. Many stakeholders told us that they appreciate this a lot, calling it refreshing and that they will select for themselves what to takeover or not. It is important to keep managing the expectations in regards to our network partners and keep on searching for ways to do that. We are currently developing new collaboration forms in which issues like intellectual property, collective ownership and needed resources are mentioned. The need for constant professionalisation also applies to the lab team (learning director and coaches, community manager, researcher, lab lead). For instance for cultivating ones own regenerative practice and being able to coach students in developing their regenerative capabilities and co-design processes. Within the lab team, we have some initial ideas about sharing core principles of regenerative place development with our (main) stakeholders. How implicit or explicit can we best approach them? What a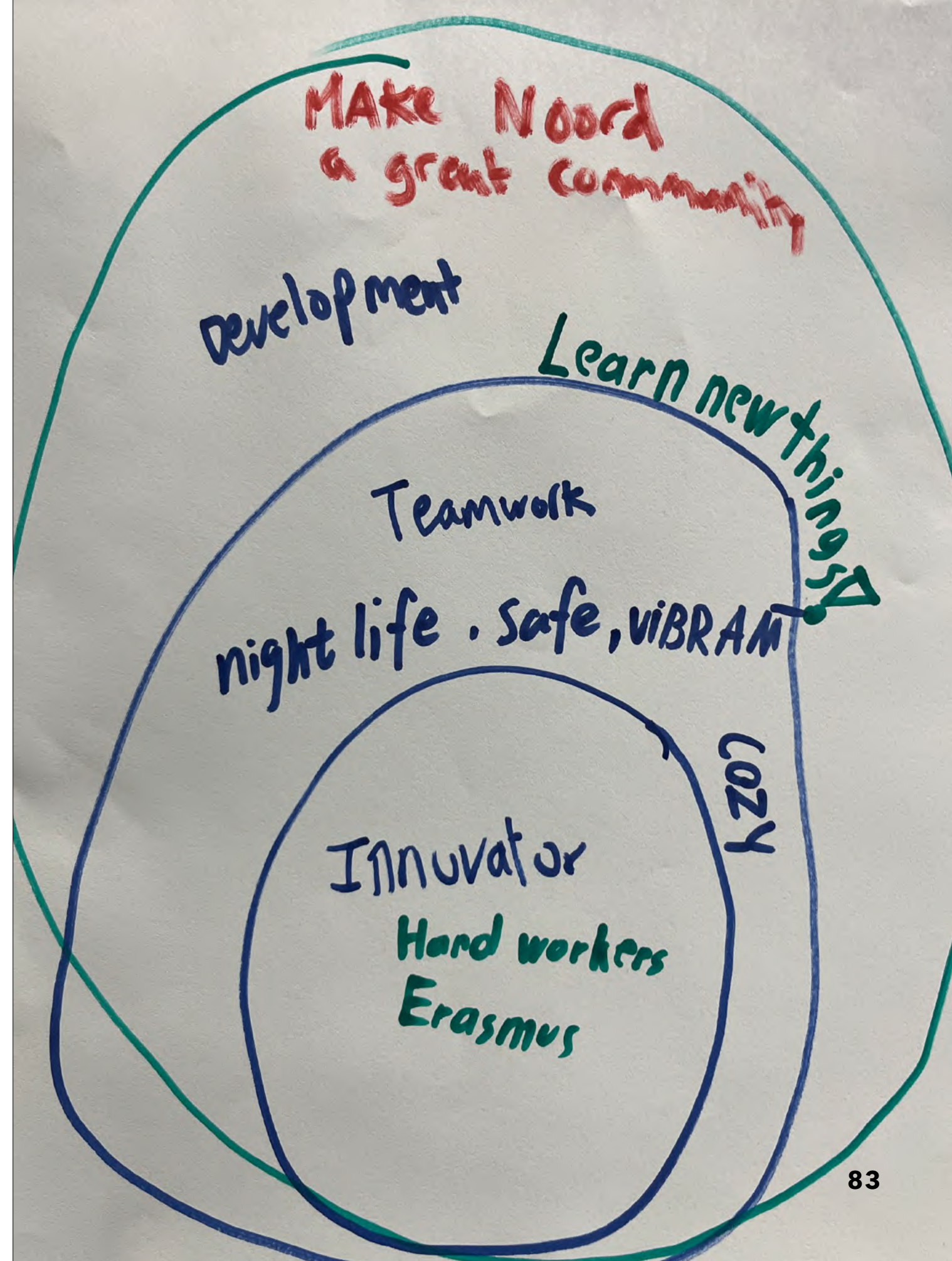re the needs of our stakeholders? Via two Regenerators in Residence in 2024: in April; Ms. Jenny Andersson MBA and in October; Ms. Dr. Dominque Hes, we invited various tourism and academic professionals for some of the public events. We are still thinking about possibilities with our other (local) stakeholders.

Core questions:
a. Which support is needed in order to improve our lab students skills as much as possible (redesign of the lab study programme)?
b. Which support is needed for the lab team in order to be able to hold space for regenerative learning and co-designing in place?
c. What output may lab stakeholders expect from our lab students and how do we manage their expectations?
d. Which support is needed and wished for among our (main) stakeholders about getting to know more about regenerative place development and an urban regenerative tourism approach?

Coalitions and funding
As of September 2025 the lab received less money than before and had to restructure. It has led to less hours for the lab coaches, who guide our students and less hours for lab researchers. On the other hand, a new role, that of community manager, was added. In order to avoid degeneration of the ULTL itself, it is necessary to build extra coalitions so that we collectively can keep on creating conditions for regenerative development and interventions. Extra funding from outside of the university is therefore needed and actively searched for. First possible leads are followed up. From September 2026 onwards, the lab will collaborate with another university (BUAS) on a new international Master programme Urban Tourism & Mobiliy that will partly run in the ULTL.
a. Which possible sources of (local) funding are available for us as an university of applied sciences?
b. Which possible coalitions can we build (further) by which an easy exchange of various resources can be achieved?

Within the lab team, we have some initial ideas about sharing core principles of regenerative place development with our (main) stakeholders. How implicit or explicit can we best approach them? What are the needs of our stakeholders?

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Colophon

Photo cover: Passer-by adding her input for the Wishing Wall at the Bowling (June 2023).
Photo back cover: One of the vanes of the 'From Place Grief to Belief' garland (October 2024).

happiness

hope

love

change