Serious gaming policy sessions to foster sustainable destination development

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SCITHOS PROJECT

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Support city policy makers and other stakeholders by developing insights and tools that support so-called deep reflections about sustainable urban tourism development
Partner cities

Amsterdam
One of the most visited cities in Europe, high visitor pressure

Belgrade
Changing river-side with huge external investments

Darmstadt
Business & heritage travelers
Application for UNESCO world heritage
Partner cities

- **Gothenburg**: Event City relying on air transport and faces social divide challenges.
- **Valencia**: MICE tourism and day visitors.
- **Stavanger**: Focus on tourism to compensate for oil industry. Dependent on cruise and nature tourism, explores MICE.
### Key question

**How can you address the negative impacts of urban tourism without losing the positive impacts?**

### SCITHOS PROJECT

- Desk research
- Interviews in partner cities
- Q sort study in partner cities
- Direct feedback to cities
- Suite of apps
- Serious gaming policy sessions
- Conference

### What is the best strategy to realise sustainable urban tourism development?
Interviews in partner cities

- **Semi-structured interviews** in five European tourism destinations between April and December 2016
- **Purposive sampling** among tourism stakeholders (public authorities, NGOs, citizen groups, business community) with the aid of local contact persons/tourism authorities

- Amsterdam (NL) 8 interviews
- Darmstadt (D) 8 interviews
- Gothenburg (S) 5 interviews
- Stavanger (N) 12 interviews
- Valencia (E) 10 interviews
Background for the interviews

• Similar to social influence and opinion dynamics in the formation of opinions (Moussaid et al. 2013, Soll and Larrick 2009, Lorenz et al. 2011, Mason et al. 2007), the collective narrative about urban tourism in a destination is likely to be influenced by ‘peer’ narratives about (urban) issues that may or not be directly linked to (urban) tourism (development).

• During interview sessions with respondents in these urban tourism destinations, various issues were brought up by the respondents which clearly influenced their perspective on and narrative about urban tourism (development). These issues included issues such as housing, gentrification, migration, safety, mobility and local political decision-making.
Amsterdam

“I think it is bullshit. There is no inconvenience caused by holiday rentals. People are annoyed by the litter, the decrease of social cohesion, by the noise, but the rental itself is not what they are annoyed by. They created this image of holiday rental, that it is the reason. The inconvenience is caused by noise or something else, but it is a different type of issue.”

“In Nieuw West there are people who do not earn a lot of money, and a lot of immigrants. And in Oud Zuid, there live the people that earn a lot of money, also immigrants, but those are mostly expats. I think, personally, that this separation is growing.”

“In a lot of countries, a separation is treated between the elites and the rest. I think the Netherlands has covered this up with a lot of tolerance and concepts. However, when you lift this up, it is quite ugly down there. Within the cities this is the same.”
“The people that are complaining now, all moved to Amsterdam in the 70's, and scared away all the real Amsterdam inhabitants.”

“Amsterdam needs to be able to compete with other cities. This competition is real. It is about the bigger airport, the investments from abroad. Amsterdam has forgotten to involve the citizens of the city within this project, within this propaganda. The citizens had to stay quiet and watch from the side. Now they are revolting. They are surprised by all of it. This revolt is underestimated.”
“[Residential areas] were built both in Gothenburg and Stockholm and so on and built outside the cities and they have become a centre for different categories of people who come from different parts of the world and become sort of segregated enclaves of certain types of people and not integrated in the city. “

“The crisis in 2008–09 [...] it mainly affected the Volvo companies and SKF and Ericson and everybody. I think that is of course related to normal business cycles of the world now what has changed is the globalization that makes things for better or worse. The effects come much quicker as everybody is connected globally. It will affect Sweden and Gothenburg much more.”
Gothenburg

“You talk to the real estate owners, they say that now interest is to get a higher value in our estate, maybe we can do that, we’ll have more economic turnover, we can take out the high rent, you kick out the small ones and in come international brands in the end, like you know, the real fancy ones. And suddenly the whole cityscape is changed, and poor people have no place.”

“The real winners, economically, is not the tourism sector, it is the real estate sector. They don’t play, they don’t have to play!”
Darmstadt

“[Locals often] rather sit in the garden with a glass of wine and listen attentively if there was a goal or not, and of course there are some that feel disturbed. They say, every two week we have here 17000 people that walk through our front yard, and therefore feel disturbed.”

“Streets had been blocked for the matches by police and there have been more police in general. After matches there is no way to get to the city center by car. That is difficult to influence. The empty beer bottles and what else soccer fans leave behind cannot really be avoided, blocked driveways included.”
“When we refugee crisis began, just before everything got blown out of proportion by the press that must have been that at the beginning of 2015 we brought to life an event that is called “Integrations Kick”, where we brought together fans and refugees once a week to play soccer. Out of that all sorts of things evented, such as friendships, some meet now elsewhere.”
“Ten years ago the fashion neighbourhood was Carmen [a neighbourhood in the Northern part of the city of Valencia], I used to go out and have dinner and things. Because if you look at … But now it’s Ruzafa, maybe in ten years it could be another one. […] everybody is concerned about what is happening with El Campanar, everyone thinks it will happen

“There are neighborhoods where the number of bars and small restaurants have increased, the premises sometimes shut the doors but people stay outside talking or playing music in their cars, so many neighbors living in areas like Ruzafa find it difficult to rest in those conditions so they protest. When this things happen rarely, people can be more tolerant considering that those in the street are young people, but when it happens every weekend, which is when people can rest, it starts being annoying.”
Valencia

“But it’s the big buildings and big events and big developments, which in my point of view have been very, very bad. “

“In the last ten years I think that we had a lot of great events in the city, but I don’t think they had a good contribution to the development of the city as a whole because they were very events. The benefits for the city were doubtful because we incremented our debts to a very high level. Now we have great problems with all these things. “

“I think that any policy we would like to develop in the city has to take into account these important issues. For instance if we talked about tourism, I think that it would be necessary to focus on a model tourism that produces benefits for the whole city, not to focus the benefits of tourism in certain areas of the city.”
Stavanger

“When it comes to business of course we have a long, long history about energy business. [...] In the last 40 years of course it has been oil and gas. The reason for why Stavanger has been growing so fast is that we have been attracting a lot of international companies and highly skilled people from all over the world. Right now Stavanger the population has representatives from 181 countries, so it is a very mixed culture. 20% of the workforce represents people coming from different countries.”

“It’s changing rapidly. Changing rapidly and, I don't know. I think we’ve not seen the bottom of our market yet. There are a lot more businesses to go bankrupt. There are a lot more people to lose their jobs.”
“We have other stakeholders that want this area to be a national park, as you mentioned. And if you make it a national park there is automatically a lot of more restrictions. So a national park is in the interest of the public and the people that love nature as it is, but it is not in the interest of the landowners.”
When ‘we’ talk about tourism...

Amsterdam: Segregation/gentrification/urban redevelopment

Darmstadt: Football/refugees (immigration)

Goteborg: Segregation/immigration/housing

Valencia: Civil empowerment/gentrification/public debt

Stavanger: (Declining) oil industry, nature
Key findings

• Urban tourism is part of a wider field of interests and emotions that need to be considered in order to achieve any kind of progress in a sustainable direction and there are no generic solutions that will work for every destination.

• You need to consider local contexts/narratives in order to develop successful strategies for sustainable urban tourism development.

• “When citizens are happier with their basic needs satisfied, then we can look at the tourism industry more favorably.” (Valencia)

• “Tourism can become the scapegoat for this. Everything that bothers me, I will blame it on tourism. Even though my situation at Zuid Oost has nothing to do with tourism, it is nice to blame tourism.” (Amsterdam)
Q sort study in partner cities

- **From discourse to statements** based on 138 interviews and literature

- **69 statements** that express specific views linked to urban tourism (development)

- **Purposive sampling** among tourism stakeholders (public authorities, NGOs, citizen groups, business community) with the aid of local contact persons/tourism authorities

- **23 Q sort interviews** in the period June–August 2017 to rank the statements and elaborate on reasons

- **Analysing** the Q sorts and elaborations to create 5 “worldviews”
Tourism transforms the city into a theme park and therefore it is important to preserve the authenticity of the city.

Tourism has to be limited and in order to solve the issues, policy interventions are needed.

All stakeholders need to be involved in this decision-making, especially the residents.

Some issues might be solved by technology.

Airbnb, StayOkay and similar services contribute negatively to the city.
Worldview 2

Policy interventions are needed

All stakeholders should be involved

The locals are the heart and the strength of the city, and therefore they need to be extra involved

This could be achieved via technology

Tourists can be attracted by sustainability

Airbnb and similar services do not have a negative impact

A crisis is not needed in order to make a city sustainable.
Worldview 3

**Livability is more important than ecological issues**

**Policy interventions are needed and stakeholders (especially residents) should be more involved in decision-making**

**Common strategies are difficult because of everyone’s own interests**

**Technology can solve a lot of the issues with tourism**

**Airbnb and similar services are a positive contribution to the city**

**There is not a fixed limit to tourism**

**It is preferred to reduce emissions from air travel over emissions in the city itself.**
Worldview 4

**Top down decision making is preferred**

*No stakeholders should be involved, especially not the residents*

**Tourism has a negative impact on the livability in the city**

**Livability is more important than the reduction of CO2**

**Airbnb and similar services decrease the livability in the city.**

**Technology cannot solve the issues**
Worldview 5

The success of tourism helps to maintain the heritage of the city

Residents should be more grateful for the investments done for tourism, as it improves the city

All stakeholders should be involved in the decision making process, which is most of the time too slow

The number of tourists does not have to decrease in order to save the planet

Ecological issues are not more important than livability

When looking for ways to decrease emissions, this should be done rather inside the city than focusing on air travel
Key findings

• Worldviews are NOT necessarily linked to having a specific role or position in a city

• Worldviews are NOT necessarily linked to living in a specific city but some worldviews appear to be more common in specific cities than in others

• In combination with the findings from the semi-structured interviews, this rather complicates matters.

How do you arrive at generic strategies for sustainable urban tourism development if and when perspectives on urban tourism are clearly shaped by context-specific issues outside tourism and, simultaneously, ‘coloured’ by highly personal worldviews?
Based on these findings, we have developed the SCITHOS framework to serve as the reference point for context-specific discussion about urban tourism.
Aim of the Game

To assist policymakers and stakeholders in engaging in deep reflections on appropriate context-specific intervention strategies for sustainable urban tourism development

Adapted after Peters et al. 1998
The city is represented by hexagon tiles with city centre, business district, airport, waterfront, residential area, etc.

Players can combine the tiles to create their ‘own’ city
GAME OBJECTS

Game infrastructure represents restaurants, hotels, etc.

Some objects can only be placed in certain city tiles, e.g. hotel in city centre

There is a carrying capacity per city tile for each object
Policy cards are designed to prevent negative effects of tourism or to increase positive impacts of tourism where necessary.

Cards show the impact on SCITHOS FRAMEWORK values.

Cards are organized into short- and long-term policies, which can be played in specific rounds.
GAME DASHBOARD

Visitors’ and residents’ “happiness index” divided to personas

Shows implications of policy cards and placed game objects during gameplay

Overall city performance based on SCITHOS values

Spread and flows of tourists
ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

1. Help stakeholders to appreciate the true complexity of sustainable urban tourism development
2. Help stakeholders to appreciate the views and reasons for those views of other stakeholders
3. Give stakeholders the opportunity to learn from other stakeholders and cities
4. Promote collaborative decision-making
QUESTIONS

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