

Residential action to cope with overtourism

The case of De Wallen



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Cover

Oudekerksplein, Amsterdam (Own photo, 2019)

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Preface:

Right in front of you lies the master thesis that will enable me to graduate from the Human Geography master program Cultural Geography and Tourism at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Completion of the master thesis means that my comfortable student life will come to an end and that I will have to find a new path to follow. Conducting this research helped me to find my personal interests in the field of the study and beyond as well as further developed my research and writing skills. Writing the thesis can be described as a challenging process characterized by difficulties and stress. However, in the end, I am very proud of the work I delivered and the final product that came out of it.

I am very grateful for all the people who helped me during the process. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Huib Ernste, for providing me constructive feedback and new ideas to keep working on. Furthermore, I could not have written this thesis without the cooperation of my eleven respondents who helped me to conduct this research by providing a vast amount of information and insights. Additionally, I want to thank my family and friends who lifted my spirits when needed and kept me motivated if I lost interest. My mother deserves a particular note of thanks: her encouraging words and council have, as always, served me well.

I hope you enjoy reading my thesis!

Max Stoffels

November 13th 2019, Amsterdam

Summary:

In recent years, visitor numbers have increased significantly in *De Wallen*, one of Amsterdam's major tourist attractions (Chapuis, 2017). Residents who live in this part of the city are affected disproportionately by negative tourism impacts and experience nuisance on a daily basis. As a result, the area has come under increasing pressure due to tension between residents and visitors (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018). This master thesis focused on the topic of residential action in *De Wallen*. The objective was to gain in-depth knowledge concerning the ways residents cope with contemporary tourism-related problems in their living environment, such as noise, waste, and crowding. The knowledge gained through this research provides insights into the 'self-help' of residents of *De Wallen* in their fight against nuisance. Therefore, the actions through which residents try to reshape and impact their living environment were analyzed to find an answer to the following research question: "What can be learned from the (everyday) actions through which residents of *De Wallen* try to maintain control over their living environment?"

To answer this question, data were gathered by analyzing policy documents from the municipality of Amsterdam, observations, and semi-structured interviews. The data were merged together to create an overall story describing the residential tactical and strategic actions in *De Wallen*. This story captures the main characteristics of how residents cope with tourism-related problems and how they try to keep their neighborhood livable.

In order to cope with contemporary tourism-related problems, residents develop various tactics and strategies of which some lead to more satisfying results than others. The most successful ways of coping with tourism-related problems are achieved by strategic actions in which residents work together to reach shared objectives. Through strategic actions, residents are able to transfer local information successfully to the municipality and to take collective responsibility by asking attention for specific problems and looking for solutions. Tactical actions mainly lead to short-term improvements and take place in the form of adaptation. These tactics demonstrate that the interests of residents concerning mobility and nuisance do not receive enough attention and demand strategic solutions.

This research also led to some recommendations for further research. A similar but larger designed research could be designed to take into account a more varied number of stories to include the more anonymous residents as well. Furthermore, it might be useful to complement this qualitative story with some quantitative data to find out how often specific strategies and tactics are applied and to measure actual residential involvement in the neighborhood.

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1. Introduction

Since the 1960s urban tourism has been one of the fastest-growing forms of tourism in Western countries (Postma et al., 2017). Ashworth and Page (2011) argue that urban tourists are attracted to urban areas by a diverse array of urban and cultural features related to history, gastronomy, nightlife, congresses, sports events, shopping, and other cultural amenities. A significant share of urban tourism takes place within historical parts of urban areas. As a result, many historical cities in Europe have developed into popular tourist destinations, some of them to such a degree that their physical and social carrying capacities are endangered. Besides being tourist destinations, cities are primarily places where ordinary people live and work which can lead to conflicting interests (Shoval, 2018).

Amsterdam is known as a tolerant, open-minded, innovative, and creative city (Chapuis, 2017). The number of tourists who visit Amsterdam has been increasing since the 1980s, and consequently, the city has become a popular tourist destination (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2013). Amsterdam has the third-highest tourism intensity per inhabitant of European capitals after Lisbon and Paris (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018a). The presence of tourists in the city center ensures a constant flow of crowds. The city is increasingly crowded as the population is steadily growing and visitor numbers have risen substantially. Recent forecasts predict that international tourism to Amsterdam and the Netherlands will double by 2030 (NBTC, 2018). Most tourists visiting the city are concentrated in the historic city center (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018a). Residents who live in this part of the city are affected disproportionately by noise, waste, and crowding, compared to those who live elsewhere (SEO, 2017). In response, a negative discourse has started to emerge among Amsterdam's residents who express their concerns about the tourism industry in general, and in particular concerning crowding in the city center and inappropriate behavior of tourists. *De Wallen* is one of the areas that must deal with negative tourism impacts on a daily basis.

De Wallen, also known as the *Wallengebied* or the Red Light District, is the oldest part of the city and has its roots in the historical port of Amsterdam (Brilleman, 2004). Today, *De Wallen* forms a segment of the *Burgwallen Oude Zijde* neighborhood in the city center of Amsterdam and is visited by approximately by 2.5 million tourists on an annual basis (Arnoldussen et al., 2016). The area is known for its unique atmosphere due to its canals, characteristic small houses, tiny and narrow alleys, and neon lights. The presence of specific amenities such as brothels, coffee shops¹, gambling halls, and themed bars sets the area apart from other neighborhoods in the city center and beyond (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018). *De Wallen* is one of Amsterdam's major touristic attractions and in the eyes of many people, it symbolizes the liberal political context of the Netherlands as well as Amsterdam's left-wing image towards drugs, prostitution, and LGBT rights (Neuts et al., 2014). As a place of entertainment services and excitement due to the visibility of the sex industry, the neighborhood is often considered some kind of free zone or unique 'pleasurescape' of sex and drugs that have created an image of Amsterdam, and *De Wallen* in particular, as a place where anything goes (Nijman, 1999). The number of visitors has increased significantly in recent years as the *De Wallen* has become a destination for a growing number of people. Besides young people who make use of cheap

¹ In the Netherlands, coffee shops are establishments where cannabis is sold for personal consumption.

flights and drug tourists, other types of visitors such as mass tourists or guided tourists, including families with children, are attracted to the neighborhood as well (Chapuis, 2017).

In the past few years, *De Wallen* has come under increasing pressure as a result of tension between residents and tourists. Moreover, the booming tourism industry threatens the residential function of the neighborhood. Frustration concerning the current situation is expressed through media channels like newspapers, public events, and municipal meet-ups (Pinkster and Boterman, 2017). Common ways the residents of *De Wallen* summarize the contemporary problematic situation of their neighborhood is by calling it a theme park, playground, or a lawless jungle for tourists (Pinkster and Boterman, 2017). The process of becoming a city stolen by tourists is described as the so-called disneyfication of Amsterdam in national as well as international media (Haines, 2016; Hermanides, 2015). Another way of expressing the same concern is by stating that “Amsterdam is becoming the new Venice” (Kruyswijk, 2016; Bolt, 2018) in which Venice is used as an example of a city that has already lost its battle against tourism.

This thesis will focus on the everyday life of residents of *De Wallen* and how they cope with contemporary problems such as nuisance and crowding in their neighborhood. The everyday actions of residents will be analyzed to gain insights into what they do themselves to keep their living environment livable.

1.1 Societal relevance

In order to halt the so-called disneyfication of the *De Wallen* and to control the growth of tourism, the municipality of Amsterdam has taken several measures that aim at keeping *De Wallen* livable. Firstly, they have decided to put a stop to new hotels in the city center and control the explosion of private holiday rental services such as Airbnb by introducing a new short stay policy. Since January 2019, private holiday law permits locals to rent out their home to a maximum of four guest up to thirty days per year (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019a). Additionally, new plans are being made to forbid private holiday rental in neighborhoods in which the livability is under pressure, such as *De Wallen* (Couzy, 2019). Secondly, various measures have been taken in collaboration with the Dutch government that aim at the redistribution of tourists over other parts of the metropolitan area and beyond (NBTC, 2018). Also, plans are being made to relocate the city’s cruise terminal to prevent cruise ships from docking in the city center. Thirdly, activities that cause nuisance such as beer bikes, pub crawls, and Segway tours are banned from the city center while the rules concerning guided tours have been restricted in *De Wallen*. Fourthly, a ban on tourist shops should prevent any new tourist-oriented shops from opening in *De Wallen*, in order to counteract the monoculture in the city center.

Despite these municipal efforts to control tourism and improve the quality of life of the city center, a balanced situation seems further away than ever. The *Burgwallen-Oude Zijde* neighborhood has one of the lowest neighborhood satisfaction rates in the entire city, due to nuisance, a relatively high crime rate, and a low sense of safety (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019b). Amsterdam’s mayor, Femke Halsema, has recently indicated that the current situation of *De Wallen* is no longer sustainable and deemed unacceptable. Therefore, radical change is needed to address the increase in the number of tourists (Couzy and Koops, 2019). It is believed that to bring about structural change in *De Wallen*, prostitution in the area needs to be revised. In order

to find a structural solution for the area, four main scenarios for the future of window prostitution are now under consideration: ending street window displays by obliging brothels to close their curtains, relocating all window prostitution to another part of the city, reducing the number of city center brothels, or allowing more prostitution in *De Wallen*. Additionally, there is a fifth proposal included for an “erotic city zone”, with an entrance gate so that authorities can register and control visitors. Eventually, one of the scenarios will be chosen and put to a vote in the city council (Couzy and Koops, 2019).

Besides measures that aim at short-term improvements and plans to revise *De Wallen*, it is believed that an integral future vision for the whole historic inner city of Amsterdam is considered necessary in the long-term (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019c). This vision should function as a guideline for the future development of the historic inner city and describe the ambition in the long-term. Zef Hemel, a visionary urban planner, was asked by the mayor to develop a realistic vision for the entire historic city center of Amsterdam. Hemel will develop this vision by gaining an overview of the different perspectives concerning the historic city center by taking into account the stories of residents, entrepreneurs, municipal officials, and visitors (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019c).

In conclusion, public opinion has started to express dissatisfaction concerning the current situation of *De Wallen*. The municipality of Amsterdam acknowledges that the situation is no longer acceptable. It is evident that Amsterdam has tried a lot to control tourism and reduce the negative effects of tourism in *De Wallen* in several ways. However, it seems that the city is not able to control mass tourism as they have not been able to bring about structural change to improve the situation of *De Wallen* so far. Radical changes such as closing down all window prostitution in the Red Light District are circulating while at the same time a vision on the role of the historic inner city is being developed to find out what possible position the historic city center will have within the city of the future. Based on recent developments, it is reasonable to assume that the municipality of Amsterdam is struggling to find solutions, and that it is uncertain how *De Wallen* will be managed.

In this respect, it can be valuable to look at residential actions to cope with contemporary problems. An understanding of their everyday actions to keep their living environment livable can gain valuable knowledge about how residents cope with negative tourism impacts and provide insights in their defense mechanisms. This knowledge can be useful for the strengthening of ties between residents and the municipality and can contribute to a greater synergy between municipal policy and the needs of residents which could help to improve the quality of life for residents of *De Wallen*.

1.2 Scientific relevance

There is a considerable amount of literature on the impacts of tourism on urban environments. Tourism has a physical, social, economic, and environmental impact on receiving societies. How this impact may be felt always depends on the number of visitors as well as on the context-specific characteristics of the destination in question (García-Hernández et al., 2017; Goodwin, 2017).

The term overtourism is used to describe the negative impacts of tourism on host societies that put pressure on the quality of life and well-being of residents (Goodwin, 2017; Postma

et al., 2017). Overtourism occurs when priorities of tourists and the tourism sector are not in line with the interests of local communities (Weber et al., 2017; Goodwin, 2017). In recent years, the perception of urban tourism has changed since services that are primarily intended for local use, such as infrastructure, public transportation, roads, and other services in touristic urban areas, suffer from increased visitor numbers. This is reflected by increasing crowding and in some cases, even by displacement of local amenities by tourism-oriented businesses (Koens et al., 2018). The issue of overtourism is caused by the overuse of urban facilities that tourists, residents, and commuters share. Therefore, overtourism is not exclusively a tourism-related problem, but rather the result of increasing usage and competition for public spaces and urban amenities. In addition to crowding, nuisance is regarded as another indicator of the concept of overtourism. Nuisance is caused by noise, waste, anti-social behavior, and any other kind of disturbance that can be associated with the presence of visitors (Goodwin, 2017; Postma et al., 2017). Negative tourism impact is never experienced city-wide as it is mainly observed in popular parts of the city, such as historical centers and nightlife areas (Koens et al., 2018). The challenges of overtourism vary from place to place, and every tourist destination must find its own way in dealing with it.

As mentioned in Section 1.1, the municipality of Amsterdam has taken numerous steps and measures to control tourism and improve the quality of life in *De Wallen*. In addition to those measures, civil society plays a role in coping with contemporary issues as well. Residents also try to look for solutions themselves or at least they try to make significant contributions to improve their situation. However, residential initiatives and actions are difficult to recognize for governments and are often overlooked (Verloo, 2017). Therefore, it can be argued that there exists a knowledge gap concerning the development of local ways to cope with negative tourism impacts.

Researching everyday life of residents and their daily usage of space gives policymakers and urban planners knowledge and new insights that can contribute to spatial plans as well as social plans. This knowledge can be valuable in improving the urban management of residential historic inner cities that have to deal with large numbers of visitors. Urban plans, in broad terms, are developed to achieve sustainable situations and aim at making city life ‘better’. Even though plans are carefully worked out, they are not always in line with the actual uses of space. Furthermore, planning is not finished after the implementation of plans as the process of making cities ‘better’ is continuous in nature. Residents and other users produce and change the state of space as it exists by means of their daily activities. It is the everydayness that gives meaning to space. In conclusion, to research how residents cope with contemporary problems such as nuisance and crowding in *De Wallen*, the way residents use the public space of their living environment needs to be researched.

1.3 Research objective and research question

This thesis focuses on everyday residential action in the *De Wallen*. The main objective is to gain in-depth knowledge of how residents of *De Wallen* cope with contemporary tourism-related problems in their living environment. To achieve this, it is essential to look beyond institutionalized reality and to analyze the everyday actions through which residents express their concerns and interests. This research only concerns residents of the northern segment of *De*

Wallen, the area around the *Oudekerksplein* and the northern part of the *Oudezijds Voorburgwal*, and the *Oudezijds Achterburgwal*, as well as all surrounding canals, streets, and alleys that are enclosed by the *Warmoesstraat* in the west, *Nieuwebrugsteeg* in the north, *Zeedijk*, *Nieuwmarkt*, and *Kloveniersburgwal* in the east, and *Oude Doelenstraat*, *Oude Hoogstraat*, and the *Damstraat* in the south, a more elaborate description of the unit of study including a map of the area can be found in Section 3.2.2 In this area live approximately 2500 residents (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018b).

I understand that this research does not provide the final solution for all tourism-related problems in *De Wallen*. It might not even give the final solution for one single tourism-related problem. Nonetheless, it makes a contribution by providing new insights based on the everyday use of space and action through which residents express their concerns and interests over their neighborhood. The knowledge gained through this research will provide insights into the ‘self-help’ of residents of *De Wallen* in their fight against nuisance. These insights can be used to complement municipal policy and help to improve the current situation and livability of the area in question. This research does not intend to present an overview of resident’s ‘self-help’ through the ages but solely focuses on the contemporary means of ‘self-help’. Despite that *De Wallen* is the center of attention and interest, the knowledge gained in this particular case might be useful for overtourism cases in other neighborhoods, cities, and in other contexts as well.

To be able to complement municipal policy it is necessary to be aware of the latest municipal strategies to counter contemporary issues in *De Wallen*. Therefore, information concerning municipal policies and interventions must be researched as well.

The following research question has been formulated to meet the research objective:

“What can be learned from the (everyday) actions through which residents of De Wallen try to maintain control over their living environment?”

To gain the required insights needed to answer the main question, three sub-questions were formulated:

SQ1: *What strategies and interventions have been used by the municipality of Amsterdam to counter contemporary problems such as nuisance and crowding, in De Wallen?*

SQ2: *What strategies have residents of De Wallen developed to cope with contemporary problems such as crowding and nuisance, in their living environment?*

SQ3: *What tactics have residents of De Wallen developed to cope with contemporary problems such as crowding and nuisance, in their living environment?*

1.4 Methods

The residents of *De Wallen* are the units of observation of this thesis. In order to conduct this research, data were collected in three different ways. Firstly, relevant policy documents of the municipality of Amsterdam were used to gain knowledge concerning municipal policy for the area in question. Secondly, observation helped to gain insights into the everyday actions of residents through which they cope with crowding and nuisance in their neighborhood. Thirdly, eleven people who live in *De Wallen* were interviewed through qualitative semi-structured interviews to gain detailed information concerning their ways to cope with tourism-related problems, an evaluation of these ways, and to gain additional knowledge. The basis of the analysis was formed by the data that were obtained through observation and interviewing. A more detailed description of the methodology of this research can be found in Chapter 3.

2. Literature review

This literature review will reflect on those theories that are believed to be most relevant for this research and essential to reach the research objective. In order to achieve an understanding of the everyday actions through which residents of *De Wallen* try to maintain control over their neighborhood, the concept of residential action must be conceptualized. To conceptualize residential action in the context of this research, a few steps need to be taken. First, the situation of *De Wallen* will be approached from Lefebvre's 'right to the city' concept to create an understanding of how residential action arises. Then, it will be explained how residents produce and shape public space and how this differs from the space that is produced by urban planners. Subsequently, residential action, as acts that aim at solving or reducing contemporary problems and express interest, will be defined. Furthermore, other relevant concepts that play a role in this matter, such as, public space and the elements that are considered to be fundamental for residents' identifiability with their living environment will be reviewed. Examples of such elements are familiarity, adaptability, and sense of safety.

2.1 The right to the city

To understand the contemporary situation of *De Wallen* concerning tourism, it is deemed necessary to be aware of recent developments of the area in question. Many established cities in developed countries, particularly in Europe and North America, are becoming places of consumerism and tourism more and more (Harvey, 2008). This trend is reflected through the public spaces of cities which are increasingly turned into places that are almost entirely used for leisure activities. When leisure becomes the primary function of a place, this challenges the local social fabric as it diminishes the ability of residents to live together and collectively work for improvements of their living environment. As a consequence, public spaces may come under pressure (Madanipour, 2005). This trend is also applicable to the situation of *De Wallen*, where tourism has become the dominant industry and as a result, the area has come under pressure (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018). In this context, it is worth mentioning that *De Wallen* has always been a place of entertainment and leisure. Nonetheless, the continued increase in visitor numbers is considered a relatively recent phenomenon that has changed the neighborhood to such a degree that the livability of *De Wallen* has come under threat (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018).

Residents experience a process of downgrading of their neighborhood and are unsatisfied with the current situation (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018). This raises the question whom *De Wallen* belongs to. The neighborhood seems to be 'swallowed' by tourists and the position of residents seems to be more and more marginalized. When the priorities and needs of residents are at stake, residents can respond in varied ways. One of these ways is seeking change through action. To understand where residential action comes from and how it arises, Lefebvre's concept, 'the right to the city', will be discussed.

The concept of the right to the city goes beyond the right to simply live in a city or visit one. It includes ideals about two fundamental rights: the right to participate in urban life, and the right to appropriation. The essence of the right to the city is the idea of a city as an *oeuvre*: a 'work of art', by which Lefebvre (1996) wanted to express the multiplicity of the city as a totality and the city as a creative product in which everyone participates. In this sense, the city is a creative product that is produced by the everyday activities of its residents and shaped

through the sum of social relations, cultural practices, and spatial practices that encompass diversity (Lefebvre, 1996). Further, the right of participation means that residents should have a central role in the urban development of their environment, and this should not be determined by top-down decision-making processes or neoliberal actors. This does not mean that decisions should be taken entirely by residents, but their voices must be heard and taken into account (Lefebvre, 1996).

The right to appropriation involves the right of residents to be physically present in the urban space of their city which implies usage, access, and occupancy of urban space (Isin and Wood, 1999). However, according to Lefebvre (1996), appropriation has a wider and more structural meaning. Besides the right of using urban space that has been produced already, he states that appropriation is the right to shape urban space in a way it meets the needs of its residents. In this respect, full and complete usage of one's living environment in the context of everyday life is seen as a basic right. Purcell (2002) adds that space must be produced in a way it facilitates full and complete usage by residents. Therefore, 'use value' aspects of space must play an important role in decisions that produce urban space.

When residents have no control over the urban development of their city and other factors affect their right to the city, they shall become marginalized (P. Hall, 2014). In such circumstances, resistance may emerge in public spaces in order to fulfill individual or group needs. Resistance aims at the creation of an environment that does suit the needs and activities of its residents and can take place in the form of adjusting one's living environment (P. Hall, 2014). From this perspective, appropriation relates to the modification of control over urban space in which residents try to prioritize their use-rights.

Within the context of the right to the city can be argued that *De Wallen* is dominated by tourists which undermines the right of residents to participate, create, and live in their neighborhood. The area is being shaped by the needs of the majority, in this case, tourists, and interests of the tourism industry. As a result, *De Wallen* is no longer produced by the everyday activities of those who live there. This reinforces the urge of residents to defend their neighborhood and fight for space that belongs to them and is shaped by them.

2.2 The production of space

In order to analyze residential action in an urban landscape as *De Wallen*, Lefebvre's conceptual framework concerning the production of space might be useful. According to Lefebvre (1991), space is produced in three different ways.

Firstly, planners, policymakers, scientists, and bureaucrats plan, design, and shape space, the so-called 'conceived space'. The production of conceived space is based on formal planning and policymaking that shape how space is conceptualized and manifested through urban design, organizational rules, and symbols (Spicer and Taylor, 2004). It provides order and gives instructions on how to use space and it is considered to be the dominant space in any society (Lefebvre, 1991).

Secondly, space is formed through the spatial practices, patterns and experiences of everyday life of residents and other users of space, known as the 'perceived space'. This space consists of the flows of spatial practices such as physical movement, daily routine, and urban reality. It connects the places, routes, and networks that form part of one's private life, work,

and leisure (Lefebvre, 1991). In short, the perceived space is produced by the everyday activities of life.

Lastly, there exists a third type of space referred to as the 'lived space'. This is the space of human experiences, imagination, and subjectivity that relies on symbols, artifacts, images, and physical objects that symbolize lived experience and generate meaning. This type of space is passively experienced (Zhang, 2006). It overlaps with physical space, makes symbolic use of its objects, and is based on local forms of knowledge.

The conceived, perceived, and lived space, together, represent the three moments in the production of space and form a conceptual triad. Within this conceptual triad, the perceived space functions as a continuously mediating factor between the conceived space and the lived space. The spatial practices of everyday activities and experiences of the perceived space take place within the abstract, conceived spaces, that are created by planners while at the same time, being shaped through individual perceptions and meanings of lived spaces (McCann, 1999). Moreover, the spatial practices of individuals and groups continuously shape, reshape, and challenge existing structures of space. Even though planners designate streets to be used in a certain way, individual and group perceptions and practices may lead to other types of uses through the reproduction of space (Lefebvre, 1991).

Elden (2007) uses the example of parks to illustrate how the construction or production of space works in a present-day city. Parks are places that are produced and designed, and thus conceived, through labor and institutions. But the space of a park itself, and its meaning to people, is transformed and adapted since it is perceived and lived by groups and individuals.

The importance of learning from the street is based on the assumption that people identify themselves with their living environment and express themselves by means of everyday practices, interactions, and experiences, and do not identify with their living environment in terms of abstract ideas with regard to crime rates, as often claimed by policy-oriented approaches (Piven and Cloward, 1977). Verloo (2017) argues that to understand everyday practices, interactions and experiences, one should look beyond these policy-oriented indicators and focus on those things that happen and 'take place' in the public spaces of people's living environment. These are the places from which can be learned from its real users. This approach is based on the principle that the community is the expert, of which the people, including residents, occupy and use space on an everyday basis which generates local knowhow (Karssenbergh and Laven, 2016). Hence, the perceived space formed by the spatial practices and the everyday activities of residents of *De Wallen* will be examined in this research.

2.3 Tactics and strategies

In order to research how residents of *De Wallen* cope with contemporary problems in their neighborhood, the concept of 'action' needs to be operationalized. Action, in a broad sense, refers to all formal as well as informal everyday actions through which residents express their concern and interest over their living environment. To include formally designed action, as well as informal everyday action, a distinction between tactics and strategies needs to be made (De Certeau, 1988). In this context, both tactics as well as strategies can be considered ways of 'self-help' among residents and the community.

Tactics are developed by people to better cope with specific situations and structures on an everyday basis. These tactics do not always aim at improvements on a grand scale and in the long-run but are often implemented provisionally and developed by local know-how to fit local contexts (Scott, 1998). They twist the overall structures in such a way that makes them practically livable at ground level. This is sometimes also denoted as the bottom up, frog's view (perspective), typical for what is described as the everyday city on eye level.

Strategies, on the other hand, are well-considered acts or policies that aim to reach long-term goals in relation to the organization and regulation of public spaces and the urban development of the neighborhood in general. One could describe this as the typical bird's eye view from above. Policies often have a strategic nature, but this does not necessarily mean that all residential strategies are tactical. Residents also develop strategies to object policies or to inform policymakers. However, residential tactics can be hard to recognize for governments (Verloo, 2017). Residential participation is recognized easier when designed strategically. Tactical actions that take place provisionally, are harder to grasp for policymakers and are usually not recognized as information sources (Verloo, 2017). This makes it even more important to look at these locally developed tactics. However, within the context of this research, residential tactics as well as strategies will be examined and are considered equally important.

2.4 Public space and identifiability with the living environment

To elaborate further on the everyday city on eye-level as a place from which can be learned from the tactics and strategies of residents, the concepts of public space and identifiability of space will be examined in this section. A public space can be described as an area that is generally open and accessible to everyone and unrestricted in character (Hospers et al., 2015). With this definition in mind, the streets of *De Wallen* can be considered a public space in its purest form. Streets are the most immediate public spaces that support endless social, cultural, economic, and political activities (Mehta, 2013). Public spaces are pluralistic ever-changing places that are characterized by contradictions, complexities, and different meanings for individuals and groups. They are places of interaction, participation, shared interests, as well as places where differences and conflicts among users play out (Mehta, 2013). These last two aspects are particularly interesting in the context of this research as they refer to possible tension between different groups of users.

An important role, as well as a challenge for public spaces, is the ability to be space for different groups at the same time. Discussion and debate concerning public spaces are often about activities and behaviors of particular groups of users that are considered inappropriate by other groups of users (Mehta, 2013). This raises questions regarding the inclusiveness of public spaces. Mitchell (2003) argues that the possibility to appropriate spaces and the use of space for personal purposes is the very thing that makes spaces public. Thus, the inclusiveness of public space might be determined by the range of activities that it is able to support. Public spaces are ambiguous, flexible, and continually changing to accommodate the activities of its users. Consequently, the range of activities they are able to support are never fixed and vary over time (Franck and Stevens, 2007). This way of conceptualizing public space is intriguing since people invent new ways of using public space and appropriate public space to activities and behaviors to fulfill their needs.

People encounter streets on a daily basis, and their lives depend on them. One of the primary roles of streets is to provide a platform for active and passive human behavior and activities. They are powerful tools of understanding and making the city legible. Therefore, looking at the streets, and observing them from the perspective of the pedestrian, helps to create an understanding of the city (Mehta, 2013). In the following sections, the elements that transform everyday public space into an identifiable place will be examined.

Next to the street as the focus and the context of this research, the concept of identifiability with the neighborhood from the perspective of residents is of major significance as well. Residents and other users produce, change, and create the reality of the street by means of their everyday actions and use of it. It is these everyday practices that generate identifiability and meaning of urban space which indicate whom a place really belongs to (Verloo, 2017). The elements that are believed to be crucial in transforming everyday space into an identifiable urban space are familiarity, adaptability, and sense of safety. These elements determine the quality and identity of urban space from the perspective of residents and will be discussed in the following sections.

2.4.1 Familiarity

The first element that is considered essential in the creation of an identifiable space is familiarity. For many people familiarity with their living environment is vital. Familiarity is supported by routine and continuity that leads to comfort in knowing what to expect (Mehta, 2013). Continuity is the ability of a place to exist over time. It offers stability, durability, and constancy that brings about regularity of use, which provides a feeling of being at home and creates a sense of place (Seamon, 1979). When the continuity of a neighborhood is under pressure, this may lead to a decrease of public familiarity. From the perspective of residents, this is often viewed as downgrading of their living environment.

Public familiarity develops by the everyday acts and routines that distinguishes an anonymous urban area from someone's own neighborhood. It arises automatically through face-to-face encounters in public spaces. For instance, by seeing familiar faces during everyday activities such as going to the supermarket, bakery, bar, or simply by walking or being on the street. The number of encounters with familiar faces is of greater importance in the development of public familiarity than the quality of these encounters in terms of meaning and mutual relationships (Verloo, 2017).

Nonetheless, public familiarity does not solely rely on these repeated physical encounters with other people, but also on the continued presence of neighborhood amenities such as cafes, restaurants, bars, community centers, general stores and so on. Often these are small local businesses that function as informal gathering places for the neighborhood where residents can regularly visit and spend time with friends and neighbors. Research conducted by Mehta (2013), showed that people generally prefer amenities that have been present for a long period of time, instead of newer, more recently opened ones. He stated that this is the result of familiarity with the products and services of these amenities as well as the people who work at these businesses.

To summarize, associations with people and places contribute to a sense of familiarity and belonging to a community. Familiarity adds meaning to ordinary places and fosters the conception of stability, which is a fundamental aspect of place attachment. Therefore, familiarity plays a crucial role in the identification with one's living environment. In *De Wallen*, tourism

has become the dominant industry which influences the demographics and the provision of local amenities in the neighborhood (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018). Contemporary developments in *De Wallen* are expected to harm the public familiarity.

2.4.2 Adaptability

The second element that plays a role in creating an environment that residents can identify with is adaptability. Although familiarity is essential in the long-run, adaptability plays a crucial role in the short-term (Mehta, 2013). The capacity to meet the ever-changing needs of diverse groups of people and individuals can be a challenge for a place. From a residential perspective, adaptability refers to their ability to manage change and to increase comfortability. In other words, the extent to which residents are capable to adjust their living environment to meet their personal needs (Mehta, 2013). Improved comfortability can be achieved through everyday place-making practices that modify public space. Everyday place-making, also referred to as ‘organic place-making’ or ‘unintentional worldmaking’, is associated with local, bottom-up initiatives and emerges through individual agency (Lew, 2017). Practices of everyday place-making have an impact on urban landscapes and can claim public space, for instance, through territorialization of space (Dyck, 2005). The importance of everyday place-making is acknowledged by Gehl (1987) who claims that having opportunities to personalize public space stimulates interaction and the creation of attractive and meaningful elements in the environment.

Territoriality in public spaces is a spatial human behavior that involves laying claim to ownership of space on a permanent or temporal basis through appropriation. Places can be appropriated by physical markers such as gardens, flower pots, fences, and other private physical objects, as well as symbolic markers like signage and changes in road texture (E. T. Hall, 1966). Such spatial practices suggest the presence of people, activity, occupancy, and therefore, add a human touch to the environment. Territorial practices in public space can function as a defense mechanism and a means to shape space according to the needs of residents. A common way to extend private territory is through claiming public space on the sidewalk, for personal purposes. Higher levels of territoriality are associated with higher levels of collective efficacy, the willingness of people to control the behavior of individuals and groups in their neighborhood (Pitner et al., 2012). Or in the context of this research, the eagerness of residents to protect themselves and their living environment.

Although these spatial practices can be provisionally (Scott, 1998) or intentionally in nature (De Certeau, 1984), they both adjust and transform space that is publicly accessible. Residents can use personalized territorial practices for various purposes. Firstly, territorial practices can provide a reliable space to carry out everyday acts and routines (Porteous, 1976). Secondly, they can be used as a mechanism to maintain privacy, private needs, intimacy, and informal social control (Brower, 1980). Thirdly, they function as a communication tool to express ownership and relationship over space and objects. Further, the presence of people and certain activities provide identity and fosters a sense of belonging on the individual and neighborhood level (Edney, 1976).

Familiarity and adaptability are features that transform ordinary public space into meaningful public space and facilitate interaction and social contacts. These are all qualities that give meaning to public space and contribute to the creation of identity and a sense of community in the minds of residents (Mehta, 2013).

2.4.3 Sense of safety

The last fundamental element in creating a neighborhood that residents can identify with is sense of safety. Sense of safety, as perceived by residents on the streets of their neighborhood, is affected by several factors. To begin with, the perception of safety varies with age, culture, and gender, making it a subjective matter. In addition, other factors such as the kind of people who are present and environmental characteristics like the physical condition and maintenance play a role as well. The presence of, for instance, graffiti, litter, vandalism, and dilapidated buildings, has a negative influence on the sense of safety (Perkins et al., 1992).

Further, previously discussed concepts such as familiarity and adaptability relate to the meaning public space has for residents (Mehta, 2013) which affects the perception of safety (Perkins et al., 1992). These findings are based on research that showed that territorial control, personalization of property, private plantings, yard decoration, as well as personal identification with the neighborhood, are able to contribute positively to the sense of safety and make public places appear to be safer in the minds of residents (Perkins et al., 1992). On the contrary, a lack of territorial control and identification can make public spaces perceived less safe (Taylor et al., 1984).

According to Van Steden et al. (2011), public participation and active citizenship impacts residents' sense of safety as well. They claim that the creation of a setting in which active citizenship is stimulated is vital in this matter. Active citizenship can be encouraged by enabling residents to define and tackle the programs of their community (Hope, 2005). Public participation starts by setting up community institutions where residents can unite themselves and come together for support. Through these organizations, residents can share their opinions, observations, findings, and concerns with each other and governmental institutions. Furthermore, this can contribute to solving local issues (Terpstra, 2009).

To conclude, sense of safety is a broad and subjective concept that is determined by many different factors. In the context of this research, not all factors will be taken into account. The focus will be on residential forms of collective cooperation and active citizenship that aim at improving safety in the public space.

2.5 Conceptual model

In order to connect all the concepts and theories mentioned in the previous sections, a conceptual model was created, see Figure 1, below. This model shows the interrelationships of the concepts that are described in this literature review and their relationship with the research topic.

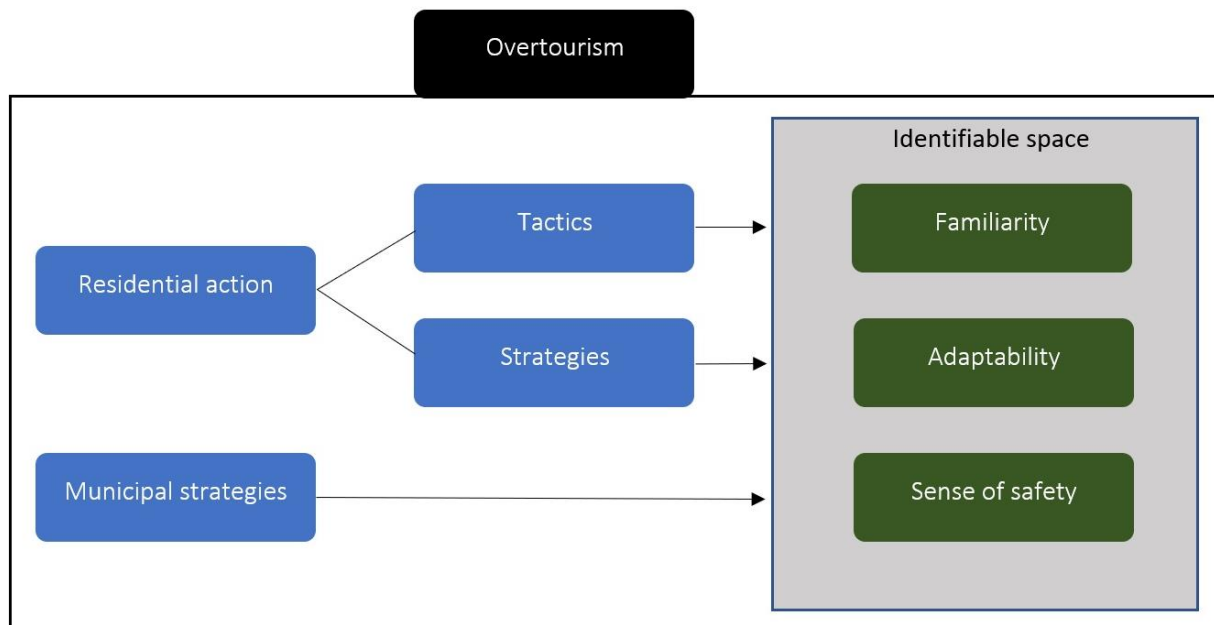


Figure 1: Conceptual model

This research takes place within a context of overtourism. It will focus on residents of *De Wallen* who are noticeably hindered in their everyday life as the tourism industry continues to expand, and ever-larger numbers of tourists find their way to the area. This has led to a negative impact on their quality of life. Based on the growth of the tourism industry in *De Wallen*, it can be stated that the priorities of tourists and the tourism industry are often not in line with the interests of the residents, which causes growing frustration (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018). This research aims to provide insights into how residents cope with contemporary tourism-related problems in their neighborhood. Therefore, residential actions, or residential forms of ‘self-help’, through which residents try to cope with tourism-related problems in their neighborhood, will be analyzed. In order to do so, this research will focus on everyday practices and activities to see what can be learned from them. In Section 2.2, the production of space was discussed to make clear how space is conceptualized and what type of space must be focused on when researching the everyday practices, activities, and other ways through which residents try to reshape and impact their living environment. The concept of residential action is divided between tactical action and strategic action, or tactics and strategies, to make a distinction between actions that are implemented in a provisional way and actions that are designed in a formal way (De Certeau, 1988).

In order to learn from the tactics and strategies through which residents cope with tourism-related problems in *De Wallen*, three elements have been chosen that are considered fundamental in the creation of a living environment with which residents can identify. These elements are familiarity, adaptability, and sense of safety. Research will be carried out to establish to what extent residents themselves can influence their environment by means of tactical and strategic action.

The elements through which residents identify themselves with their neighborhood are depicted in Figure 1 and put into the sub box of 'identifiable space'. Although these three elements are put into separate boxes, they are all related to each other and overlap to a certain extent. Also, it is worth mentioning that there might be more aspects of identifiability on the neighborhood level. However, these are not taken into account in this research. Furthermore, the box of government strategies is connected to the sub box of 'identifiable space' by an arrow. Besides residential practices that influence the identifiability of space, government strategies play a role in the perception of identifiable space as well through urban design, instructions on how to use space, and the power to uphold the law (Spicer and Taylor, 2004).

Further details on how the research was conducted will be explained in the next chapter: the methodology.

3. Methodology

The research methods that were used to answer the research question are discussed in this chapter. As expressed throughout the previous chapters, this research is about everyday residential action in *De Wallen* through which residents express their concerns and interests over their living environment. The objective is to gain in-depth knowledge of how residents of *De Wallen* cope with contemporary tourism-related problems such as crowding, nuisance, and waste. This knowledge will gain insights into the ‘self-help’ of residents in relation to their struggle of keeping their neighborhood livable. The methods that are used to collect, interpret, and analyze the gathered data are discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Research design

To answer the research question and sub-questions of this thesis, data needed to be collected. The data for this thesis were collected by conducting qualitative research, more specifically, by conducting ethnographic research. The term ethnography literally means ‘writing about people’. It is a form of qualitative descriptive research that is used to obtain information concerning the current status of a phenomenon and it is used to look at and listen to individuals or small groups of participants (Sangasubana, 2011). This research method aims at gaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon and conducts data in an unchanged natural, real-life setting in which the people who are studied live (Creswell and Poth, 2017). Ethnographic research is considered to be an effective method to provide insights into the processes and meanings that underlie socio-spatial life. People construct their own social and spatial worlds through actions and processes that have symbolic meanings which are meaningful to them. People reproduce and challenge macro-logical structures by carrying out actions in their everyday life, and ethnographic research gives insights into their motivations. Thus, it explores everyday life to uncover the processes and meanings that underly social action and can clarify the relationship between agency, structure, and geographical context (Creswell and Poth, 2017). In this context, agency is defined as people’s habitual behavior that is perceived as taken for granted (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Ethnography examines the relations different social groups establish with each other and how space is dominated, adjusted, defined, defended, and lived in. In doing so, it determines how agency and place intertwine and direct each other.

There are several variants of ethnography. Nonetheless, this type of research is generally based on methods whereby the researcher spends a substantial time observing and interacting with the units of observation in order to gain insights into their everyday activities and symbolic constructions. The observations and interactions enable the researcher to develop an understanding of how social groups establish cultural constructions and relations (Creswell and Poth, 2017). In other words: ethnographic research “is concerned to make sense of the actions and intentions of people as knowledgeable agents; indeed, more properly it attempts to make sense of their making sense of the events and opportunities confronting them in everyday life” (Ley, 1988: 121). It uncovers things that the units of observation might take for granted that reveal meaningful structures and knowledge which explain the blueprint for their action. This gives the research an explorative approach.

The research approach is inductive in nature because a theory is formed after the collection of data and data analysis. Inductive reasoning is a bottom-up approach that starts with in-

depth observations in order to generate a detailed description of the phenomenon that is being studied. It involves the search for patterns, meanings, and development of explanations based on the analysis of the collected data set. Learning from experience is key: patterns and regularities in experience are observed in order to draw conclusions or to develop theories. This being said, ethnographers generally enter the field with a strong interest in exploring particular social phenomena instead of testing hypotheses about them (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998).

Ethnography is considered a suitable method to collect the required data for this research since it is a functional way of studying the behavior and beliefs of a ‘culture sharing group’ at a specific location. In this perspective, the behavior is perceived as action taken by an individual in a specific setting, and belief is defined as how an individual perceives things in a particular setting. In this research, the ‘culture sharing group’ consists of, broadly speaking, residents of *De Wallen* and the shared patterns to be found in their behavior, attitudes, and beliefs that underlie the way they cope with contemporary tourism-related problems in their living environment.

3.2 Research methods

Ethnographic research requires a large amount of field research (Sangasubana, 2011). Three types of qualitative research methods were used to study the everyday action through which residents of *De Wallen* try to maintain control over their living environment. First, analysis of policy documents was used to gain knowledge concerning the ways the municipality of Amsterdam strives to counter contemporary problems in *De Wallen* as well as their policy principles. Second, (participant) observations were conducted to research interaction between residents and tourists in public space as well as to find out how residents intervene in public space to cope with problems such as crowding, nuisance, and waste, in their neighborhood. Third, semi-structured interviews were held with residents in which they were asked about their everyday affairs, life at *De Wallen*, how they cope with contemporary problems, and how they contribute to keeping their neighborhood livable. The (participant) observations and the stories of the respondents form the basis of the analysis. However, the combination of these three research methods will build the answer to the research question. In the following sections, the three types of qualitative research that were used in this research are discussed.

3.2.1 Policy analysis

To find out how the municipality strives to improve the situation of *De Wallen*, relevant policy documents concerning livability and the regulation of tourism in Amsterdam’s inner city, and *De Wallen* in particular, were investigated and analyzed. This research method was used to identify the key municipal policy principles as well as relevant interventions and plans in relation to the area in question. It is essential to be aware of the most recent and relevant policies concerning tourism-related problems in *De Wallen*. The analysis of policy documents was considered necessary since the findings based on residential action are expected to provide new insights for urban planners and policymakers. To be able to formulate possible policy recommendations, as described in the research objective, this knowledge will be vital to compare

residential action with municipal action to find out what can be learned from the everyday action through which residents of *De Wallen* express their concerns and interests over their neighborhood.

3.2.2 Observations

Observations are one of the key elements in ethnographic research (Kusenbach, 2003). O'Reilly (2009) states that to understand and to make sense of the world, ethnographers should emerge themselves in the everyday experiences of those under study. Therefore, observations were used to observe the everyday life of residents in *De Wallen*. The observations aimed at creating an overview of what was happening in the streets of *De Wallen* by capturing their behavior and practices, as well as encounters between them and strangers.

The observations were conducted in a way that is inspired by symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism fits this research as it is an approach that studies people's psychological, social action, and interaction. This approach aims to understand the world from the point of view of those who live in it (Schwandt, 1994). In this respect, symbolic interactionism is not just about observing and describing particular phenomena, but rather to describe the meanings of human action. It is based on concepts such as social interaction, society, actor, objects, action, and interconnectedness among actions. People react towards physical objects and other beings in places based on the meanings that these things have for them. These meanings derive from social interactions such as communication between people and are used to deal with the things one encounters (Blumer, 1969). In other words, behavior is framed through shared meanings that have been assigned to objects and concepts. To understand what is happening in *De Wallen*, it is essential to analyze the objects, actions, and interactions that take place in this area and to explain their meaning.

The observations were held in the northern segment of *De Wallen*, see Figure 2 on the next page. The unit of study is bordered by the *Warmoesstraat*, *Nieuwebrugsteeg*, *Zeedijk*, *Nieuwmarkt*, *Kloveniersburgwal*, *Oude Doelenstraat*, *Oude Hoogstraat*, and the *Damstraat*. This area has a length of about 550 meters from north to south and is approximately 125 up to 200 meters wide from east to west. The area is composed of two principal canals, the *Oudezijds Voorburgwal*, and the *Oudezijds Achterburgwal*, that run from north to south as well as the *Oudekerksplein*, a square that is characterized by its landmark, *De Oude Kerk* (The Old Church), that acts as a central square in the neighborhood. Further, the area is known for its small and narrow alleys that cross the principal streets and canals from east to west. In total, there are about thirty-five alleys and streets of which around two-third are open and accessible for pedestrians. The remaining alleys are closed off permanently by fences and can only be opened by residents. In terms of size, most alleys are relatively short streets with a length of about 20 to 80 meters, and a width that ranges between one and a half and a couple of meters.

The northern segment of *De Wallen* was chosen as the unit of study because of the high concentration of prostitution windows, sex shops, bars, restaurants, and other urban amenities compared to surrounding neighborhoods and the southern segment of *De Wallen*, that have a more residential character. These surrounding areas are expected to be visited less frequently and consequently, will be less affected by negative tourism impacts compared to the northern segment of *De Wallen*. This makes the northern segment of *De Wallen*, an exciting place for conducting research. The unit of study consists of the northern part of the *Burgwallen Oude*

Zijde neighborhood and coincides with the municipal administrative areas of *Oude Kerk*, *Burgwallen Oost*, and the southern part of *Kop Zeedijk*. In this area live about 2500 people (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018b).

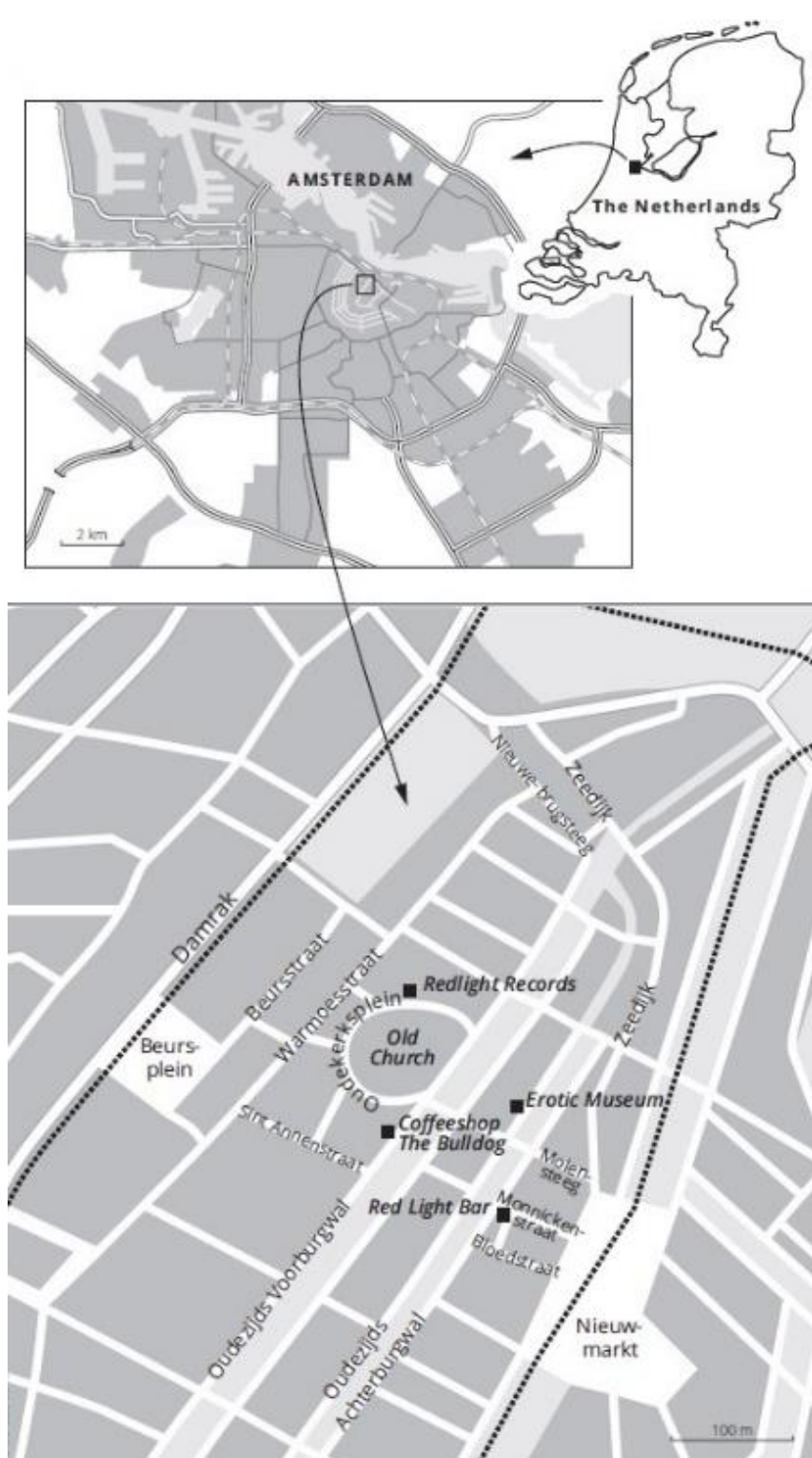


Figure 2: Location of the northern segment of De Wallen in Amsterdam (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018)

Observations were conducted in four different phases and carried out at July 17th and 20th between 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. and August 19th and 24th between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. covering weekdays as well as weekends and different times of the day.

According to Asplund (1979), observation provides answers to the following five questions: what was done? Where or when was it done? Who did it? And, how was it done? These questions, respectively, relate to acts, scenes, agents, and agency of environment-behavior relationships. In other words, observation provides information concerning what, when or where, who, with whom, and how, of people's behavior on streets. Walk-by observations were conducted to identify the activities in which residents were engaged as well as the interaction between them and tourists in public space. Also, participant observation and direct observation were used to observe the public space of *De Wallen*. The protocol that was used during the observation phase can be found in Appendix 1. Special attention was paid to how residents, as well as governmental institutions, try to steer the behavior of people in public space. The walk-by observations started at the *Oudekerksplein*. From this point, the walk continued in slow pace through all streets and alleys within the unit of study. During the observations, field notes were written down and photographs were taken extensively to record the dynamics of residential behavior and their actions in public space.

3.2.3 Semi-structured interviewing

Although observation provides a large amount of information and insights, it is better to collect data in various ways. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, observation provides answers to question such as: What was done? Where or when was it done? Who did it? And, how was it done? However, to be able to understand everyday residential action in public space, it is necessary to know why residents did what they were observed doing (Asplund, 1979). This can be of great significance in complementing, verifying, and elaborating on observations and in addition, gain insights into the underlying motives and attitudes that led to particular actions.

There are several ways of conducting interviews, from structured interviews with pre-defined order and questions, to unstructured or narrative interviews which have a formless character whereby stories are generated through interviewing (O'Reilly, 2009). In contrast to structured interviews, qualitative interviewing aims to obtain the more fundamental meanings that individuals assign to events, as well as the complexity of their actions, attitudes, and experiences (O'Reilly, 2009). This enables the ethnographer and the respondents time to express their feelings and to reflect on these events and experiences. Qualitative interviews may take different forms depending on the nature of the population that is being studied and the research question. For this research, semi-structured interviews were chosen to ask respondents about a list of predetermined topics concerning residential action in *De Wallen* and observations that had already given some insights of what was happening in this area. How the questions were asked, formulated, and the order of the interview, varied per interview as this depended on the responses of the respondents. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to make sure that all subjects would be covered. Nevertheless, respondents had the opportunity to expand their answers beyond the predetermined questions and to tell their own vivid stories to gain a complete overview of residential action in *De Wallen*. All questions were open-ended in order to avoid yes or no answers and probing techniques were used to respond to the replies to obtain more, broader, clearer, and more personal information about things that are happening in the neighborhood. In

order to obtain the required information for this research, face-to-face interviews were conducted with a total of eleven people who are known to be actively involved in the neighborhood.

By interviewing residents who are considered to be active and involved in the neighborhood, it was assured that all respondents had knowledge of their neighborhood and were involved in practices that aimed at improving the situation of *De Wallen*. They were expected to provide interesting and valuable knowledge for this research. All respondents participated in at least one of the following organizations: a local newspaper: *d'Oude Binnenstad*, a video platform: The Voice of 1012, a livability inspection team: *leefbaarheidsschouw*, an organization that provides quality labels for amenities: *De Goede Zaak Amsterdam*, a community center and visitor information center: We Live Here, a federation of cooperating residents' organizations: *WIJ-Amsterdam*, and a real estate company: *Stadsgoed*. Besides being participants in one of these organizations, all respondents were also residents of *De Wallen*. The interviews were conducted between July 21st and August 20th and took place in the We Live Here community and visitor information center at the *Oudezijds Voorburgwal*, respondents' homes, and at cafes in the neighborhood.

During the interviews, respondents were asked about the challenges of everyday life in *De Wallen* and what they do to keep their living environment livable: what kind of nuisance they must deal with on a regular basis? How do they cope with these kinds of nuisance? What drives them to participate and contribute to organizations that strive to improve the contemporary situation of *De Wallen*? And how do they evaluate and reflect upon their own actions? In addition to that, respondents were asked to describe their living environment and their feelings regarding their neighborhood as well as to give their opinion on collaboration with municipal authorities and what aspect(s) of municipal policy they would change if they would be in the position to do so. The guide that formed the basis for the interview phase can be found in Appendix 2

This phase of fieldwork contributed to the creation of an overview of the 'self-help' of residents of *De Wallen* regarding their struggle against negative tourism impacts as well as to gain an understanding of these actions through which they try to maintain control over their living environment. Furthermore, it provided insights into the underlying motives that lead to residential actions and an evaluation of these actions. These findings can be valuable to see how residential actions relate to municipal policy and whether the municipal policy can be complemented or improved concerning *De Wallen*.

3.3 Analysis and reporting of findings

Next to the collection of data, an analysis is of significant importance. In this phase, the researcher looks for trends and patterns that occur within groups or individuals (Krueger, 1994). The analysis of data and interpretation require creative insight, disciplined examination, and careful attention to the research objectives. However, analysis and interpretation are considered to be distinctive processes. The analysis process starts with the collection of data and obtaining an overview of the entire process or the overall picture to make the data manageable. Interpretation implies the addition of meaning, importance, and relevance to the analysis. This involves an explanation of the descriptive patterns, a search for relationships, and links between descriptive dimensions (Genzuk, 2003).

Prior to the phases of fieldwork in which was searched for trends and patterns in the actions, attitudes, and beliefs that underlie how residents cope with tourism-related problems, policy documents were read to see how the municipality of Amsterdam attempts to reduce contemporary issues in *De Wallen*. A list of key municipal measures was created to summarize relevant municipal policy in this matter.

The first step in capturing the means by which residents of *De Wallen* aim at maintaining control over their living environment were the observations. Field notes were made to record things that were happening in public space and used as an inspiration for the interviews. The photographs were archived and allocated to different maps and used to illustrate specific actions at a later stage.

In the final phase of fieldwork, interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed in detail. After the transcription process, the data were uploaded to ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis program, and coded. In doing so, the data were organized in a structured way so that examination and analysis was made possible. A combination of concept-driven coding and data-driven coding was used to structure the data. The observations already provided some ideas that led to the creation of some predetermined codes. However, the interviews provided a large quantity of data causing new codes to arise. A complete overview of the codes can be found in Appendix 3.

A significant part of the reports include descriptions of the experiences of respondents. These descriptions intend to explain what particular activities and events took place in the environment in question and what they were like. Analytical processes help to discover the primary narrative themes of people their lives and demonstrate how they make sense of it (Genzuck, 2003). Or, as stated by Thorne (2000: 69), “Narrative analysis is a strategy that recognises the extent to which the stories we tell provide insights about our lived experiences”. While going through the interviews and the coded data, the emphasis was paid on parts that could be used as descriptions that represent a typical experience or activity. These descriptions or quotations are reported in narrative form so that they provide a holistic image of what happened.

3.4 Challenges of ethnography

Despite the clear advantages of ethnography, as described in this chapter, the method has several challenges and critiques that need to be taken into account. The three most common heard critiques relate to concerns about the scientificity, generalizability, and representativeness of ethnographic research methods (Herbert, 2000). Each of these critiques is reviewed in this section.

The first concern is about scientific quality criteria since interpretation plays a vital role in ethnography. Therefore, questions are raised regarding the objectivity of the method. From this point of view, findings can be unreliable and subjective as they rely too much on the researcher’s personal orientation. Interpretation is indeed an inevitable process. However, interpretive practices and subjectivity play a part in all sciences, which means that the interpretive dilemma is not solely unique to ethnographic methods (Herbert, 2000; Ley, 1988). In order to counteract the issue of subjectivity, the ethnographer should try to be as reflexive and self-conscious as possible, spend enough time in the field to create an understanding of the phenom-

enon of interest, and use his or her developing cultural expertise to define the symbolic architecture of those under study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore, persistent observation was used to identify the elements and characteristics of residential action. Findings can only be justified if the ethnographer is very clear about how interpretations are derived (Herbert, 2000). Moreover, interpretations should be tested with members of the groups from whom the data were obtained (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this research was tried to do this by using knowledge from observations and previously conducted interviews to test particular findings and to enable respondents to correct wrong interpretations and to provide additional information.

The second concern is about the generalizability of ethnographic research. To understand meanings and processes, ethnographic research typically focuses on a single or a small number of cases to gather in-depth information in which emphasis on description plays a vital role. Therefore, ethnography is sometimes criticized for lacking confident generalizations that might apply to other settings (Herbert, 2000). Although survey research and census analysis may provide a notable generalization, it often says very little about contextual matters that play a role in the features of social life (Abbott, 1997). This research aims to increase the knowledge of what residential action against tourism-related problems consists of in the northern segment of *De Wallen*. It does not give a complete overview of what residential action looks like elsewhere in the world, nor in the Netherlands in general, nor in other parts of Amsterdam's city center. Findings based on ethnographic research may not be generalized and are at most relevant in understanding similar settings (Herbert, 2000). Therefore, the objective of this research was not to look for sweeping generalizations but rather to provide a 'thick description' in order to thoroughly explore everyday life and uncover the meanings and processes that underly residential action. The term 'thick description' refers to a detailed outline of field experiences in which the researcher clarifies the patterns of social and cultural relationships and puts them in context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Nevertheless, ethnography and generalization are not entirely incompatible with each other. When combined with other research methods, such as comparative analyzes (Eliasoph, 1996), quantitative analyzes (Merry, 1981) or by using the method explicitly to improve on existing theory (Buroway, 1991), the generalizability of ethnographic explanations can be increased. However, most importantly, ethnographic research helps to create knowledge on the current state of affairs that can help researchers before the use of quantitative measures (O'Reilly, 2009). In this respect, ethnography has the potential to lead to possibilities for further research.

The final concern relates to representation. Some claim that ethnography often lacks self-consciousness regarding the representation of the events and activities of observation. This is reflected through bias and questions of power between the observer and those things that are observed. It typically occurs in cases of marginalized groups and is often ignored by ethnographers (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Since this research focuses on residents of *De Wallen*, extra attention is required as the units of observation, in this context, can be considered a marginalized group. In order to minimize the distortion of this research and response to this critique, the conditions under which the research was conducted were based on Herbert's (2000) three principles of forthrightness, reflexivity, and modesty, which are essential in ethnographic research. Based on these principles, the research objective, access to the units of study, as well as

the development and reporting of findings, has been explained in the clearest possible way. Awareness of the researcher's intellectual and cultural position that might have affected his or her knowledge, and the discussion of data has been taken into account. Moreover, there has been acknowledged that ethnographic knowledge is always partial and merely reflects a particular perspective in a particular moment of time.

Besides the challenges of ethnography in general, the fieldwork methods that were used to conduct the data also have to deal with some challenges. Something that must be taken into account when doing observations is the risk of observation bias. This bias can arise when at the stage of data collection, the obtained data is regarded as insufficient, or when the researcher has the tendency to see what he or she is looking for. As a result, an unrealistic image of the situation can be created (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007). These problems were countered by trying not to look (only) for well-known ways of residential action but to see what other interesting activities, behavior, and events took place as well.

The interview part was characterized by other types of challenges. All interviews were conducted during the summer holidays, and arranging all appointments was expected to be difficult during that time of the year. This challenge was overcome by being as flexible as possible in terms of date, time, and location of the interviews. As a result, it was possible to meet up and interview all desired respondents in the end.

Although ethnographic methods receive some criticism, challenges and critiques can be overcome and counteracted when researchers acknowledge and consider the potential pitfalls of the discipline. Furthermore, the advantages of ethnography to geographic studies, as explained in this chapter, outweigh the potential threats. As a result, ethnography is considered a suitable way of collecting data for this research as well as to achieve the research goals.

4. Results

As explained in the methodology, Chapter 3, the data for this research was conducted in various ways. Namely, by analysis of municipal policy documents, observations of real-life situations, and semi-structured interviews. Although the collected data is different in content and structure, it was merged together to create a single story: the story of residential tactical and strategic action in *De Wallen*. This story captures the main characteristics of the ‘self-help’ of residents of *De Wallen* through which they cope with tourism-related problems and aim at keeping their living environment livable. This chapter also includes an overview of municipal strategies and policies for the area in question.

4.1 Municipal strategies

As explained in Chapter 2, policymakers and planners shape public space through urban design and organizational rules (Lefebvre, 1991). This section focuses on the policies and practices through which governmental authorities try to influence *De Wallen* and its public space. One of the first things that became clear when gathering information for this research was the existence of an extensive amount of policy documents concerning the livability and tourism-related nuisance in *De Wallen*.

4.1.1 Project 1012

From 2007 to 2018, the municipality of Amsterdam tried to restore the balance between livability and entertainment in *De Wallen* and decrease the tension over anti-social behavior by carrying out Project 1012, named after the district’s zip code. The ambition was to fancy-up and transform *De Wallen* into a stylish and exciting neighborhood that would attract creative entrepreneurs and different types of visitors: more culturally interested and high-end visitors instead of those who are predominantly interested in nightlife (Rekenkamer Metropool Amsterdam, 2018). This had to be achieved by replacing the criminal infrastructure of the neighborhood with more luxurious and creative forms of entertainment such as designer stores, exhibition spaces, and fancy restaurants and clubs. In order to realize this goal, the municipality of Amsterdam worked together with housing associations and private actors to close down various brothels, sex shops, coffee shops, massage salons, and gambling halls, that did not comply with the law (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018).

Project 1012 led to success in certain fields but did not achieve the desired upgrade of *De Wallen* as intended. Subprojects that were implemented successfully and led to the desired outcome were the physical upgrade of public space, the closure of prostitution windows and coffee shops, and the increase of residential dwellings by transforming vacant upper floors. Despite these improvements, the preferred diversification of amenities was not reached, and the integration of *De Wallen* into the expensive city center of Amsterdam did not go as smoothly as expected (Rekenkamer Metropool Amsterdam, 2018). Creative businesses had a vital role in the transformation strategy and were encouraged to settle down in the area. However, it turned out that they had to deal with severe competition and could not stand a chance against the tourism industry. As a result, instead of creative businesses, many tourist shops opened in *De Wallen*, which led to the homogenization of amenities and challenged the initial objective of creating a stylish neighborhood (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018). A further point of concern

was the continued change of the commercial landscape driven by increasing rents and real estate prices. Shops such as bakeries, grocery stores, and other ordinary shops, of which some had been present for a long time, could no longer afford the rent, started to disappear, and were replaced by mini-supermarkets, low-quality bars and restaurants, and shops that sell souvenirs, waffles, and ice creams. In essence, tourist-oriented shops that can be found in any touristic city (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018; Rekenkamer Metropool Amsterdam, 2018). The thriving tourism industry even started to threaten the sex industry since the increasing presence of tourists who only visit the area to walk around and to take pictures reduces the anonymity of potential customers for sex workers leading to fewer actual customers (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018).

Although residents, entrepreneurs, and others who were involved in Project 1012 appreciate the improvements that were realized, they are unsatisfied with the increase in visitors, tourist-oriented shops, and the rising real estate prices. The spatial transformation initiated by the municipality of Amsterdam led to a booming tourism industry and more tourists visiting the area. This resulted in a further increase of nuisance, crowding, and facilitated further homogenization of amenities. Nowadays, tourist-oriented shops and catering industry make up the dominant image of the area (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018). This has led to the impoverishment of the living environment and is seen as a threat to the social cohesion of the neighborhood. Project 1012 lacked the adequate tools to steer the economic development of *De Wallen* and enforce the desired changes (Rekenkamer Metropool Amsterdam, 2018; Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018a).

4.1.2 Current municipal policy

Despite Project 1012 came to an end in 2018, the municipality of Amsterdam continued taking measures to improve the livability of the city center, in particular in areas that are appealing to visitors such as *De Wallen* (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018c). According to the municipality, permanent measures are considered necessary to tackle nuisance in the inner city. In order to keep the city center livable, several short and long-term measures are taken (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018c).

In order to decrease visitor nuisance and nightlife-related nuisance, the municipality has taken two measures. Firstly, by deploying extra police, *handhaving*², and nightlife hosts. Secondly, by raising awareness concerning behavior that is not allowed in the public space of the area. This is done through informing visitors of the consequences of inappropriate behavior (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018c). Therefore, iron signs are placed on various bridges in *De Wallen*, as shown in the photos in Figure 3. The messages on the signs are written in English or Dutch and function as a means of communication concerning rules and behavior in public space by providing information concerning fines, the amount of money to be paid as punishment for offenses such as drinking alcohol, tossing litter, and urinating in public space.

Residents state that they have nothing against these information signs and describe them as “good things”. However, they also explain: “The point remains, over and over again, that just saying that something is not allowed is not taken seriously by people if there is no law

² Municipal law enforcement officers.

enforcement” (resp. 2). Furthermore, these signs can be overlooked easily: “It concerns thousands of new people every day, and when you are really drunk you don’t really read anymore” (resp. 4). Residents regret the insufficient capacity of law enforcement forces to enforce rules, and they refer to the image of *De Wallen* as the cause of problems in their neighborhood. To change this image, residents plead for stricter law enforcement and believe that placing these signs does not make much difference.



Figure 3: Signs that contain information concerning fines for violations of the law

In collaboration with the police and *handhaving*, the municipality of Amsterdam has developed the Crowd Management System Amsterdam (CMSA) to facilitate and manage a better flow of visitors (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018c). A male resident calls into question the functioning of these law enforcement forces with regard to crowd management: “it is unclear whether law enforcement forces get clear instructions concerning the things they should pay attention to and what not” (resp. 5). Plant store Jemi is located in the *Warmoesstraat*, a store that is loved by the neighborhood. They always store their flowers and plants on tables outside the store in the *Enge Kerksteeg* alley, next to their entrance, as depicted in Figure 4. Residents like them to this as it “cheers up the neighborhood”. Officially, they are not

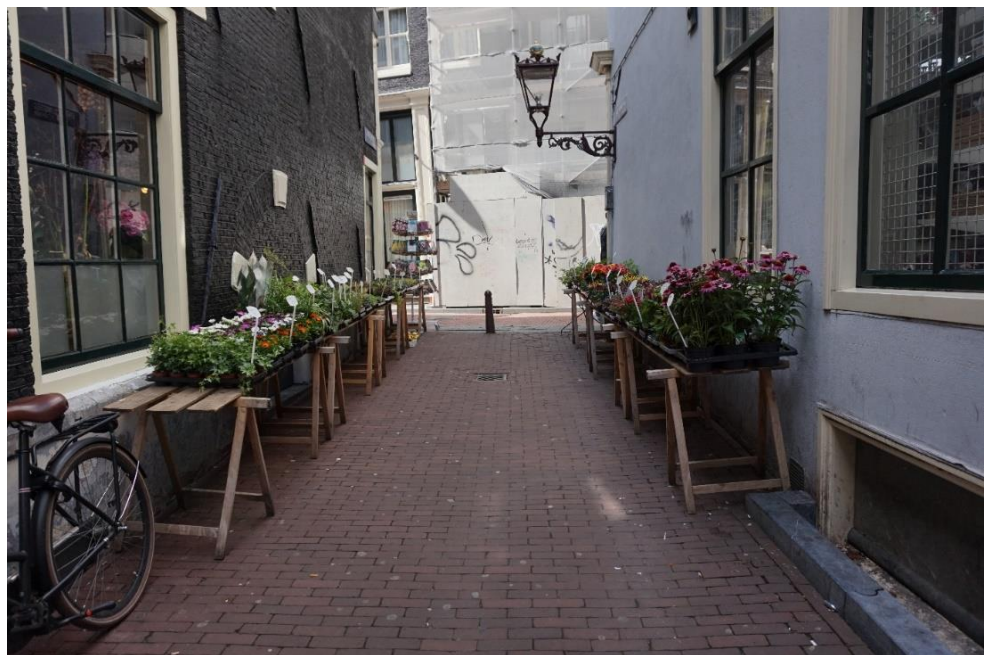


Figure 4: Plant store Jemi’s installation plants on the sidewalk

allowed to store their plants outside because they do not have a permit. However, an agreement was made with law enforcement forces to make an exception and allow Jemi to place their plants outside. This was done at the request of residents. Despite the agreement that was made, and much to the dislike of Jemi's owners and residents, the store keeps risking to be fined since law enforcement forces continue to pass by once a while to ask if they have a permit to install their products in the *Enge Kerksteeg*. Apparently, not all law enforcement forces are aware of the agreement that was made. The resident questions whether law enforcement forces know what is really going on in his neighborhood and claims that "no one is bothered" by the installation of Jemi's plants on the sidewalk. This resident is not the only one who thinks that law enforcement forces too often focus on the "wrong things" and that they should pay more attention to matters that are considered important by the local community: "The point is that law enforcement agents should tackle those [people] who cause real nuisance: those who drive with high speed through the alleys, those who pee against the church, and those who scream and can be heard from three blocks away" (resp. 5).⁵ It seems that law enforcement forces in *De Wallen*, in some cases, lack local knowledge and focus on unimportant things.

To reduce crowding in *De Wallen*, a maximum group size of 20 people has been determined and tour guides need a permit for tours in which at least four people participate. Besides this, it is no longer allowed to stand still with groups in specific alleys or bridges, and all tours must be finished by 7 p.m. at the latest (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018c). Residents are satisfied with the efforts of the municipality to fix the rules around guided tours. Nonetheless, one female resident noted that the rules are difficult to remember and hard to oversee: "the rules of the municipality are so extremely detailed that no resident can declare them by heart if you would wake them up at night. The groups are not allowed here, but in the *Zuidelijke Burgwallen* they are, then there is a border at the bridge, and then suddenly it is allowed again. The rules are very detailed and very comprehensive and therefore difficult to enforce and difficult to explain to people and as a result fail to achieve their goal" (resp. 1).⁶ Another problem is that tour guides also adapt to the new rules and "split up in smaller groups" so that they do not have to comply to all the rules.

To improve the handling of nuisance reports by residents of the city center, the municipality of Amsterdam claims to have improved the follow-up of nuisance reports by *Actie Service Centrum*. This service is open 24 hours per day so that complaints of residents can be handled effectively (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018c). Complaints can be made through the website of the municipality by filling in a complaint form, calling the complaint number 14020, by going to the council hall, or via an application that can be downloaded for smartphones. Residents indicate that complaints are taken seriously by the municipality but this does not mean that problems are being resolved, as explained by multiple respondents during the interviews: "The misery is often over before they [police] are on-site" (resp. 6).⁷ Nuisance usually takes place for just short periods of time and before the police or law enforcements agents arrive, the people who cause nuisance have moved on already. Therefore, doing a complaint is not seen as an effective solution to reduce nuisance.

In order to keep the city center as clean as possible the municipality of Amsterdam has made an effort to keep clean the public spaces by providing more facilities to reduce public urination, placing more and bigger garbage bins, deploying extra sweep teams in areas with

high visitor numbers, and deploying teams that clean porches of residential dwellings (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018c). According to residents of *De Wallen*: “The cleaning service is one of the best functioning municipal companies. They are really doing a great job, even though it’s a tough fight against the huge amount of waste that people throw on the streets” (resp. 5).⁷ Even though the municipal cleaning service functions well, there are some spots, mainly in the narrow alleys, that are less accessible for the material of the cleaning service. Therefore, residents sometimes take the responsibility to keep their alley clean. As a result, they often have to clean up the mess of other people, as explained by a male resident: “The first thing I did this morning while I was on my way to the *Singel*, before I had left my alley, I saw a mess and I had to clean up pizza boxes again. The stairs of the museum look beautiful and well maintained but are often used by tourists and junkies who sit down to enjoy a meal and leave a mess behind, and then we are the ones who can clean it up again. In the morning, I often open my door with fear and trembling. You never know what to expect in the alley” (resp. 6).⁸

To halt the homogenization of amenities in the zip code area of 1012 it is no longer possible to open tourist-oriented shops in premises where there is no tourism-oriented retailer active already. This prevents an increase in tourist-oriented shops in the area. Only when entrepreneurs of current tourist-oriented shops decide to leave their business, new entrepreneurs may continue a tourist-oriented business at the same location (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018c). However, this does not stop tourism-oriented amenities from opening in *De Wallen*. This legislation is limited to retail business and does not include catering establishments. A female resident states that: “if something closes, often a burger restaurant returns instead” (resp. 3).⁹ The problem is: when good quality entrepreneurs with a catering zoning plan move out, they are often replaced by entrepreneurs that want to make fast money and open up a mainstream fast-food place with an “easy-earn model”. At the *Oudekerksplein*, there used to be a restaurant called Anna, which had the reputation of a “stylish, high-end restaurant”. One year ago, the building in which restaurant Anna was located was sold to another party, and a new restaurant opened its doors. Another female resident tells that the new owner: “added a terrace and attracts a completely different public than Anna used to do: namely tourists, which has created a different atmosphere” (resp. 2).¹⁰ With the new owner, the place was converted into a hamburger restaurant that focused on a different public. This example shows that change of ownership can still lead to an increase of tourist-oriented restaurants and bars in *De Wallen*.

4.1.3 Involving citizens

Next to the various municipal measures to improve livability in *De Wallen*, the involvement of residents plays a central role as well. There are various possibilities for residents to participate actively in municipal policy and discussion concerning changes in their neighborhood. The *Integraal Burgwallen Overleg* (IBO) is a meet-up that takes place two times per year in which livability issues are discussed, an overview of current problems is made, and plans are formulated on how to deal effectively with these issues. Besides this, it also functions as a platform to explain and ask support for local initiatives. Municipal officials, residents, police, law enforcement agents, and entrepreneurs, participate in the multilateral talk and there are short lines of communications between the involved parties: “when one goes to a meeting all parties are involved and everyone knows where to find each other, in the past we did not have any contact with the police, we just waved at them and that’s it. Nowadays, we do have contact with each

other” (resp. 11).¹¹ Over the years the contacts have improved by which mutual cooperation has benefited. Despite improved contact and cooperation, not all residents are satisfied with the IBO: “the IBO is rather a means of transmitting information than to receive information, while the original purpose was to give the neighborhood a voice towards the local government” (resp. 5).¹² Therefore, some see the IBO as ineffective in expressing local resentment and dissatisfaction.

Another way to give residents a voice in *De Wallen* is through project We Live Here. “I Live Here” is something many residents of *De Wallen* yelled out of their windows at visitors who were causing nuisance. Others even put up notes on their doors and windows, saying “I Live Here” (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018d). The municipality of Amsterdam picked up on this and wanted to support the message, which resulted in the development of a campaign in collaboration with residents. This campaign aims at making visitors aware of the fact that ordinary people live and work in *De Wallen* as well and that they must be taken into account. As part of the project, posters of real residents were used and spread through the neighborhood and showed at several windows and doors, as depicted in Figure 5. Residents feel supported by the posters as claimed by a female resident: “In the past we used to say: I live here! Take it easy because I have children here! Back then you could easily be dismissed as a jerk which made the message less powerful. But know you can say: look at this! And then you see the poster and that image just works for that matter” (resp. 2).¹³

The posters encourage this resident to start dialogue with tourists.



Figure 5: We Live Here poster

Further, an information center has been opened in the neighborhood since the start of the project. This information center is managed by volunteers who live in the neighborhood and functions as a meeting place for residents and tourists. In addition, officials of the municipality, police, *handhaving*, and hosts, come by as well. The contacts and cooperation between different parties seem to profit from this project as explained by one of the volunteers: “Nowadays we are in contact with each other, even the Executive Committee comes by, Mascha ten Bruggen-cate, Ilse Griek, and Micha Mos, to talk with us. So contacts have become that easy. I think that the most important aspects are the contacts and cooperation. This makes it easier to find each other in case something is happening” (resp. 11).¹⁴ Project We Live Here is more than just showing tourists that people live in this area and the social cohesion profits from the project as well: “I’ve been living here for 27 years and Gione (...), who lives here across the street at the *Warmoesstraat* number 56, well I had never met that guy until I got in touch with him through We Live Here. It can’t be true that we’ve been neighbors for about 25 years but have never seen each other. Well, the same happened with Soraya who lives in the Lange Niezel, I had never met her either” (resp. 6).¹⁵

4.2 Residential strategies to ensure familiarity

As mentioned in Chapter 2, familiarity plays a vital role in residents' identification with their neighborhood. Associations with local people and amenities provide a sense of familiarity, stability, and place attachment (Mehta, 2013). Familiarity relates to the relationship residents have with their living environment. This relationship is influenced by long-term social contacts and long-term presence of local amenities.

In respondents' stories concerning the relationship with their neighborhood, it becomes clear that many have very strong place attachments. When describing their living environment, they often refer to it in aesthetic terms such as the beauty of the canals, buildings, and bridges. They also mention things like the "nice" people who live there, the sense of community, the dynamics, as well as the unique atmosphere and cultural mix due to people from all over the world who come to spend time in their neighborhood. Despite this strong place attachment, the livability is under pressure as tourists are the ones who clearly dominate the area nowadays. The continuous nuisance that takes place in different forms, leads to residents enjoying their life in *De Wallen* less and less.

The area attracts so many tourists that residents regularly no longer feel at home in their own neighborhood. When asked about feeling at home in *De Wallen*, a resident tells that he feels like a "stranger" in his own city: "The whole street is just as if the neighborhood or the city has been taken over by foreigners, by tourists" (resp. 8).¹⁶ Another resident adds that some residents he once knew have passed away, moved out, or fled away as they could no longer stand the nuisance and crowding. This resident asks himself: "what do we get in return? Many properties have been bought by people with good financial resources, to accommodate Airbnb services, to start a hotel ... it is no longer affordable for ordinary people to live here" (resp. 9).¹⁷ These developments influence the demographics of the neighborhood and threaten the residential function. From time to time, residents find support from one another: "We have a common enemy, and that also fraternizes" (resp. 7).¹⁸ There is much solidarity among residents, but this is challenged when local contacts are lost.

Changes of the urban landscape also reflect a loss of feeling at home: "ordinary shops" such as bakeries, butchers, and greengrocers, that were originally focused on residents, are disappearing, and "souvenir shops and chocolate stores" have entered the neighborhood. These tourist-oriented shops are considered "low-quality" amenities by locals and do not satisfy their needs.

In order to counter these developments, three different organizations are active in *De Wallen* in which residents are involved. Two of these organizations are real estate companies: *Stadsgoed* and *NV Zeedijk*. These companies play a crucial role in the neighborhood and aim at maintaining sustainable residential living and preserving amenities that are considered vital for the neighborhood: "1012Inc [*Stadsgoed*] and *NV Zeedijk* are important pillars of the neighborhood since buildings are being preserved and refurbished thanks to them (...) they also keep an eye on the rent to ensure habitation by ordinary people" (resp. 11).¹⁹ These real estate companies focus on strengthening the quality of life and residential function of Amsterdam's city center, with a particular focus on the 1012 postcode area *De Wallen* forms part of. This is done through purchasing, managing, and renting out properties. *Stadsgoed* and *NV Zeedijk* are intensively involved in *De Wallen* as they are in continued contact with residents and local entrepreneurs. The commissioner of *Stadsgoed*, who lives in *De Wallen* himself, explains: "when the

market value of the rent would be 2000 Euros per month, we can decide to rent it out for 1000 Euros when we think that someone contributes positively to the neighborhood” (resp. 7).²⁰ In other words, real estate companies such as *Stadsgoed* and *NV Zeedijk* can use their rental policy to preserve specific amenities for the neighborhood and counterbalance further homogenization of amenities to a certain extent. These real estate companies also contribute to project We Live Here by providing space for the community and visitor information center.

Subsequently, another organization, *Stichting De Goede Zaak Amsterdam*, was set up to support local retailers who contribute to the diversity of amenities in their neighborhood. This organization was founded in 2018 by residents of the *Burgwallen Oude Zijde* neighborhood. A current employee of the organization who lives in *De Wallen* herself, explains that the initiative started in this neighborhood as “this was the area with the highest need” (resp. 10).²¹ In the meantime, the organization has expanded city center wide. *Stichting De Goede Zaak Amsterdam* supports local entrepreneurs in the retail industry that have a “heart for their neighborhood” and contribute to “the diversity of stores” in their street. This support takes place in the form of recognition by handing over a quality label and creating awareness among residents by underlying the importance of local entrepreneurs for the neighborhood. The quality label is assigned based on three criteria: operational management, advertisements, and product range. Those who receive the quality label can place it in their window, as showed in the photos in Figure 6. Besides assigning the label, *Stichting De Goede Zaak Amsterdam* also provides online visibility on their social media channels and website.



Figure 6: Quality label *De Goede Zaak Amsterdam*

4.3 Residential tactics of adaptability and addressing nuisance

Based on the interviews with residents it has become clear that nuisance as a result of inappropriate behavior, crowding, and pollution in the public space dominates everyday life in *De Wallen*. In order to cope with these problems, residents develop various tactics that differ in effectiveness. These tactics have in common that they are developed through local agency and implemented in the public space of *De Wallen*.

4.3.1 Direct and indirect negotiations to reduce nuisance

Residents of *De Wallen* experience several forms of nuisance caused by different actors. If possible, residents try to address nuisance themselves without the intervention of authorities. This is done through direct and indirect dialogue with those who are considered responsible for nuisance.

Inappropriate behavior of tourists is one of the main types of nuisance that takes place in the public space of *De Wallen* (Van Aalst and Van Liempt, 2018). Residents address inappropriate tourist behavior in direct as well as indirect ways. Direct dialogue and conversation with those who cause nuisance is a means to make them aware of their behavior. For example, by telling them that particular behavior is not allowed and considered undesirable. This is done with the hope that “they listen” and the “information will spread among tourists”. As explained by multiple respondents during the interviews, tourists usually listen when residents address their behavior. However, a female resident points out that: “you get tired of it too, it is pretty annoying, and there are new groups every day” (resp. 2).²² Another resident emphasizes that you should not go too far concerning correcting others: “you also need to protect yourself because if you worry too much about all of it and you want to tackle it all, you’ll have no life anymore” (resp. 7).²³ Further, there are also indirect methods through which residents try to create awareness among tourists. For example, by putting up signs and written notes on their doors as shown in the photos in Figure 7.



Figure 7: Sign and note directed to tourists on the doors of residential dwellings

Some residents have a more aggressive approach and go further than just peaceful dialogue or putting up notes. A female resident who deals aggressively with people who pollute their neighborhood tells that: “When I see them [tourists] throwing a can [beer] on the ground, I immediately get aggressive: hey asshole! Clean it up!” (resp. 1).²⁴ And if they do not obey, she continues: “then I pick it up, I squeeze the can, and I approach them from behind and put in their blouse” (resp. 1).²⁵ She also developed a tactic to cope with tourists who gather under her window at night: “If they gather under my window to smoke hashish and the weed vapors rise, I ask them one time in a polite way: ‘gentleman good evening, would you be so kind to walk on?’ Nine out of ten times they do as I asked but one out of ten times you get a big mouth, from tourists! In your own neighborhood! Then I have no pity and a whole bucket of water goes down or I spray with my Kalashnikov [super-soaker]” (resp. 1).²⁶ She chases away those who do not want to listen to her. The resident in question describes this as an effective method as they usually go away because they are “afraid their joint gets wet”.

Whether residents address inappropriate behavior by means of conversation or take the law into their own hands, it cannot be seen as a structural solution to the problem: “people come here just for one time, okay they might come a second time and then it will be new people again” (resp. 5).²⁷ This resident explains that addressing inappropriate behavior is an endless task as tourists are replaced by new ones every week.

Another frequently mentioned complaint from residents living in *De Wallen* concerns guided group tours that walk through the neighborhood. During tours, once in a while, the groups stand still so that the guide can say something. In doing so, they often cause crowding and noise nuisance which is a major frustration for residents. Some residents are bothered so much by these guided tours that they feel forced to put up notes on their window, see Figure 8. Other residents try to confront tour guides personally when they cause nuisance. A resident of an alley, which is often used by tour guides to stand still with their groups, explains how he addresses these tour guides: “Sometimes the entire alley is blocked by a tour guide and his group. Then I say: perhaps you are not familiar with the situation but there are also people living here, can we also enter our own alley?” (resp. 6).²⁸ It is common for residents who are bothered by guided tours to ask the tour guides to maintain distance when they stand “too close” to their house or when they speak “too loud”.

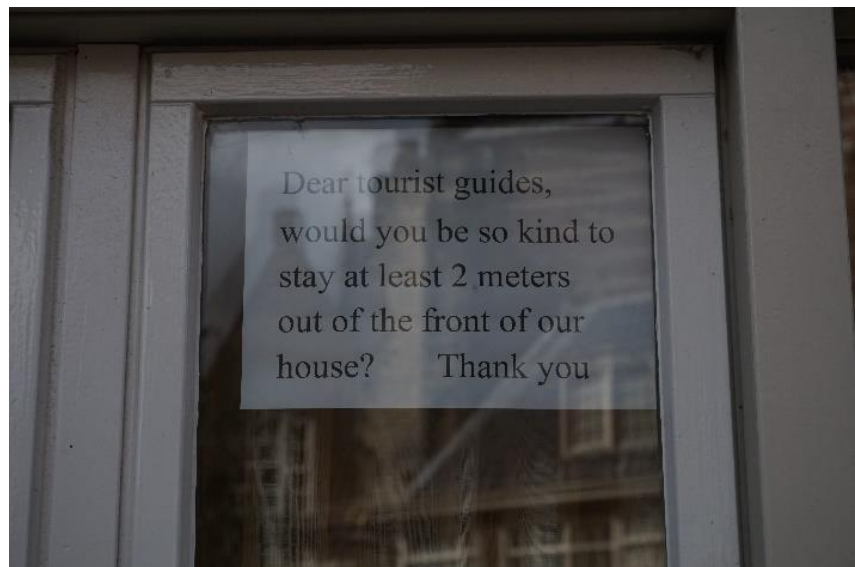


Figure 8: Note on window that asks tour guides to keep their distance

On the individual level, residents make agreements with tour guides, which are described as temporary “solutions”. In this respect, residents and tour guides take each other into account by developing knowledge concerning places that are suitable for groups to stand still, and places that are considered unsuitable. However, these are no structural solutions and depend

on the willingness of tour guides to cooperate. Furthermore, knowledge concerning these suitable places often disappears with the tour guides in question. This means that agreements must be made with every individual tour guide, which is difficult due to the large numbers and high turnover of tour guides. It would be useful if such information could be retained to inform tour guides.

4.3.2 Crowding & mobility

Visitor numbers have increased considerably in recent years (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018a). This development has not gone unnoticed by residents either, as one resident explains: “if you are about to live in the center of the city you know it’s busy, but the last ten years it has become a lot busier than it used to be” (resp. 10).²⁹ One of the things that bothers residents the most in their everyday life is crowding. Crowds gradually increase during the day, and in many streets and alleys of *De Wallen* it is continuously busy. A male resident points out: “When I go grocery shopping, I have to squeeze myself through people, particularly after noon” (resp. 5).³⁰ This can be “very annoying” for residents, especially when one must go through some narrow alleys with “heavy shopping bags”. Residents have developed tactics to cope with crowding in their neighborhood. Many do their groceries in the morning, as a female resident tells: “when you go to the Albert Heijn or the Dirk [supermarkets] in the morning, you’ll see residents doing their groceries, from 11 a.m. onwards it’s just tourists, tourists, tourists...” (resp. 1).³¹ After the afternoon, residents usually do not go grocery shopping anymore. They try to do all their daily grocery shopping before it becomes too busy. However, doing groceries is not the only daily activity where crowding needs to be taken into account.

The problem of crowding is also reflected in terms of mobility. A female resident explains: “Imagine if I want to leave this place [De Wallen] by bike, let’s say I want to go to *De Jordaan* [neighborhood]. I would like to go through the city center, but it’s just no longer possible to cycle here anymore. I haven’t been cycling here for years, I only walk in this busy part of the city” (resp. 1).³² She further explains that she avoids the busy parts when going somewhere: “If I want to go somewhere, I usually go all the way around, via the *Prinshendrikkade*. Although this street is also a busy bike path, it is still better than having to go all the way through the Red Light District. Thus, if you live in the busy part [of *De Wallen*] and you need to go somewhere, first you’ll have to walk a large distance with the bike in your hands until you finally reach a place where you can get on the bike. And that place gets further away as it gets busier” (resp. 1).³³ Another tactic to arrive on time at your destination is to leave your home a few minutes earlier: “I cycle a lot in Amsterdam and when I need to go somewhere, I always leave 5 to 10 minutes earlier nowadays. Back in the days, I didn’t do this, but you just don’t want to wind yourself up every time” (resp. 2).³⁴ Some residents have more difficulties in coping with the current situation and keep being frustrated by the crowds: “I always try to remain ‘zen’ on my bike, I often cycle with my children. However, many times I already lose my patience at the third tourist who walks in front of my bike and this happens within the first hundred meters. It is not even possible anymore to go to the dry cleaner on a Saturday. You just can’t set your own pace anymore, it’s like a funeral procession where you have to adapt to the slowest link in the chain, and that’s very sad” (resp. 7).³⁵ There are also residents who have developed alternative tactics to maneuver through the masses: “Some people get angry and have a whistle or a bicycle bell and go like ring, ring, ring at high speed through groups of tourists” (resp. 1).³⁶

If residents have to go somewhere and leave their home, whether they go shopping, go to work, to visit a friend, or simply go from point A to point B, they always need to take into consideration the number of people that could be on the street at a particular time which might hinder their mobility. To cope with this mobility problem, they have developed different tactics. Groceries are primarily done in the morning before it becomes busy, bicycle use is avoided for relatively short distances, and a lot of activities are done on foot since it is easier to maneuver through the crowds. When residents do decide to take the bicycle, they often take a detour or alternative routes. By taking these routes, they suffer less from crowds, and it enables them to cycle more comfortably. Busy parts of the *De Wallen* are avoided as much as possible by bike as well as on foot. Although residents are able to cope with crowding to a certain extent, mobility seems to be a structural problem that requires a strategic solution.

4.3.3 Everyday place-making

Tactics that lead to immediate results are tactics of everyday place-making such as greening and territorialization. In the public space of *De Wallen* several examples of residential modifications made to the environment can be found. These modifications are made in order to lay claim to ownership of space and to steer the behavior of people. A distinction can be made between the tactics of greening and territorialization.

Tactics of greening consist of maintaining wall gardens and tree gardens in the public space of *De Wallen*. These gardens are mostly located in the narrow residential alleys and the *Oudezijds Voorburgwal* and the *Oudezijds Achterburgwal*. A wall garden is an area that consists of soil directly in front of a house's exterior wall, and a tree garden is a small garden surrounding a tree, see photos in Figure 9, on the following page. Space for plantings is created by the removal of bricks and tiles from the sidewalk. A female resident who is responsible for maintaining various wall and tree gardens tells: "A friend and I started a wall garden 15 years ago, back then we were one of the first, in the meantime, numbers have gradually increased. More and more people are beginning to realize that greenery is not only beautiful and nice but also some kind of counteract against the blunt mass tourism" (resp. 1).⁵⁷ She further tells that she has developed project *wormenhotel*, hotel of worms. This project aims at the production of compost to fertilize the soil of wall gardens. Residents can bring their organic waste to a container in the neighborhood where compost is being produced and divided among residents that maintain wall gardens.

In some cases, the tactics of greening have even led to the emergence of organizational forms that look more like strategic action than tactical action. Another resident explains that his alley organized itself and started a wall garden project in order to counter the high amount of waste that is dumped in their alley. In this alley, about ten households jointly take care of their wall gardens. This involves construction, planting, and maintaining the wall gardens as well as waste removal. The resident indicates that their initiative is effective and that their alley has a better and more enjoyable appearance than it used to have. However, he also points out that: "It is important to maintain it carefully and make sure that there are no gaps in the planting because when there are, people will put their bikes there and pollute the garden with garbage that does not belong there" (resp. 6).⁵⁸ Greenery is used as a means to show visitors that there are actual people living in *De Wallen* and that they care about their living environment. Although it is

necessary to keep an eye on the greenery constantly, it is an effective way to keep the area around one's door clean and to reduce waste nuisance.



Figure 9: Different types of wall gardens and a tree garden on the sidewalk

In *De Wallen* it is common for tourists to hang out, eat, and drink on the stairways that lead to residential dwellings. A common way to prevent people from using these stairways for such purposes is by placing fences with little doors, as shown in the photos in Figure 10. This tactic is applied frequently in the *Oudezijds Voorburgwal* and *Oudezijds Achterburgwal*.



Figure 10: Fences to prevent tourist from using residential stairways

Another tactic that leads to direct impact are practices of appropriation of public space by residents. Appropriation practices consist of modifying public space through transformation into private space. Such tactics are implemented on the sidewalk in front of residents' doors, as depicted in the photos in Figure 11, on the next page. Physical markers such as plastic fences and flower pots are used to appropriate parts of the sidewalk. This territorialization of the sidewalk steers the behavior of people as it prevents them from coming too close. It creates an area, or front yard, which residents can use for personal purposes and forces people to walk around these privatized spaces.

From a policy perspective in which formal law should be enforced, these latter tactics are highly debatable since it is not officially allowed to use public space exclusively for private use. However, in some cases, law enforcement forces do tolerate that residents appropriate some space in front of their doors. In these cases, residents are permitted to adjust some public space to their personal wishes in order to create a more livable situation. These examples show that law enforcement forces have an important role and can act as a mediator between residential tactics and formal law.



Figure 11: Appropriation of public space in front of residential dwellings

4.4 Residential strategies for safety and cooperation

Safety and livability are essential for residents of *De Wallen*. Therefore, they have developed several strategies that aim at addressing contemporary problems. Some of these strategies are developed in close cooperation with the municipality. Others can be characterized as collective community cooperation movements through which residents take responsibility to solve problems themselves.

4.4.1 Leefbaarheidsschouw & d'Oude Binnenstad

In the 1990s, residents developed a strategy in collaboration with the municipality of Amsterdam, police, and entrepreneurs to identify safety issues that had to be addressed: the *Veiligheidsschouw*, which can be translated as the safety inspection team. This partnership was set up to reduce the drug-related problems which the area was facing back then. Around fifteen years ago the safety had improved considerably, and new problems related to the increasing visitor numbers arose. As a result, the drug-related problems were replaced by livability and tourism-related issues, and the *Veiligheidsschouw* was changed into a livability inspection team: the *Leefbaarheidsschouw*. Nowadays, the inspection is a means to gain an overview of what is happening in *De Wallen* and to determine what problems should be addressed. It is widely supported among residents, and they can sign-up if they want to join. In 2018, twenty-seven walks were conducted.

In order to identify relevant problems of subparts of *De Wallen*, the neighborhood is divided into four different parts, and every inspection is dedicated to one of these four areas, see Figure 12 for the route of the *Burgwallen (West)* inspection, the route that corresponds most with the unit of study. During the *Leefbaarheidsschouw*, three (or more) local residents accompanied by an official of the municipality and a police agent, walk through the neighborhood

together. A predetermined route is taken on a fixed time in the morning, evening, or at night. During the inspection, residents and professionals gather information on matters that are considered problematic and ascertain objectively the extent of nuisance. They pay attention to matters such as danger, waste, and nuisance. Problems are not solved on the spot, but participants make notes and take pictures during the walk. Based on the information that is provided by these inspections, reports are made and shared with the municipality. The municipality uses these reports to coordinate their policies and to undertake appropriate action in the right places, at the right time. Two times per year an evaluation meeting takes place to see whether specific problems have been solved, reduced, or worsened, and if new problems have arisen that need to be addressed.

Furthermore, one of the organizers of the *Leefbaarheidsschouw* explains: “the *Leefbaarheidsschouw* is not just determining [problems] but also involving everyone [three parties]. When observing something, it is not just residents who are involved, but the police see it, and the municipality sees it too. We walk with the three of us on the street, so to speak, and together we say, for example, it’s dirty here, so let’s make a note of it” (resp. 11).³⁹ Besides identifying problems, these inspections are a means of creating mutual understanding between residents, police, and municipality. In other words, it encourages mutual agreement on the seriousness of problems.

The *Leefbaarheidsschouw* provides detailed insights for policymakers into the kind of problems the neighborhood is facing on different scale levels: subparts, streets, squares, and corners, and what problems require extra attention. Therefore, it can be seen as an important source of information for the municipality and a crucial communication tool from the perspective of residents.

Another organization that identifies contemporary problems and informs the municipality is *d’Oude Binnenstad*, a local newspaper that was established in the 1990s when *De Wallen* was still a deprived area. Just like the *Leefbaarheidsschouw*, this local newspaper was initially started to reduce drug-related nuisance. Nowadays, *d’Oude Binnenstad* is a means to draw attention to contemporary tourism-related problems that the neighborhood has to deal with. The newspaper has a circulation of four per year. The authors are residents of the inner city 1012 postcode area of which *De Wallen* forms a part. Officials of the municipality and police read the newspaper, and as mentioned by one of the authors, it is a means to “inform” the municipality about relevant issues and “influence” municipal policy by reporting about what is going

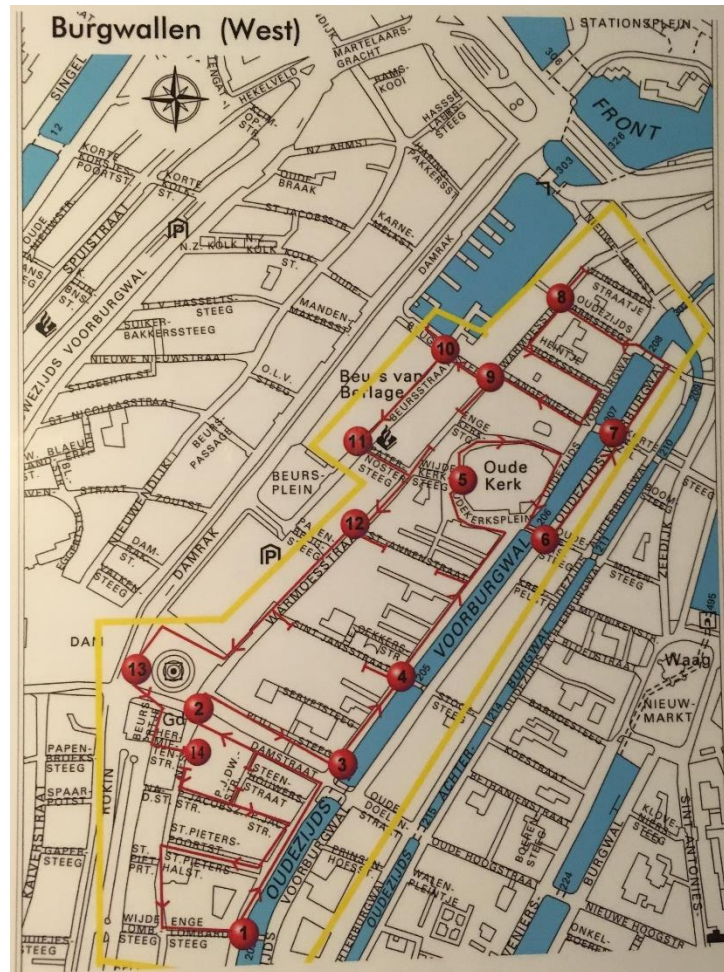


Figure 12: *Leefbaarheidsschouw*: route Burgwallen (West)

in the 1012 postcode area (resp. 5).⁴⁰ Another (former) author who used to be involved questions whether enough is being done with the information that is provided to the municipality and states: “At some point you have simply had enough, you can keep on drawing attention to it...” (resp. 2).⁴¹ *D’Oude Binnenstad* is an organization that stands close to the public and takes forward the opinions and concerns of local residents.

4.4.2 Alley networks

In order to cope with waste nuisance, it is common for residents to join forces. In the alley of the *Heintje Hoekssteeg*, twelve households organized themselves for the sake of keeping their alley clean and to act collectively against other types of nuisance. Together they formed a small-scale alley network: ‘*Die Heijntgen Hoecke*’. They use a WhatsApp group to keep each other informed concerning agreements with the municipality, group appointments, and nuisance. A resident who describes himself as the “alley master” of the *Heintje Hoekssteeg* explains: “we noticed that if there’s waste somewhere, it multiplies very quickly. Therefore, we try to remove it as quickly as possible” (resp. 6).⁴² When residents of the alley observe waste, they intervene by removing it. In collaboration with the municipality, the ‘*Die Heijntgen Hoecke*’ arranged a waste container to throw in the waste that is dumped in their alley. This container is placed in the hallway of one of the alley’s residential blocks of which only residents have the key. This container plays a vital role in keeping the alley clean. Once it is full, the municipal cleaning service is called to empty the container.

Ons Lieve Heer op Solder, a museum that is located at the end of the *Heintje Hoekssteeg*, forms part of the alley network as well. Here, two times per year, a meeting takes place in which an official of the municipality and a local police officer participate as well. Officials of the municipality know about the existence of the alley network, and residents who participate in the alley network know the officials as well. If necessary, they know how to find each other: “We have the telephone numbers of the municipal officials, and we know which officials we need to approach per theme, whom we should talk to, and which days they are at the office” (resp. 6).⁴³ It is crucial to keep contacts warm and communication lines as short as possible. The alley master is consistently reporting and in contact with the municipality. He describes taking care of the alley as a “full-time job”. Although it takes considerable time and effort, the alley network is considered to be a success as it is an effective way to keep the alley clean, to join forces, and to communicate with the municipality. Additionally, local social contacts are strengthened as well.

Nonetheless, fruitful cooperation between residents and the municipality is not a certainty. The alley master points out that he feels heard by the municipality but whether something actually happens remains uncertain: “One time, one of the officials went on maternity leave for half a year and then you notice immediately that the topic is off the agenda, and that the other official picks it up less actively” (resp. 6).⁴⁴ This example refers to an agreement concerning odor nuisance that was made with the municipality: “The period after April 2018 was characterized by some radio silence, certain steps that had been taken during a meeting but all of a sudden we stopped hearing from the municipality. This changed again after the maternity leave” (resp. 6).⁴⁵ The point that can be made based on this example is that cooperation often depends on the collaboration and goodwill of individual municipal officials. The attention for specific topics and follow-up might disappear when they are no longer present.

The residents of the *Heintje Hoekssteeg* work together to keep their alley livable by taking responsibility to keep it clean and keep in constant contact with the municipality to find solutions for local issues. Local collective community cooperation and responsibility play a crucial role in coping with specific problems. In collaboration with the municipality, residents try to improve the quality of life on the level of the alley. ‘*Die Heijntgen Hoecke*’ is not the only network in which residents take responsibility to keep their living environment livable. There are similar initiatives in other alleys and streets.

5. Conclusion and discussion

This research focused on the topic of residential action in *De Wallen*. The aim was to gain in-depth knowledge concerning the ways residents cope with contemporary tourism-related problems in their living environment by researching their ‘self-help’ in coping with nuisance and everyday challenges of living in an area that is dominated by tourists. In order to address this theme, this research was conducted with the following research question in mind: “*What can be learned from the (everyday) actions through which residents of De Wallen try to maintain control over their living environment?*”.

To answer this question, data were collected in various ways: analysis of municipal policy documents, observations (four times), and semi-structured interviews (N=11). The conducted data resulted in an overall story describing the tactics and strategies of residents and the municipality of Amsterdam, presented in Chapter 4.

In this final chapter, those results are translated into a conclusion and include an answer to the main research question. After that, this chapter will discuss recommendations for praxis and reflect critically on this research and the methods that were used. At last, recommendations for further research will be formulated.

5.1 Conclusion

First, the municipality of Amsterdam tries to counter contemporary tourism-related problems in *De Wallen* through several measures. Namely, through raising awareness concerning inappropriate behavior in public space, deploying extra law enforcement forces, making rules to reduce crowding, improving the cleaning service, facilitating the handling of nuisance reports, and implementing strict legislation to prevent further homogenization of amenities. These measures have in common that they aim at keeping *De Wallen* a clean, safe, and livable place. In order to give residents a voice and involve them in their policies, various strategies are used to promote residential participation. Residents are given the opportunity to participate in municipal policy through the *Integraal Burgwallen Overleg* (IBO) and meet with the municipality by attending meetings of project We Live Here. In addition, they can contact the municipality to file complaints.

Despite efforts to improve the quality of life in *De Wallen*, the municipality of Amsterdam is struggling to find a balance between livability and tourism. The desired situation residents hope for has not been reached, and the municipality is unable to handle all complaints. As a result, residents look for solutions themselves and develop tactics and strategies to cope with contemporary problems in their living environment.

In order to cope with contemporary problems, residents develop various tactics. To begin with, residents develop tactics to express their frustrations and to meet with those who create nuisance in public space. Tourists and tour guides who misbehave and are held responsible for nuisance, are addressed in direct and indirect ways. Residents address their behavior through dialogue and put up notes with written texts on their doors and windows.

Residents feel obliged to adjust their daily rhythm to cope with issues of crowding and mobility. Daily shopping is done in the mornings to avoid the most substantial crowds. During the day as well as at night, busy parts of the neighborhood are avoided. When going somewhere,

residents must take into consideration possible hinderance they may experience due to crowding. As a result, they are forced to take longer alternative routes where they can walk or cycle more comfortably.

Everyday place-making tactics such as greening and territorialization are used to modify public space in order to steer the behavior of visitors. A frequently applied residential tactic is planting wall gardens in order to maintain their living environment and reduce waste nuisance. This tactic aims at making visitors aware of the residential character of the neighborhood. Further, physical markers are used to appropriate parts of the sidewalk for personal purposes and to prevent visitors from coming too close.

Besides tactics, residents also develop strategies that aim at preserving the continuity of their neighborhood in the long-run and are involved in residential and local private organizations to protect their neighborhood from the tourism industry. Local real estate companies such as *Stadsgoed* and *NV Zeedijk*, in which residents play a prominent role, protect the residential function of the neighborhood by securing long-term residential occupancy. These organizations also contribute to the diversification of amenities since they use their rent policy to preserve and attract specific amenities that are considered essential or contribute positively to the image of the neighborhood. Besides these real estate companies, another initiative emerged to support local retail entrepreneurs: *Stichting De Goede Zaak Amsterdam*. Local entrepreneurs who contribute to the diversity of their street are rewarded with a quality label and provided with free online visibility on the social media channels and website of *Stichting De Goede Zaak Amsterdam*.

Another strategy concerns the exchange of information. Residents developed organizations that function as communication tools to inform the municipality. Organizations like the livability inspection, *Leefbaarheidsschouw*, and the local newspaper, *d'Oude Binnenstad*, are used to inform the municipality about what is going on in the neighborhood, to identify relevant problems at street level, and to determine if specific problems need some extra attention. These organizations are sources of information for the municipality and are ways to express concerns and interests from the perspective of residents.

Furthermore, residents develop strategies to keep their streets clean and try to solve local problems themselves where this is possible. They join forces by the creation of alley and street networks. By making mutual agreements and taking responsibility, they can cope with specific local problems and improve the livability of their living environment to a certain extent.

This research showed that *De Wallen* can be characterized as an area where conflicts between residents and tourists, and policies and practices are played out. The residents of *De Wallen* developed several tactics and strategies through which they express their concerns and interests over their neighborhood. The stories of residents indicate that it is difficult to cope with tourism-related problems. It seems that the most successful ways of coping with contemporary tourism-related problems are achieved by strategic action. Residents can unite themselves through various local organizations to protect their neighborhood and through which they can transfer information effectively to the municipality. As opposed to strategic action, most tactical action, if successful, only leads to short-term improvements and not to structural solutions. These tactics are considered sources of information and provide knowledge concerning aspects that are considered important to residents. Tactical action of residents in the public

space of *De Wallen* shows that their interests concerning mobility and nuisance do not receive enough attention and require structural solutions.

5.2 Contribution to theory development

Based on the literature review, a conceptual model was made in order to shape how the topic of residential action in the context of overtourism would be approached, see Figure 1. The conceptual model can be adjusted based on the knowledge gained in this research. This knowledge is used to create a more complete model of how residents try to create a living environment with which they can identify. The renewed conceptual model is depicted in Figure 13.

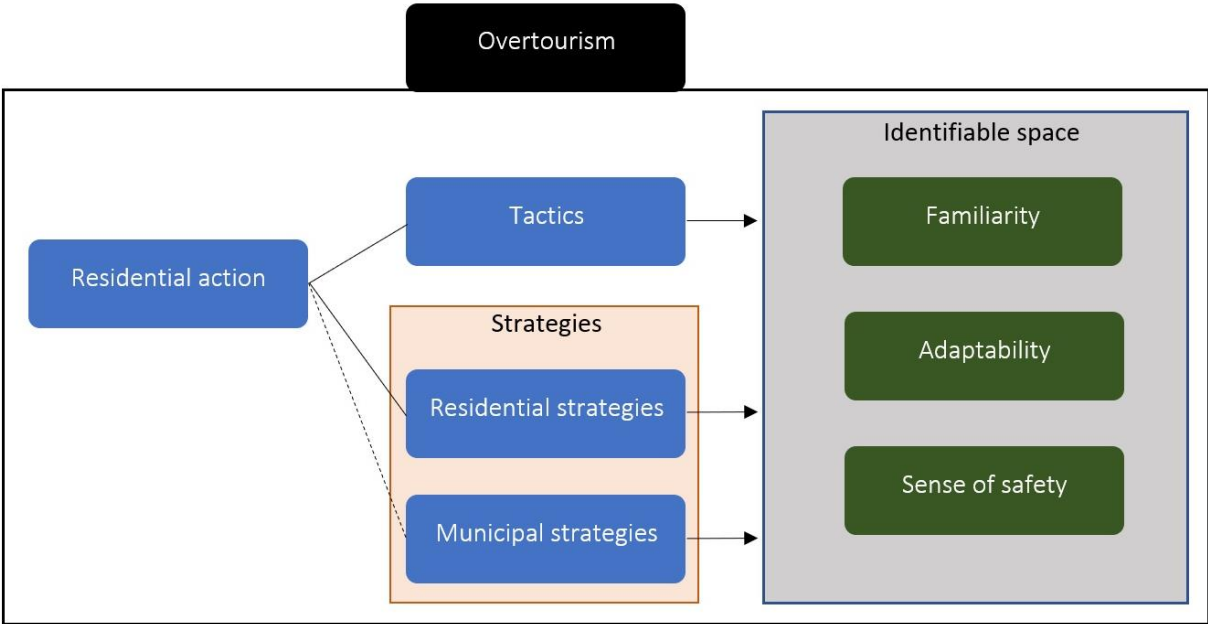


Figure 13: Renewed conceptual model

The main concepts of identifiable space stayed the same as in the original model. This model differs from the original one in the relationship between residential strategies and municipal strategies. Whereas in the original model, residential strategies and municipal strategies were considered to be two different actors that were unrelated to each other, this is no longer the case in the renewed conceptual model. During the research, it became clear that residential strategies and municipal strategies cannot be regarded exclusively as independent actors since they overlap to some degree. This research showed, on the one hand, that all forms of strategic residential action take place, to a certain extent, in cooperation with governmental authorities such as the municipality or law enforcement forces. On the other hand, it also showed that many municipal strategies that aim at improving the livability of *De Wallen* are based on residential involvement. Therefore, in the renewed conceptual model, both residential strategies and municipal strategies have been placed into the sub box of 'strategies'. The box of residential action is connected to municipal strategies with a dotted line to indicate the involvement of residents.

5.3 Recommendations for praxis

Based on this research, it becomes clear that coping effectively with negative tourism impacts requires profound cooperation between residents, municipality, and law enforcement authorities. This interplay between residents and government is often underexposed and emerges in many cases more or less spontaneously and unplanned.

Law enforcement authorities such as the police and *handhaving*, as well as municipal neighborhood managers, play an essential role in mediating between residential tactical action and formal policies. Some residential tactics, such as territorialization, take place on the verge of what is allowed and what not. These authorities and municipal staff should be given the space to mediate between rules and the interests of residents. They should act as insiders and be easily accessible to the community. Also, the knowledge gained on the street must be converted and saved so that it can be used in formal policy. Therefore, a more significant role for these authorities and municipal staff is recommended, including opportunities to inform formal planning and policy with the knowledge they obtain on the street. The municipality of Amsterdam should look more into the everyday tactics through which residents express interests over their living environment and make use of local knowledge. A shift should take place whereby residential tactical action is converted into formal policy strategy. In that way, coping with negative tourism impacts becomes much more a co-production between residents and government.

5.4 Reflection and recommendations for further research

Although this research reached its objective, researchers should always reflect on the limits of their own work. Therefore, a reflection on the research itself, its short-comings, and suggestions for additional research will be given in this final section.

First of all, the methods used in this research will be reflected upon. I believe that the combination of the three methods that were used in this research provided a large amount of data, which made it possible to write the story of residential action in *De Wallen* successfully. Studying municipal policy concerning livability and tourism management in *De Wallen* has proven to be vital in understanding the relationship between residential and municipal action. While I do believe that doing observations was essential for the data collection of this research, it was also characterized by difficulties. Many things happened in the public space of *De Wallen*, particularly at principal parts such as the *Oudezijds Voorburgwal*, *Oudezijds Achterburgwal*, and the *Oudekerksplein*. At these places, there was a constant flow of tourists and residents seemed to be absent as they blended into the crowds. As a result, it was difficult to really see everything that was going on and hard to stay focused. Nevertheless, observations turned out to be a great way of gaining insights into what was happening in the area and contributed to the preparation of interview questions. I believe that building the semi-structured interviews upon the data gathered through policy analysis and observations has been successful. This allowed me to find out how residents and the municipality try to address the same issues by looking for similarities and differences, and elaborate on things that were observed in the public space of *De Wallen* which needed further explanation.

Interviews were conducted with eleven residents who are actively involved in *De Wallen*. I believe it was advantageous for the collection of valuable data to interview them because they were able to provide plenty of information concerning local strategic and tactical

action. However, the selection of this vocal and long-term group of respondents can also be linked to a limitation of this research: namely, the exclusion of stories from ‘ordinary’ or ‘average’ residents. The community of *De Wallen* consists of more groups than just actively involved residents. These groups are also worth taking into account and could have provided other insights, in particular in the field of tactical action.

For further research, it would be interesting to investigate these groups of ‘average’ and more anonymous residents. Therefore, a similar but more extensively designed research must be conducted so that a larger and more varied number of stories can be taken into account. However, one should take in mind that such an investigation will take more time.

Though this research showed that this is a great way to gain in-depth knowledge concerning the ways residents of *De Wallen* cope with contemporary tourism-related problems, I can imagine that it might be useful to complement this qualitative story with some quantitative research methods. For example, to find out how frequent specific tactical and strategic action takes place and to measure the actual level of residential involvement.

Lastly, in the context of overtourism in *De Wallen*, it would be desirable to research the carrying capacity of the destination in order to find out the primary factors that play a role in experiencing adverse effects caused by large number of visitors and the tourism industry. This could be used to develop capacity limits concerning tourism activities in the area, including a vision concerning management and future development.

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Appendixes:

Appendix 1: Protocol for observations

- What kind of people can be observed in *De Wallen*?
 - Tourists
 - Residents
 - (large) groups

- The state of public space.
 - Clean, messy, dirty
 - Differences between street and alleys

- What residential tactics that aim at coping with tourism impacts are visible in public space? (how do residents try to steer the behavior of tourist?)
 - Signs
 - Fences

- How does the government try to steer the behavior of people?
 - Signs
 - Warnings
 - Presence of police or *handhaving*

- Which objects are for residents and which are for visitors?

- What kind of interaction takes place between residents and visitors
 - Do people speak to each other?
 - Does non-verbal communication take place?

- What other things do I find striking/do I notice?

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Introductie:

Mijn naam is Max Stoffels en ik studeer Sociale Geografie aan de Radboud Universiteit. Voor mijn masterscriptie voer ik een onderzoek uit op De Wallen in Amsterdam. ik wil met mijn onderzoek in kaart brengen wat voor tactieken en strategieën bewoners van De Wallen gebruiken om om te gaan met de negatieve gevolgen van toerisme in hun leefomgeving zoals toenevende drukte, overlast en homogenisering van het winkelaanbod. De focus ligt niet op gemeentelijke maatregelen maar op wat bewoners doen om hun buurt leefbaar te houden en hoe zij omgaan met problemen in hun buurt. Met andere woorden: ik ben geïnteresseerd in de challenges waar u in uw dagelijkse leven mee te maken in uw buurt en hoe u hiermee omgaat. Uiteindelijk hoop ik op basis van mijn bevindingen een advies voor de gemeente te formuleren.

Ik wil benadrukken dat ik volledige anonimiteit van mijn respondenten garandeer en dat ik uitspraken nooit aan een naam of adres zal koppelen. Gegevens zullen uitsluitend voor mijn eigen onderzoek gebruikt worden.

Het interview zal ongeveer 20 tot 30 minuten in beslag nemen.

Vragen:

Wie: (naam, geslacht, leeftijd)

Waar: (locatie)

Wanneer: (datum)

1. Waarom bent u betrokken bij de bewoners community *We Live Here*?
2. Hoe vindt u het om op De Wallen te wonen?
 - Voelt u zich thuis in uw buurt?
 - Komt u regelmatig bekenden tegen in uw buurt?
3. Hoe zou u het alledaagse leven op De Wallen omschrijven?
4. Hoe wordt er omgegaan met overlast op De Wallen (klachtenafhandeling) en hoe wordt er vanuit de bewoners geprobeerd om de veiligheid te verbeteren?
 - Hoe zou u de samenwerking tussen bewoners en de gemeente en politie beschrijven?
 - Vindt u dat er genoeg gedaan wordt met de informatie die vanuit de bewoners aan de gemeente wordt overhandigd?
5. Hoe gaat u om met de toenemende drukte in de straten (publieke ruimte) van uw leefomgeving?

- Wat voor acties onderneemt u zelf om hiermee om te gaan (op wat voor manieren houdt u rekening met drukte in uw buurt)?
(briefjes met 'I Live Here' ophangen? Ruimte creëren door een deel van uw stoep met plantenbakken af te zetten?)
- Mijdt u bepaalde delen van uw buurt (tijdens bepaalde tijdstippen)?

6. Hoe zou u de interactie met bezoekers in uw buurt omschrijven?

7. Hoe zou u de publieke ruimte in uw buurt omschrijven?

8. Als u iets mocht veranderen aan het gemeentelijke beleid in uw buurt, wat zou dat dan zijn?

9. Vindt u dat de gemeente en haar partners voldoende maatregelen nemen om verschraving (homogenisering van het winkelaanbod door de toename winkels die voornamelijk op toeristen gefocust zijn) tegen te gaan?

Afsluiting:

Ik wil u hartelijk bedanken voor uw tijd en medewerking!

Vindt u het goed als ik wederom contact met u opneem indien ik nog verdere vragen heb?

Als u wilt dan kan de resultaten van mijn onderzoek met u delen.

e-mailadres:

Appendix 3: Codebook

Code groups:	Codes:	Number of quotations:
Challenges of every-day life	Examples of nuisance	29
	Mobility	19
Municipal strategies	Collaboration with authorities	20
	IBO-overleg	4
	Policy evaluation	20
	Project 'We Live Here'	11
Others	Feeling at home in De Wallen	19
	Motivation for action	7
Residential tactics	Contact and agreements with entrepreneurs	9
	Contact and agreements with tour guides	3
	Contact and agreements tourists and residents	16
	Everyday place-making	5
	Individual and group action	21
Strategies for safety & livability	D'Oude Binnenstad	7
	Leefbaarheidsschouw	11
Strategies to increase familiarity	Real estate companies	7
	Urban amenities	21

Appendix 4: Original quotes in Dutch

¹ “Nou dat is aan de ene kant ontzettend ontsierend, maar oké, het is een signaal. Het punt blijft steeds maar weer, ja je kan het allemaal wel zeggen dat iets niet mag maar als er geen controle is dan is het lachen.”

² “Het gaat om duizenden nieuwe mensen iedere dag en als je echt dronken bent dan lees je ook niet echt meer.”

³ “Het is sowieso de vraag of de handhavers duidelijke instructies krijgen, van waar ze wel en waar ze niet op moeten letten.”

⁴ “Waar het om gaat is dat de handhavers de overlast hier in de buurt te lijf gaan. Dus: de aso's die op hun brommer door de steeg scheuren, de pissers die tegen de kerk staan te zeiken, de brallers die drie straten verder nog te horen zijn. Die lui moeten worden aangepakt.”

⁵ “Die regels van de Gemeente zijn zo extreem gedetailleerd dat niet één bewoner, als je die 's nachts wakker maakt uit het hoofd kan declareren. Want de groepen mogen hier niet maar op de Zuidelijke Burgwallen dan weer wel. Er is dan een grens bij de brug en daarna mag het ineens weer wel. De regels zijn heel gedetailleerd en heel uitgebreid en daardoor ook moeilijk handhaafbaar en moeilijk uit te leggen aan mensen en daardoor hun doel voorbij schieten.”

⁶ “voordat zij kwamen was de ellende vaak alweer over”

⁷ “De reiniging wel een van de best functioneerde, dat wil ik nog wel even expliciet zeggen, een van de best functionerende gemeentelijke bedrijven, ze doen het goed, <emphasis> ze doen verschrikkelijk hun best, alleen ja is het af en toe vechten tegen de [...] <emphasis> zo gigantisch veel rotzooi dat gewoon op straat gemieterd wordt.”

⁸ “Vanochtend het eerste wat ik deed, ik was op de weg naar het Singel en voordat ik de steeg uit was zag ik een tering bende, eerst weer pizzadozen aan het opruimen. Er zitten mensen op die trapjes van het museum, het ziet er allemaal prachtig uit, historisch zeer verantwoord maar het wordt vaak gebruikt door junks en toeristen die daar even lekker gaan zitten eten en vervolgens de troep laten liggen en dan kunnen wij het weer lekker opruimen. Dus vaak is het met angst en beven dat ik de deur opentrek 's ochtends, je weet soms niet wat je in de steeg aantreft.”

⁹ “als er ergens iets dicht gaat dan komt er een burgerbar voor terug of zoiets.

¹⁰ “er is nu opeens een terras bijgekomen en het trekt een heel ander publiek aan: toeristen, waardoor de uitstraling ook weer totaal anders is geworden.”

¹¹ “ga maar naar een willekeurige ... overleg en dan zitten alle partijen bij elkaar en iedereen weet elkaar te vinden ... terwijl vroeger was dat gewoon dan had je daar de politie en de chef en die zag je wel eens een keertje en je zwaaide een keertje ofzo maar daar had je verder geen contact mee. En nu hebben we gewoon contact met elkaar”

¹² “het was vaak dat ze veel zenden en weinig ontvangen, terwijl het IBO juist bedoelt was om de buurt een spreekbuis toegeven richting lokale overheid”

¹³ “Zoals je vroeger zou zeggen: ik woon hier! Doe een beetje rustig aan! Ik heb kinderen enzo! En dan kon je bewijs van spreken door een dronken jongen zo van heuheu worden weggezet als een zeikerd waardoor het wat minder aan kwam. Maar nu kunnen we zeggen: kijk hier eens naar! en dan zie je gewoon die poster, en dat beeld werkt gewoon wat dat betreft toch wel.”

¹⁴ “En nu hebben we gewoon contact met elkaar en zij komen ook bij We Live Here langs en (...) ook het stadsdeelbestuur, Mascha ten Bruggencate en Ilse Griek en Micha, nou Mos heet ie volgens mij, het dagelijks bestuur, komen ook daar over de vloer en houden ook een spreekuur. Dus zo makkelijk zijn de contacten geworden. Dus juist uhm... ik denk dat nog het allerbelangrijkste is gewoon die contacten, die samenwerking, dat je daardoor elkaar makkelijker kan vinden als er iets speelt.”

¹⁵ “Ik woon hier zelf al 27 jaar ofzo, die Gione, die je nog moet spreken die woont hier schuin aan de overkant op de Warmoesstraat, op nummer 56, nou ik had die gozer nog nooit ontmoet tot ik met hem via We Live Here in contact kwam. Ik zeg het zal toch niet waar wezen dat wij al 25 jaar, min of meer, burens van elkaar zijn en dat je elkaar niet kent. Nou idem dito met Soraya, die woont dan hier in de Lange Niezel, die had ik ook nog nooit ontmoet.”

¹⁶ “Het hele straatbeeld is gewoon alsof de buurt of de stad is overgenomen door buitenlanders, door toeristen, door vreemden.”

¹⁷ “er zijn natuurlijk een hoop overleden natuurlijk en wat krijgen we daar voor terug? Een hoop panden zijn gewoon opgekocht natuurlijk door mensen met goede financiële middelen, airbnb, er worden meer hotels, de hotelstop is nu wel gekomen, wel of niet nou er is ook wel weer omheen te zeilen, het is niet meer betaalbaar voor de gewone mensen.”

¹⁸ “We hebben een gezamenlijk vijand dus dat verbreedt ook wel”.

¹⁹ “Dankzij 1012Inc en de NV Zeedijk, dat zijn echt van die pijlers in de buurt, worden panden behouden en opgeknapt. (...) zij houden in ieder geval ook zicht op de huur en normale bewoners en die heb je ook gewoon nodig.”

²⁰ “Ze kunnen wel hè, als de huur bijvoorbeeld 2000 normaal is, dan kunnen ze gewoon zeggen van ja we verhuren het aan jou voor 1000 omdat je zo goed bent voor de buurt en zo belangrijk.”

²¹ “Maar de grootste nood was gewoon hier vanuit die oude binnenstad”

²² “daar wordt je ook moe van, dat is ook vrij vervelend en het zijn natuurlijk ook steeds nieuwe groepen hè.”

²³ “En dan moet je jezelf ook in bescherming nemen want als je je te druk maakt en overall correctie op wilt aanbrengen, dan heb je ook geen leven meer.”

²⁴ “als ik ze een blikje zie gooien dan word ik meteen agressief: <angry> he klootzak! Opruimen!”

²⁵ “dan raap ik het op en dan knijp ik het blikje en dan pak ik ze van achter, blousje open (...)”

²⁶ “Ik begin altijd als ze onder mijn raam gaan staan samenscholen, te blowen, en de weeddampen stijgen op, dan vraag ik een keer heel beleefd: gentleman good evening, would you be so

kind en wilt u alstublieft doorlopen. En negen van de tien keer doen ze het wel, maar één op de tien keer krijg je een grote bek, van toeristen hè, in je eigen buurt! Maar dan heb ik ook geen medelijden en gaat er een hele emmer water naar beneden of spuit ik met de Kalasjnikov.”

²⁷ “Het grote punt is natuurlijk dat er hier mensen komen, die komen hier een keer, oké misschien komen ze nog eens een tweede keer en dan zijn het weer nieuwe mensen. Je kan wel aan de gang blijven ja.”

²⁸ “Ik heb ook wel eens dat soms de hele steeg is afgesloten met een groep mensen, dat een gids pontificaal voor je steeg staat. Ik zeg ja misschien bent u er niet mee bekend maar er wonen hier ook nog mensen, ik zeg mogen we ook nog van onze eigen steeg in bewijs van spreken”

²⁹ “Je weet dat als je in het centrum van de stad gaat wonen dat het gewoon druk is maar hier is het de afgelopen tien jaar enorm veel drukker geworden dan het was.”

³⁰ “Als ik boodschappen ga doen, dat ik me dan door mensen moet heen wringen, , met name na 12 uur”

³¹ “als je hier vroeg in de ochtend naar de Albert Heijn of de Dirk van de Broek gaat dan zie je de buurtbewoners boodschappen doen. Vanaf 11 uur toeristen, toeristen, toeristen...”

³² “Als ik hier met de fiets uit wil, stel je voor ik wil naar de Jordaan. Ik wil wel door de binnenstad gaan maar je kan hier toch niet fietsen, ik fiets al jaren niet meer, ik loop in de dit drukke stukje alleen maar.”

³³ “Dus als ik ergens heen wil dan moet ik helemaal buitenom, via de Prinshendrikkade. Ook een drukke fietsweg maar die is nog altijd minder erg dan dat ik helemaal door het Red Light District hee moet. <emotional> Dus als je echt in het drukke deel woont en je moet ergens heen, moet je dus eerst een heel eind te voet lopen met de fiets aan hand tot je eindelijk op een plek bent waar je op de fiets kan stappen. En dat stukje wordt eigenlijk steeds langer naar mate het drukker wordt.”

³⁴ “Verder fiets ik natuurlijk heel veel in Amsterdam en als ik ergens heen moet dan ga ik tegenwoordig altijd 5 a 10 minuten eerder weg want, vroeger deed ik dit niet maar je wil je gewoon niet opwinden.”

³⁵ “Ik probeer altijd zen te blijven op de fiets, ik fiets vaak met mijn kinderen. Maar vaak verlies ik al mijn geduld bij de derde toerist die voor mijn fiets loopt en dat is honderd meter. Dus ik ga, ik kan ook niet eens meer naar de stomerij op zaterdag, je kan niet je eigen tempo bepalen, het is een soort van begrafenistoet waar je je aan moet passen aan de langzaamste schakel en dat is (...) dat is allemaal heel verdrietig”

³⁶ “Maar sommige mensen zijn dus boos en die hebben of een fluitje of die zitten op de fiets, tring, tring , tring, die gaan met een bloedgang door een groep toeristen heen.”

³⁷ “Een vriendin en ik zijn 15 jaar geleden begonnen met een geveltuin, wij waren toen een van de eerste en langzamerhand werden het er steeds meer. Het besef begint bij steeds meer mensen door te dringen dat groen niet alleen mooi is en fijn maar ook (...) een soort van tegenwicht vanuit de zachte krachten tegen dat botte (...) platte gewelddadige massatoerisme.”

³⁸ “Je moet het wel goed bijhouden en zorgen dat er geen gaten in die beplanting vallen want anders gooien mensen er meteen hun fietsen neer en vervuilen de tuin met afval dat er niet thuishoort”

³⁹ “Dus dan zie je dat het schouwen niet alleen vaststellen is maar ook iedereen erbij betrekken van hey wij zien iets, dus dat is niet alleen bewoners die dat zijn maar ook politie ziet dat, ook de gemeente ziet dat, met zijn drieën loop je over straat bewijs van spreken en met zijn drieën zeg je van: hey hier ligt vuil dus laten we er een aantekening van maken.”

⁴⁰ “Nou, persoonlijke strategieën, laat ik beginnen met die politiek die dan toch, naja, je probeert natuurlijk toch op de een of andere manier overheidsbeleid te beïnvloeden en met name gemeentelijk overheidsbeleid. En dat doe ik op verschillende manieren, via dit krantje dat hier ligt, d’Oude Binnenstad”

⁴¹ “Je bent op een bepaald moment een beetje uitgebabbel. Je kan er wel eindeloos aandacht voor vragen”

⁴² “we gemerkt hebben als er ergens vuil ligt dat er alleen maar heel snel heel veel vuil bij komt. Dus we zorgen ervoor dat we het zo snel mogelijk wel halen.”

⁴³ “We hebben de telefoonnummers van ambtenaren en weten welke ambtenaren we voor bepaalde thema’s moeten benaderen, wie we moeten hebben zeg maar en welke ambtenaren er aanwezig zijn op verschillende dagen.”

⁴⁴ “Ja gehoord wel, maar of er dan vervolgens daadwerkelijk iets mee gebeurt ..., een van die ambtenaren is een half jaar op zwangerschapsverlof ofzo geweest en dan zie je meteen dat het even van de agenda af is of dat die andere ambtenaar het iets minder actief oppakt of wat dan ook.”

⁴⁵ “De periode na april 2018 werd getypeerd door wat radiostilte, er waren tijdens een overleg bepaalde stappen afgesproken maar vanuit de gemeente hoorden we daar op eens niets meer over. Na afloop van het zwangerschapsverlof veranderde dit weer”