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***“Head, Heart & Hands:  
finding a balance between them”***

*A three-month-long ethnographic investigation of how Amsterdam as a city in transition promotes Social Sustainability with a special focus on ‘Pakhuis de Zwijger’ as the major case study.*

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**Case study:** Cultural organization Pakhuis de Zwijger/ Amsterdam

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# Index

P.5	Acknowledgements!
P.6	Welcome to Amsterdam!
P.8	Fieldwork- Cultural organization Pakhuis de Zwijger!
P.10	Research Methods
P.12	Int(r)o the field!
P.17	2.1 How Pakhuis de Zwijger contributes to Amsterdam's SOCIAL INNOVATION
P.20	2.1.1 Who is finally involved and why Amsterdam is considered an ecosystem?
P.21	2.1.2 Case study: Amsterdammers make your city! (in Dutch, Amsterdammers, Maak je Stad! or AMJS)
P.25	2.2 Why Amsterdam is considered a 'city in transition'!
P.25	2.2.1. Case study: "New Democracy" : "How this trajectory represents the transition theory!"
P.32	2.2.2 Case study: 'New Europe-Cities in Transition' platform
P.36	2.3 How Amsterdam as a city in transition encourages ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP
P.37	2.3.1 Case study: 'city-making'
P.39	2.3.2 21st century skills!
P.40	2.3.2a Case study: Maakplaats#021 and link to 21st century education
P.41	2.3.2b "Maak je buurt!"
P.43	2.3.3 Case study: 'Eat to meet' and link with 'Interethnic Contact' theory
P.45	2.4 Reflections and Recommendations
P.47	2.4.1 Pakhuis de Zwijger
P.50	2.4.2 Amsterdam
P.55	Exiting the field!

## Acknowledgements!

At this point of writing up the acknowledgements, clear thoughts of gratitude and excitement are crossing my mind. When, 3 years ago, I was studying in Italy as an exchange student, I had a small talk with a friend talking about our future plans. She asked me whether I would do my master's in Greece or abroad and I just responded automatically "*Me and master are two different stories. I could never do a master's degree, let alone in English!*" Recalling this moment back in 2014 I can just say that people like coincidences and me especially love accepting challenges. Moving to the Netherlands I hadn't my mind set on a specific research plan, however months after visiting various cultural centers I got deeply inspired by Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam. After a couple of months researching their various workshops, campaigns and workings, I realized that my ethnographic focus will be on 'Cities in Transition' and how this transformation scheme could ideally contribute to the city's Social Sustainability. Challenge after challenge, with a lot of peaks and lows throughout a three-month-long research period, I definitely feel grateful to all this experience, family, professors, friends and colleagues that always stood by me offering great help, support and faith in me.

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Closing, I want to express a deep gratitude to all this experience and share with every reader that accepting the challenges that might occur can make us more faithful, self-confident and motivated for the future!

## Structure of the thesis

This research project is analyzed upon a linear structure which explains the cohesion and sequence of each chapter and case study. To begin, I will provide descriptions of Amsterdam as a city and Pakhuis de Zwijger as my ethnographic research site. In specific, 'Welcome to Amsterdam!' section explains the background and the reasons why I chose to investigate this specific area, while the part 'Fieldwork-Cultural organization Pakhuis de Zwijger' taps into the significance of investigating this particular cultural center. Following that, the section of 'research methods' will further explain all the methodology I used in order to collect my data before starting to write the end product, the thesis.

In the introduction as well as the major section, deep analysis provides insights of the main theoretical concepts that are combined with specific case studies extracted from my ethnography within Pakhuis de Zwijger, based in Amsterdam. Further to that, the final part, conclusions, contains an analytical overview of what has gone before as well as what still needs to be further researched so as to achieve higher levels of Social Sustainability in terms of policy-making, structural-wise and organizational-wise.

### Welcome to Amsterdam!

Amsterdam is the capital city of the kingdom of the Netherlands, Holland and is located in the north- west part the country. This city concentrates a high percentage of the country's total population, thus 845 thousand citizens out of the 17 millions in the whole of Holland and registers 180 different nationalities. This makes Amsterdam a quite populous city and especially attractive to internationals and expats.

*"The city facilitates innovation in many ways, whereby openness, creativity, pragmatism and collaboration come first. This can be seen in the big number of startups, high-tech companies, top universities, knowledge institutions, and initiatives."* - (Robert-Jan Smits 2017) involved with the iCapital award on behalf of the European Commission

My major question is *"how Amsterdam as a city in transition promotes Social Sustainability"*, while a set of subsidiary questions will provide further answers and information to help

respond to the main Research Question. Additionally, reviewing a series of programs, interventions, debates and partnerships that Pakhuis de Zwijger as a crucial player has introduced into the arena of Amsterdam, I will provide examples and analyses on how this cultural organization managed to lead such important transformation schemes and practices for the Dutch capital to finally be considered Innovation Capital for 2016 and 2017.

In various pdf's, scientific papers, the iCapital bid and journals, Amsterdam has repeatedly been characterized as a 'City in Transition', 'Innovative City', 'Ecosystem' and 'Sustainable City'.

*'are excellent examples how Amsterdam fosters and orchestrates the vibrant innovation ecosystem in the city.'*

(Cohen, Boyd, Esteve Almirall, Henry Chesbrough 2017)

This research project will focus on Amsterdam and Pakhuis de Zwijger while the series of sub-questions that will help me answer the main Research Question with regards to Amsterdam's Social Sustainability are the following:

*How Pakhuis de Zwijger is involved?*

*Why Amsterdam is considered a city in transition?*

*How 'transition' schemes approach the anthropological lens?*

*What is the European engagement?*

*What is the difference between Top-down and Bottom-up governance?*

*What can be further improved?*



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## Fieldwork- Cultural organization Pakhuis de Zwijger!

Pakhuis de Zwijger (PDZ) was built in 1934 in the center of Amsterdam near the central station Amsterdam Central and operated as a warehouse. It was rebuilt and renovated by architect André van Stigt to now function as a unique Cultural Organization hosting a series of workshops, movie screenings, debates, lectures, creative projects and exhibitions that are characterized by innovation, creation, bright –minded people and innovative ideas.

Pakhuis together with a bunch of partners develop research, projects, ideas, meetings and platforms. They all together aim at spotting the challenges and the needs of Amsterdam and Amsterdammers in order to turn the city into a livable and vibrant place to live in. This cultural enterprise approaches values such as social innovation, inclusion, networking, interculturalism, circular economy, knowledge and sustainability. Besides that, Pakhuis de Zwijger seeks to instill those principles into Amsterdam citizens as well as citizens of the various cities it works with. Through all the events and partnerships that Pakhuis organizes, makes Amsterdam a creative industry and arena for all the capable people to perform and



foster the society. Pakhuis informs, engages, organizes and inspires.

It suggests the intersection between all the bright minds and the creative industry of the Dutch capital. By stimulating all different actors from various disciplines, manages to pioneer when giving opportunities for citizens to voice up and make their needs and potentials visible. Programs, meetings, movie-screenings, talks, workshops and exhibitions represent the creative, cultural and social aspect of this city. What is extremely striking is the potential of this city to gather together citizens and newcomers from many different and diverse backgrounds.

This organization has built local, national and international partnerships with people from across the globe- in specific, through innumerable networks inside and outside Europe. Within Europe, Pakhuis has built collaborations with 28 european cities while through the City Embassies, as a strand of their initiative 'Cities in Transition', has reached even the latin continent when established the City Embassy in Quito, Ecuador and in Sao Paulo of Brazil.

What proves the internationality and networking of Pakhuis de Zwijger is the extent to which it has built international partnerships. For instance, those City Embassies are located not only in various cities across the Netherlands or Europe but also in other continents. City Embassy of Sao Paulo and Quito are two examples of their international partnerships beyond the European territory, just *"around the world- not only Amsterdam"* as Egbert, Pakhuis de Zwijger director, mentioned in our discussion. The topics that those Embassies are approaching are covering a large scale of interests. Among them, one can spot transformations about waste, health care, building communities or creative industries. They constitute platforms through which people can learn from each other and work together on all subjects that affect their current and future life.

## I. Research methods

With regards to the topic of Social Sustainability of Amsterdam, I decided to conduct my research and collect all my data about the field, limits and potential as well as the dynamic of this research location, Pakhuis de Zwijger. During the three-month-long research period I used multiple ways of data collection. Participant observation, participant ethnographic involvement, literature, informal discussions and expert interviews were my main ethnographic methods. I did research on two different levels. On one hand, my academic research (ethnography) was focused on Amsterdam's Social Sustainability with a special emphasis on the major case study of Pakhuis de Zwijger.

On the other hand, I got involved in the organization working as an editorial intern on the international platform 'New Europe- Cities in Transition'. My internship position, otherwise ethnographic involvement, required me to work for 3 days a week. During those days I was in charge of collecting information, doing research and translating these data into articles on the platform. Those articles were written on a common basis about various cities in Europe that undergo certain sociocultural transformations and consequently can be entitled as such. For this reason, I had access to all these research tools so as to collect the information needed. For example, since Pakhuis functions as a conventional and dialogue center on a daily basis, hosts every day events and discussions. All the events I have attended are under the title of very precise projects that program makers of Pakhuis are organizing. They are called "New Amsterdam", "New Europe" and "New Democracy". On the side, I kept my field notes in my field diary so as to differentiate my focus on Amsterdam's transition and other cities that I conducted research for my internship tasks.

In the first place, I had multiple **informal conversations** with employees of Pakhuis de Zwijger. By doing so, I managed to gain trust and information through more informal ways, either while working together on projects or during lunch time in the organization. As far as the formal interviews and discussions are concerned, I did 9 official interviews with people from both within and outside Pakhuis de Zwijger. For example, 6 out of those 9, are employees, project leaders or program makers. Each of them is leading one of the Case studies I investigated such as 'New Democracy', 'New Europe- Cities in Transition', 'Eat to meet', 'New Netherlands- Cities in Transition'. Besides, I interviewed the director of the organization to know the background, current situation as well as future plans of Pakhuis.

Moreover, I had also the opportunity to have a formal **discussion/ interview** with the Urban Innovation Officer at the City Hall of Amsterdam. This discussion led me through the iCapital world, all the processes before and after the prize. On the side, multiple informal

discussions with initiators of bottom up movements in Amsterdam that work together with Pakhuis de Zwijger offered me the chance to view their perception from the outside- in what terms they work together, how they perceive this organization and whether they consider it as part of the top-down or bottom-up approach.

In a second place, as part of my participant observation, I attended workshops and events inside the cultural center. For example, I took part in the workshop of [Flatpack Democracy](#) in the frame of 'New Democracy' as well as a 'Maakplaats' workshop in the library OBA in the North of Amsterdam. Reading their newspaper 'New Amsterdam', reading numerous publications on their webpages and platforms "Pakhuis de Zwijger" (<https://dezwijger.nl/>) and 'New Europe-Cities in Transition' (<https://citiesintransition.eu/>) as well as previously published interviews, articles and webinars led me through very important information and experiences. In the meantime, coworkers trusted me giving me many pdf's and presentations with relation to their workings and plenty of material.

All in all, data triangulation, expert interviews, ethnographic involvement and participant observation were the basic methodologies that I used and were visible when I completed the interviews on the grounds that all the information, research results and subjective perceptions, material in combination with the scientific relevance and literature came into place.

### *Int(r)o the field!*

*“Yes, we are open for collaborations with other parts of the world. Yes, we are open for collaborations with other areas or cities. Through these partnerships and networks, we managed to build ‘alliances’”.  
(discussion with Egbert, director of Pakhuis de Zwijger, 19.4.2017)*

In order to answer the main research question concerning Social Sustainability of Amsterdam, it is essential to make a clear link between notions of Active Citizenship, Sustainable Citizenship and how they are connected to Social Sustainability. In a first stage, it is crucial to define what Social Sustainability actually is and then how it is related to the other theoretical concepts.

“Three traditions of research and practice add definition to the concept of social well-being and hence Social Sustainability, i.e., Human Centered Development, Sustainability and Community Well-Being” (Magis, Kristen & Shinn, Craig 2009)

In other words, Social Sustainability can otherwise be described as the basis where human rights, human well-being, democratic governance and equality are met with the intention to provide human-centered conditions for people (citizens in Amsterdam’s case) to make equal and democratic use of the society they live in.

The purpose of this thesis is to illustrate up to what degree Pakhuis de Zwijger promotes Social Sustainability in Amsterdam and how more research can contribute to further improvements for better results. Four major dimensions of Social Sustainability are : *human well-being, equity, democratic government* and *democratic civil society*. Wanting to review these dimensions I will make a deep investigation through specific academic concepts that I can extract from the case studies analyzed further in the thesis. ‘Social Innovation’, ‘Transition’ and ‘Active Citizenship’ are the guidelines I will base my research on so as to approach the general concept of Social Sustainability.

Further, I want to stress the importance of sustainable citizenship as a form of conscious and active role on behalf of citizens within an urban context. According to the article of Micheletti and Stolle “Sustainable Citizenship and the new politics of consumption” (Micheletti and Stolle, 2012) sustainable citizenship “...*emphasizes new responsibilities and expectations for individuals and institutions*”. By referring to that, I want to point out that this form of citizenship sets certain responsibilities as well as conditions which both individuals and institutions should comply with. This explains that both sorts of actors can jointly

contribute to a more just and sustainable development of the city. Active citizenship as a key framework calls for active participation, equal responsibility and civic engagement of citizens towards a broader societal, animals' and environmental benefit.

Therefore, in every chapter of 'Social Innovation', 'Amsterdam in Transition' and 'Active Citizenship', I will present specific case studies that prove how these theoretical concepts relate to the major four directions of the components for Social Sustainability to be practiced. All of these case studies explain how Pakhuis de Zwijger as an institution brings together citizens and encourage them to act as responsible and aware individuals towards the development of their city, the general social welfare and human well-being within an urban context.

“In order to address the increasingly complex challenges in Urban Areas, it is important that Urban Authorities cooperate with local communities, civil society, businesses and knowledge institutions”- (Council of the European Union, 2016)

According to the 'Pact of Amsterdam' (Council of the European Union, 2016) that stresses the importance and need for cities to restructure and recenter the way that governments, NGO's, social enterprises, residents, knowledge institutions (universities, schools, cultural institutions, libraries or foundations), civil servants together with the assistance of the EU involvement, deal and ideally confront the challenges and limitations that impede Amsterdam's growth. In order to achieve efficient and impactful levels of sustainable citizenship, European, national and local methodologies have to join forces for the present and future social, environmental and financial development, referred to otherwise as 'Sustainable Development'. Even though the challenges that urban areas are confronted with are local, the assistance and engagement of the wider national and international authorities is essential so as to further contribute to coping with such issues spotted on local bases. Severe challenges that modern cities, such as Amsterdam, are confronted with, are for instance the increasing poverty and inequality, conflict, housing, financial and refugee crisis as well as climate and environmental challenges. These are amongst the most severe issues that are influencing the development and well-being of our urban, rural areas and environment as well as animal's well-being at the same time.

The 'Pact of Amsterdam' (Council of the European Union, 2016) acknowledges the significance of the knowledge and practices' exchange so as to re-generate and promote sustainable solutions through wider online and offline platforms and strategies that will lead to collaborative, cohesive and diverse urban contexts. As analyzed in the 'Pact of Amsterdam' (Council of the European Union, 2016) key priorities for the Urban Agenda for



EU are the following: **-Inclusion of migrants and refugees. -Air quality, -Urban poverty, -Housing, -Circular economy, -Jobs and skills in the local economy, -Climate adaptation, -Energy transition, -Sustainable use of land and Nature-Based solutions, -Urban mobility, -Digital transition, -Innovative and responsible public procurement.** ( Council of the European Union, 2016)

What about the modern and advanced cities? “*The economic, political, social, environmental, and cultural changes implied by the term “globalization” are truly startling.*”(Gross & Hambleton , 2007) The relations between the wealthy and the poor keep widening and the dynamics of the social structure keep developing in uneven terms. Major challenges and especially the way of current governance structures, treating all sorts of citizens stress our highest attention and call for urgent intervention within a neoliberal and modern society. High globalization and digitalization streams are more than ever facilitating the neoliberal era that undoubtedly affects our modern society, including Amsterdam as well. The combination of the global financial crisis along with the strong drawbacks of neoliberalism has jointly conjured up modern cities and they find themselves caught up in the game of power dynamics in the global terrain. Such complex challenges urgently demand a new era of working together for the better, a new shift from best practices to best processes with special emphasis on collective decision-making, budgeting and governing solutions.

Social enterprises, foundations, cultural and knowledge institutions are not in charge of solving and delivering services that modern states are responsible for. Rather, they intervene as mediators in order to complement the government working when it comes to social services. For that matter, and in addition to the financial crisis of 2008-2010 that hit also the Netherlands, an energy of ‘bottom-up’ movement arose. This grassroots energy comes into play as a determined and active key player to further **assist** in delivering social services, solving societal issues and innovate ways that the traditional state has failed to respond to. More specifically, in 2011 Amsterdam’s municipality cut off financial connections, due to the economic inefficiency, and that is the key starting point for the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) to kick into gear and for various cultural organizations and institutions to put distinct focus on.

Based on these interconnected global issues with strong local implications in both the global North and the global South, leaders and representatives of various disciplines have come up with solutions that will rather bring people, ideas and methodologies together. Therefore, good governance structures, qualitative tailor made urban solutions, healthy partnerships and adaptation of strategies and policies that aim to effectively tackle urban challenges are essential ingredients for a recipe called ‘Sustainable Development’.

*'Amsterdam has never been more liveable, exciting and prosperous. Gone are the abandoned canal houses and impoverished neighborhoods. Urban development took swing, with arts and culture as main drivers. Culture is everywhere in this city, not only with artists and institutions, also with a population made up of more than 180 nationalities'*(Cathelijne Broers 2015 ;41)

Cathelijne Broers, director of the Hermitage museum claimed in the Cities Culture Report of 2015 stating Amsterdam's capacity to gather together bright minds, artists, visitors and entrepreneurs from the global scale in the arts and creative industry, and facilities that the city supplies them with. Its main charm is due to its diverse and multicultural society, cultural heritage with a large variety of cultural events and cultural centers as well as dynamics of commercial and innovative industry.

The city of Amsterdam as well as many other European cities and capitals play a crucial role in the European model of sustainability. The Dutch capital holds two ultra significant labels within the EU context. On one hand, Amsterdam was awarded as **iCapital** by the European Union, that stands for Innovative Capital of Europe for the years of 2016 and 2017. On the other hand, it held the **Dutch presidency** over the first semester of 2016. Being in Holland for this period of 2016-2017 (at least) for my master's degree in '**Cultural Anthropology; Sustainable Citizenship**', I thought that it would be a great chance to pursue my academic research and dive into the knowledge that these occasions would offer me. Pursuing my internship and ethnographic research in Amsterdam and investigating the background, practices, methodologies, partnerships and outcomes in Pakhuis de Zwijger as an important and impactful key role in Amsterdam, with this thesis, I aim at providing an overview, analysis, deep knowledge and information to everyone reading my piece.

The first chapter of the major part of this thesis is analyzed upon Amsterdam's acquisition of the iCAPITAL award for 2016 and 2017 and **Social Innovation** in the city.

An analysis of the procedure, before, during and after the prize, will show why the capital of Holland is awarded as Innovative European city and what are the core principles and forces that led it to this title and recognition. Next to that, I will provide examples of how Pakhuis de Zwijger innovates and manages to play a key role in this Socially innovative aspect of the city.

The second chapter provides analysis on the concept of **Transition** and two case studies that Pakhuis de Zwijger has been implementing with regards to transformation and transition

platforms. In turn, this facilitation of networking is offering online and offline opportunities in Amsterdam and all European capitals to connect, exchange knowledge and practices.

Following that, the third chapter is focused on **Active Citizenship** and specific insights about how again this social enterprise contributes to the concept above by having put in practice specific programs with an intention of involving various sorts of residents (newcomers, children, Amsterdammers ecc.) and educating/ developing future do-ers and aware citizens.

At the end of this part, I will provide recommendations, otherwise 'reflections' on the case studies such as 'Eat to meet', the general concept of transition and policy creation that stem from my anthropological analysis.

## **2.1 How Pakhuis de Zwijger contributes to Amsterdam's SOCIAL INNOVATION!**

*"The City DNA in Amsterdam can be featured by the following assets Diversity, Openness, Pragmatism, Tolerance, Dynamic and Creativity."* (Sigaloff, Arnoldus and van Exel, 2015)

Amsterdam's DNA has long proved that is a collection of characteristics underpinning its image of innovative, open-minded, diverse and multicultural city. To name a few of these assets, the commitment to policies that attract new talents and investment opportunities from external parties, the exchange of knowledge and know-how as well as the embracement of a bottom-up approach to societal issues. What is more, the Dutch culture and mindset strongly characterized by the '*polder model*', suggest a pioneer for collective and collaborative approaches to problems having an impact on the entire society. '*Polder model*' is the combination of the twin ultra significant attributions that turned the Dutch into this competent and skilled population. (The Economist, 2002) A glance at the historic behaviour of Holland and how they were confronted and eventually dealt with floods provides certain insights. For instance, since approximately the 16th century and according again to the Dutch culture, various stakeholders would gather and collaborate with citizens of Amsterdam in order to protect their city from a number of disasters. Consequently, this '*Polder model*' (ibid) reveals the twofold popular skills of strong governing authorities along with cooperation terms. Such a perspective shows how importantly this population values principles such as collaboration, participation, goal-oriented solutions through collective, down-to-earth and genuine practices.

As a result, strategies and ideas that the Dutch society has come up with collaborative and tailored made terms can guarantee and justify the iCapital prize. On April 8th, 2016 Amsterdam won this award for the years of 2016 and 2017 by the European Commission due to its "... capacity to connect people, places, public and private actors, urban areas can substantially enhance innovation in Europe." (European Commission, 2017). iCapital stands for Innovation capital of Europe and is defined as "*innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social*" (Mulgan, 2007: 8). As a matter of fact, Amsterdam was awarded as European Capital of Innovation '*for embracing a bottom-up approach based on smart growth, startups, livability and digital social innovation*' and its victory was equal to a prize of 950.000euro with the intention of scaling up innovative practices and efforts.

The selection of Amsterdam's award, among 9 shortlisted other candidate cities, was decided by a bunch of experts for its future capacity of innovation as well as its ongoing citizen driven initiatives that were launched after 2012 rooting in the capability of fostering and strengthening citizens and residents. The 'Amsterdam Approach' (Amsterdamse Aanpak) is a strategy that the city has taken on and proves why Amsterdam is considered this innovative city entitled as iCapital for 2016-2017. Through this competition one can see the reasons and the criteria why Amsterdam is awarded as such. iCapital stands for Innovation capital, including all the actions and actors that underpin a title like that. In saying so, I mean all those social innovators, social entrepreneurs, civil servants, initiators, activists, urban planners, academics and various stakeholders that come together in order to conceive, gather, design and implement policies for the common social good impacting on the entire society. This perspective reveals the notion of 'bottom-up' approach

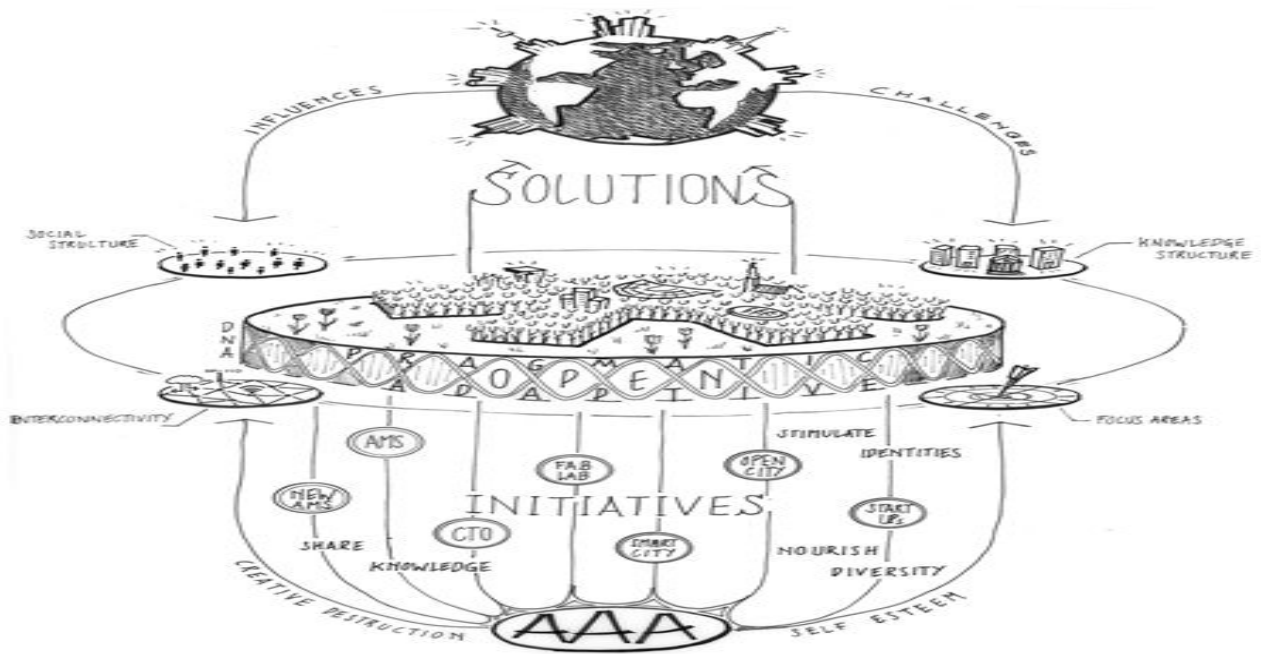
Amsterdam has proved to be a very successful example of this point of view due to the sustainable, citizen-centered and innovative model of the city that represents. This is visible through the many bottom-up initiatives and the many social enterprises and organizations that keep developing opportunities for residents to make their needs visible and strive for them. One of these examples is undoubtedly the organization Pakhuis de Zwijger. It suggests a place where major related actions are based and a space for creative and social entrepreneurs and initiators to meet each other. For instance, people from the City of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Economic Board, Waag Society and other organizations meet and support projects and ideas related to the award of Amsterdam: EU Innovation Capital Award 2016 and 2017. The EU engagement here is important because with this competition and prize wants to spot, promote, scale up and sustain innovative, citizen-centered and collaborative processes.

The main objective of iCapital and the Amsterdam acquisition of this title is that the parties involved want to bring innovation on top of the agenda. This Innovation is simultaneously the collection of Digital, Social and Sustainable Innovation. Those parties aimed at bringing together people from businesses, NGOs, knowledge institutions and the government as an ecosystem that can provide resilience which adapts to the needs of people living in Amsterdam.

*"Our goal was to bring innovation from pocket to daily life. We aim at the exchange of knowledge and know-how with other European cities in order to remain an innovative city" -Femke Haccu-Urban Innovation Officer at City of Amsterdam, 3.5.2017*



When Femke explained to me about the entire process, I realized that people from Amsterdam acknowledge the city's collaborative and innovative spirit. However, they claim that this is not enough. Winning the prize is not enough if it does not further promote innovation, development, knowledge, collaboration and go deep into society's issues. Standing from your throne and watching your kingdom cannot prove you are a leader, rather every-day challenges show who you really are.



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### ***2.1.1 Who is finally involved and why Amsterdam is considered an ecosystem?***

To begin, let me first refer to the proposal of Amsterdam when applied as a candidate city for this competition back in 2015. 'Accelerating Amsterdam's Assets' is the proposal that all parties involved came up with in order to provide and explain in formal terms why Amsterdam should win this competition. (Sigaloff, Martijn and van Exel Thijs, 2014)

The city of Amsterdam, Kennisland, Stichting de Waag NL, Amsterdam Economic Board NL, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions and Pakhuis de Zwijger make up the core team behind the processes of iCapital. Each and every member of these played and will still play an important role in order to sustain this image of Amsterdam as the European Capital of Innovation for 2016 and 2017. All these partners together constitute an ecosystem which is able to bring resilience that adapts to the needs of the city. Two interconnected focal points of this proposal bid and consequently, directions for the follow-up of the prize are: **The Talented city** and **The Healthy city**.

While the first one focuses on the levels of work, education and self-sustainability the latter puts its emphasis on the livability of Amsterdam. The incorporation of all these actors explains the multidimensional aspect of this proposal, which is a collection of focus areas of: smart, startups, liveability, digital and social innovation. In fact, this collaborative model intends to underpin and bring visibility to local initiatives that want to tackle societal challenges at a local base. Be it housing, segregation, health issues, etc grassroots initiatives and movements of Amsterdam are pushed further to the forefront of the city's innovation.

*"Amsterdam's € 950,000 first prize will be used to scale up and expand the city's efforts to innovate. How this money will be spent will be determined by all partners involved in this bid."* ( Amsterdam.nl , 2017)

Another dimension of this concept is not only to build partnerships between various stakeholders, but mainly to voice up local practices that will work together and remain committed, in the long-term, to investing in a better future. In this regard, after the selection of the Dutch European Capital of Innovation, a four-month-accelerator program will run providing training and formation to the winners of the local competition. Stakeholders decided that the remuneration of the prize should be distributed across the city to initiatives which are faithful to collaborative practices and whose common ground is innovation related to societal challenges.

# AMSTERDAMMERS, MAAK JE STAD!

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## *2.1.2 Case study: Amsterdammers make your city! (in Dutch, Amsterdammers, Maak je Stad! or AMJS)*

This competition is called ‘Amsterdammers maak je stad!’ and equals to ‘Amsterdammers make your city’ and it’s still an ongoing process. This challenge aims to identify 30 to 50 local initiatives that contribute towards the city’s innovation at a local level as well as further sustain financially and bring them to the surface. By bringing together all these winners after the so-called challenge, stakeholders want to create another local ecosystem consisting of local social enterprises, bottom-up initiatives, start-ups, individuals and neighbourhood upscaling movements that will reflect notions of collaboration, participation, transparency and openness. AMJS challenge is not only a tool that explains, justifies and sustains the iCapital award of Amsterdam, but mainly, supports the two trajectories of “**Healthy city**” and “**Talented city**”. (Challenge: Amsterdammers, Make Your City!, 2017 )

Besides that, this trajectory is a tool for democratic participation that further boosts the sense of belonging, social change and spreads notions of equal responsibility. This occurs due to the fact that local residents feel the need to change or modify situations so as to meet their needs, and simultaneously they are given the possibility to take a step beyond and

decide by designing and implementing their own ideas with regards to these specific needs that need to be met. These final 30 to 50 winner initiatives, when selected, will be covering a range of topics from housing, sustainability, segregation, health and other angles that concern the present and future of Amsterdam. Hence, the distribution of this prize proves that the bottom-up movement can steer its own path regardless of the government's political agenda. Citizens make use of their own ideas and potential and move on at their own pace.

By engaging people through blogs and welcoming everyone to a series of workshops, discussions meetings, the AMJS challenge wants to stimulate innovative thinking and continuous learning processes. This cooperative ecosystem aimed at innovation brings together the bottom-up movement along with institutions of Amsterdam as a strand of the 'Amsterdam Approach'.

Both **identification** of the societal challenges as well as the **development** of ideas to cope with these issues on behalf of the citizens constitute the first two important steps to implementing Social Innovation as far as the perspective of European Commission it goes. (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2015).

However, the aim of this research thesis is not to analyze the role of every party, rather to evaluate and elaborate on the practices and strategies of Pakhuis de Zwijger. As a central party to this procedure, this cultural organization suggests the workplace where all the actors mentioned above would meet, interact, discuss, plan and design strategies for the iCapital. Concerning this award for example, all different local actors meet again and again in the facilities of Pakhuis. What follows is the importance of creating 'practical projects'. They might vary in content and strategy depending on the context and the impact they will have on the local community each time. From running local bazaars to growing organic vegetables in community gardens, transition movements can most likely apply solutions to local concerns and needs.

As mentioned and analyzed in the 'Agenda for renewable energy, clear air, a circular economy and a climate-resilient city' that the city of Amsterdam has adopted, that for a transition in order succeed it is very crucial to establish proper **collaborations** (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2015). Adequate partnerships can result not only in more fluid and cohesive connections, but also in more fruitful, representative and impactful practices. Cross-sectoral and inter-departmental collaborations have the potential of providing more helpful insights than more monotonous strategies in terms of diversity could possibly offer. In the case of Pakhuis de Zwijger, one can notice numerous multidimensional and cross-sectoral partnerships and connections that undoubtedly supply all the actors involved with accelerated and more genuine results.

All in all, through this chapter dedicated to Social Innovation and how Pakhuis de Zwijger as an expertise and debate center brings everyone together, I have reviewed certain concepts and ideas that one can come across reading it. First of all, I analyzed the reasons why Amsterdam was awarded as iCAPITAL for 2016 and 2017 and for which specific reasons this city values and expresses the significance and existence of Social Innovation across Amsterdam. After having analyzed why and how Amsterdam won this award, I explained how this prize is distributed evenly in the city so as to create platforms and **partnerships** in the future as a key ingredient to sustainable and long-term innovation. This future network intends to boost subsequent and constant growth within the city that will keep evolving and brightening up the innovative Capital.

*“The Consortium said Amsterdam is an ecosystem. But just to lean back when you are good is not a good way.”-Femke Haccu-Urban Innovation Officer at City of Amsterdam, 3.5.2017*



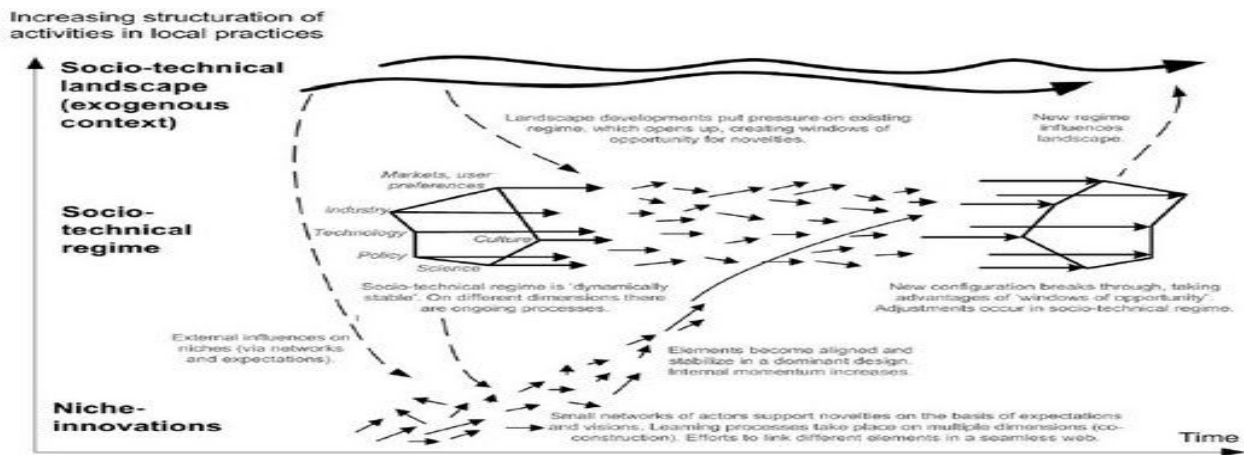
# EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF INNOVATION

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## 2.2 Why Amsterdam is considered a 'city in transition'!



### 2.2.1 Introducing the transition theory

The chapter focused on the concept of Transition with special emphasis on Amsterdam and how Pakhuis de Zwijger contributes to that, aims to provide a theoretical and experiential analysis. I will elaborate on a series of theories, practices, quotes and case studies that will further explain and tap into the essence of 'Cities in Transition' and especially why Amsterdam is considered as such. Next to that, by referring to Amsterdam in Transition it is essential to point out that this is a stage or a shift meaning that Amsterdam is a transitioning city rather than a transitioned city as a work in progress and not a final stage. 'New Democracy' and 'New Europe- Cities in Transition' are the two main case studies, launched by Pakhuis de Zwijger, that will explain in depth, through theoretical and practical perspectives, to what extent transitions are significant and feasible in our modern society.

At this point, I will introduce the theory of Energy Transitions between the power relations of modern challenges as well as city makers. The former consists of global streams that have

an effect on both local and global scales. For instance, high streams and trends of Digitalization and Globalization. On the other hand, city makers or change makers want to spot these challenges and by putting pressure on the existing system, they aim to bring democratic changes within the society. They intervene as niche- innovators within small networks so as to bring about novelties on the basis of every-day life.

*“The existing system gives power to the government and increases inequality. The longer the time of no-change, the more power they have. Redistribution of power can be succeeded through 3 stages: 1)Spotting the challenges and principles. 2) Coming up with resources in order to confront these limits, and 3) Design and implement strategies. Through ‘new Democracy’ we want to create learning networks of co-creation, research for the commons, sense of democracy and social justice”- Interview with Joachim- 28.02.2017*

These two layers are placed one across the other and they both put pressure on the existing democratic system, the so-called ‘Regime’. This pressure by both factors leads to the move of the regime from the initial spot to the ‘New Regime’. To put it more clearly, this transition of one point to another envisions to bring about new notions of social justice, social innovation and a new sense of belonging and ownership.

"It is about communities stepping up to address the big challenges they face by starting local. By coming together, they are able to create solutions together." (Transition Network Organization, 2016)

What is this ‘*New regime*’ we are talking about? Transition can not be achieved on its own. It has to be implemented in all different layers of the society, otherwise it cannot be called transition, but rather a focal change, whereas Transition should be a radical shift away from the traditional capitalist/ neoliberal system. Hence, for the transition to be impactful and effective, change-makers and in general stakeholders have to come up with new ideologies, concepts and narratives that will generate new practices and sustainable lifestyles.

New forms of thinking, organizing and doing have the potential to bring in this social change through emancipation, entrepreneurial projects and sustainable lifestyles. A multi layered shift must be placed on the shift of participants, local residents and stakeholders that all together will result in *new* ways of influencing the current governance structures, *new* ways of organizing the community and *new* ways of connection and interaction among the various key players. This ‘*new regime*’ has to be built within a framework based on trust,

collaboration, resilient practices, just social terms by first acknowledging past negative effects. By jointly creating new citizen-oriented and community-focused values and implementing new 'states of mind', we (change-makers, scientists, academics, researchers, residents, stakeholders, activists, civil servants) can embrace and produce narratives that will function as key drivers for this so-called social change.

In order to explain further the concept of "Transition" I will make a link to the "Essential guide to doing transition" introduced by the Transition Network Organization. Based on that, I wrote an article about doing transition on the platform of "Cities in Transition" of Pakhuis de Zwijger. Hence, this essential guide suggests a manual for all those who envision local transitions so as to implement certain changes and shake up the current governance models intending to bring about social change, democratic participation, sentiment of ownership as well as the exchange of knowledge and know-how. Transition is a movement of grassroots initiatives that strive for social justice and democratic participation at local levels without aiming individual profits, rather they seek collective and shared benefits. Be it food justice, environmental activist initiatives, neighbourhood projects or alternative community currency projects, local initiatives can potentially achieve and establish transition as long as it is for the better of the entire community they live in.

Such movements and initiatives have their mind and principles set so as to achieve certain values and goals. To what extent to which they can be successful can be defined by the seven significant steps or ingredients for transition movements while performing the transition. **Healthy groups, Vision, Involvement, Networking, Practical Projects, Part of movements and Reflection** are the ingredients that make up the list for successful transition movements.

Amid this research thesis I intend to investigate and evaluate the goals, practices, processes, partners and challenges that Pakhuis de Zwijger is dealing with and to what extent has made it through all the stages mentioned above in order to be considered as an organization that eases and facilitates successful transition movements.

The "Guide to Social Innovation" developed by DG Regional and Urban Policy and DG Employment, Social affairs and Inclusion, and commissioned by DG Regional and Urban Policy (European Commission) in order to provide insights and direct explanations about Social Innovation and how it can be achieved. Therefore, according to this guide, processes that strive for social innovation can be based and analyzed on four interlinked steps:

- 1) Identification of social needs,
- 2) Solutions to meet these needs,
- 3) Reflection of these solutions and whether they met their goals, and

#### 4) Scaling up these social innovation practices.

An analysis of both case studies provided further down in the text proves that the **combination** of ‘New Democracy’ and ‘New Europe- Cities in transition’ concentrate all the above mentioned ingredients: *identification, solutions, reflection and scale-up*.

While New Democracy aims to identify social needs and solutions to them through the theoretical learning networks that reflect on each solution through research, ‘New Europe- Cities in transition’ intends to spot and make visible all these innovative practices across Europe through the platform and field trips.

Pakhuis de Zwijger is not an initiative itself, rather it is an organization that wants to intermediate among local grassroots movements and the government. Its mission is to connect those partners and offer a stage where all stakeholders meet so as to result in collaborative practices dealing with various societal problems and challenges. Therefore, I will not examine and evaluate this case study as an initiative, but I will elaborate on to what extent this social enterprise facilitates such strategies and offer personal critical insights on how this transition can be further developed through an anthropological lens.

“All across the world, transition movements have common goals and values. They aim at intervening at local scale and deal with obstacles that impede the society to grow and sustain itself. No matter who these initiatives consist of and where they are coming from, they establish transitions so long as they connect minds, vision and skills”. (Keranidou, 2017)

Following, I will provide two case studies that I had the great opportunity to either observe or be actively involved with. ‘New Democracy’ and ‘New Europe- Cities in transition’ speak for themselves. After having introduced the concept of Social Innovation, I will now analyze those two concepts that are alert for something new, innovative with a fresh approach to our society.

- **2.2.1 Case study: “New Democracy” : “How this trajectory represents the transition theory!”**



In 2016 Pakhuis de Zwijger introduced the concept of New Democracy. For the first six months of 2016 the Netherlands presides over the European Union. This year Pakhuis together with the Amsterdam municipality launched the program series of New Democracy. Pakhuis de Zwijger represents an expertise center for new democratic structures in various fields such as

- Energy transitions,
- Area development,
- Public health care,
- Public services in neighborhoods, etc.

In the everyday agenda of this organization there are meetings and events going on that gather people from various backgrounds and disciplines. A good example could be the project “New Democracy”. This program raises certain questions regarding the common goods through certain workshops, talks and campaigns. “*Who owns the common goods?*”, “*Who manages the common goods?*” “*What are the common goods?*” and in general questions about how we as citizens and knowledge institutions can restore democracy in our society. Program makers of ‘New Democracy’ call on people that envision such societies either they belong to the political scene (Top) or to the bottom. Through this neo-democratic lens, people have the opportunity to re-think their cities and together with people from the local government, they plan alternative policies or practices tackling various obstacles for the common good. Those alternative co-designed practices lead to strengthening our societies and enhancing the civic glue and cohesion.

Therefore, ‘New Democracy’ is a theoretical tool that wants to create space for dialogue among these various stakeholders so as to share narratives, work collaboratively and interact. By acknowledging all the negative effects of our modern dysfunctional governance structures in modern states, key role players want to make the society shift to more resilient, democratic, sustainable and citizen-friendly results. Such a theoretical framework intends to bring together people that want to bring in such terms and conditions by inviting everyone to take part.

After putting emphasis on our democratic systems otherwise called ‘regimes’, this ‘New regime’ promises to spread notions of social democracy, equity and participation. A very helpful example of neo-democratic activities, that I had the chance to take part in, took place at Pakhuis. Peter MacFadyen gave a speech about his guide on how we can co-create alternative democratic political schemes. His example in the city of Frome (UK) is very successful and he explained the factors that played a key role to achieve it.

During this event called “Flatpack Democracy” all of us that took part had the possibility not only to be passive observers, but rather we were kindly asked to be involved by sharing our opinions, asking questions and develop our own ideas on how such alternative governance structures can potentially be implemented in our cities or regions. The audience comprised not only of academics, politicians, people from the municipality of Amsterdam, but also students and local residents of Amsterdam. This event gave us the chance to discuss in detail the failures of current traditional governance structures, but also come up with ideas and concepts that could cope with those. Further to that, all participants and guests discussed about methodologies that representative Democracy can be restored again in our society, bringing about democratic renewal as well as representative democratic practices and opportunities. This event is more than a democratic speech, rather is one example of bringing together people from different disciplines and backgrounds so as to discuss topics that concern the entire society.

It goes without saying that “New Democracy” as a concept is based on significant academic theories. One important guideline of “New Democracy” is Transition theory introduced and further developed by John Grin, professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam.

### ***What are the goals of New Democracy?***

This innovative theoretical program aims to bring these changes and restore the philosophy of Democracy in modern societies, such as Amsterdam. In doing so, this concept brings together and create the space for debate among various actors in order to build certain ideals. To put it more clearly, Knowledge institutions such as University, schools or cultural organizations, residents as well as government bodies (both Amsterdam municipality and the Dutch State) are invited to develop learning networks and transparent methods. Each partner of those is in charge of different tasks. University members provide research for the so-called commons or urban design for instance, while people from the government provide structures. All parties, individually and collectively, bring about inputs and outputs for the activities they design together and influence the powerful layer of our society, the government, either local or national.

These fields of the society are already democratic themselves. However, New Democracy appears as an “Experimental Democracy” in the sense that wants to spread forms of continuous adaptation to the constantly changing contexts. First of all, based on the *Transition Theory*, it wants to further promote research about certain directions. In specific, it is a means for a circular economy and new governance structures in order to design and

co-create practical implementations. New governance structures are based on co-designing and co-creation of a new regime that may bring a new sense of equity and ownership on the grounds that residents voice up their needs/ involvement and take part in decision-making processes. New Democracy as a concept wants to redistribute the power relation between government and the citizens. The main principle, then, of New Democracy is that it is based on co-creation of new democratic structures in fields that have an impact on the whole society.

*“Social innovation is understood as the development and delivery of new ideas and solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes) at different socio-structural levels that intentionally seek to change power relations and improve human capabilities, as well as the processes via which these solutions are carried out”*(Jacobi, Edmiston and Ziegler, 2017)

Bearing in mind this definition, we come to the understanding that social innovation engages new ways and angles of approaching the society. And particularly, through a variety of perspectives such as: social, cultural, financial and political levels so as to meet the needs of urban citizens and be able to design tailored policies. Social innovation as a concept is a key point that the EU model suggested through its agenda in order to tackle certain challenges that our modern cities are confronted with. “New Democracy” describes this innovative shift from traditional approaches to the modern ones that bring all the involved parties in the same processes with equal terms.

All in all, through this chapter dedicated to Social Innovation and how Pakhuis de Zwijger as an expertise and debate center brings everyone together, I have reviewed certain concepts and ideas that one can come across reading it. First of all, I analyze the reasons why Amsterdam was awarded as iCAPITAL for 2016 and 2017 and for which specific reasons this city values and expresses the significance and existence of Social Innovation throughout Amsterdam. Apart from that, I continued analyzing how the program series ‘New Democracy’ represents the theory of Transition as well as core principles such as Transparency, co-creation, democracy, commons and social change.

- **2.2.2 Case study: ‘New Europe-Cities in Transition’ platform**



(©New Europe-Cities in Transition)

The idea of ‘Cities in Transition’ is designed upon the call for dealing with challenges that modern societies provoke and simultaneously implement a series of innovative and creative practices that enhance the sense of social and democratic innovation inside the communities for the common good. Such a platform promotes and enhance the civic engagement, social cohesion and multiculturalism due to the fact that engages many actors such as social entrepreneurs, activists, urban planners, academics, enterprises from different cultural and economic backgrounds. Therefore, this action contributes to a more diverse society whose first objective is to strengthen society and address inequalities regardless of the origins, gender, nationality and orientation.

The European engagement in this program is significant and this is obvious through the fact that ‘Cities in transition’ is co-funded by the ‘Europe for citizens’ programme of the European Union. As a funded programme by the EU, it reads that this programme aims to foster the European citizenship and further promote common stages and agency for European citizens to make equal and democratic use of participating in processes within the European terrain. In the last three years, this network managed to bring together over 500 European city makers, an impressive fact, despite the diverse components and topics covered by local initiatives and practitioners.

“A key success factor in accelerating the transition to a sustainable city is working together and making the right connections.” (Municipal Council of Amsterdam, 2015)

That was the idea behind ‘New Europe- Cities in transition’, an umbrella project spread in Europe that functions as a network between city-makers. ‘Cities in transition’ network is an online and offline platform in which every European capital is equally participating. On one

hand every city in transition is supplied with a home page in which city reporters can map and write about innovative movements and bottom-up initiatives aiming at transforming the urban context of their city. On the other hand, all these cities involved in the network organize and run city field trips in various cities as an expression of city expeditions and opportunities to discuss about topics that concern those cities. While the online platform was launched back in January 2015, the network already existed since May 2014 when launched the first field trip to Bucharest.

*“Our idea was to create a network so as to connect and map city-makers from various European cities. We want to bring the urban agenda on local, national and European level.”- Quirine*

In short, this network initiated by Pakhuis de Zwijger back in 2014 is a network that connects city-makers and changemakers in Europe aiming at providing opportunities for online exchange of knowledge and know-how. All these European cities strive for social change and transition that will seed notions of equity, transparency and democracy that our current governance structures are no longer able to provide. Over 500 city-makers sharing common values, goals, principles and ambitions for the development of their cities can have access to this online mechanism so as to provide an overview of what is happening in their own city in terms of transition, sustainability, innovation, circular economy and movements. Such a dynamic partnership and networking facilitates active citizens that strive for social innovation, co-creation, active citizenship, social change, democracy, circularity and urban development functioning under the same flag. Cities that are undergoing transformations and are in the phase of transition want to change the relations between the public and private sector, the government and citizens and simultaneously create some space for different communities to interact. High attendance and registration in the yearly meetings prove the degree to which representatives of grassroots movements and citizens from across Europe are faithful to this idea of transition.

*“Citizens all over Europe are looking for answers to the complex issues of our time, that can no longer be addressed by our (local) governments alone. New Europe - Cities in Transition is initiated by Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam and maintained by City Ambassadors all over Europe.” - New Europe-Cities in Transition platform, <https://citiesintransition.eu/>*

What is important to stress, by bringing to light and giving visibility to all these local actors of co-creation, activism, innovation, movements, grassroots initiatives and the creative industry, Pakhuis de Zwijger contributes to the engagement of active citizens at a local, national, European arena. Resilient, peaceful, innovative, circular, diverse and sustainable are just few

among the missions that city-makers strive for in their local environment. And being part of the platform 'cities in transition' as an editor while pursuing my internship duties, this digital connection between transitive cities and city-makers intends to effectively embrace active citizens in the daily life and scene of those cities each time.

*"A Global Citizen is someone who takes responsibility for these global problems, who engages actively in the search for solutions, and who tries to change things". (Ron Israel, 2012).*

As a consequence, one can see that Amsterdam and specifically Pakhuis de Zwijger, by implementing such platforms, has a double role in society. Not only is the initiator of collaborative, collective, sustainable and citizen oriented practices but also, constitutes the crossroads for people with this sort of interest to meet and interact. Placed in a former warehouse, this organization seeks to embody people from the creative industry, movements representatives and change-makers as an end product of the interdisciplinary collaboration. The common ground of all city makers is that they are inspired by social innovation that does not emerge from top down institutions (government) or mechanisms, but rather from bottom up initiatives (citizens) sharing a common principle of common ownership <https://citiesintransition.eu/f-a-q/>. They all practice daily innovative actions and contribute to the solutions that affect their daily and future life on both local and global scales.

Closing up this paragraph focused on 'Amsterdam in Transition' from an ethnographic perspective, I want to make a clear link between the analyzed projects. Even though the theoretical case study 'New Democracy' is based on co-creation and transparency between the bottom-up and top-down structure so as to implement more democratic practices, 'Cities in transition' is a more hands-on platform putting main emphasis on the evolution and upscaling of grassroots movements aiming at bringing about notions of mapping, knowledge exchange and collaboration. Despite the fact that the former represents the intersection (co-laboration) between bottom-up and top-down practices, the latter is a network among entirely grassroots movements in all European countries without the involvement of top-down practices. However, common ground of those 2 case studies is that they reveal how Amsterdam as a 'city in transition' promotes and instill notions of co-creation, connection, redistribution of power and energy democracy.

Though, being a city in transition does not mean that Amsterdam is already in this 'New stage', 'New Regime' yet. To the contrary, it is a transitioning city and this socio-cultural transformation underpins the shift from a 'Top-down' governance model to more collaborative infrastructures that aim to promote democratic government and democratic civil society. 'Amsterdam in Transition' is a work in progress and the focus is on the shift rather than the

end product!



### 2.3. How Amsterdam as a city in transition encourages ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP!

To begin, as explained and analyzed in the previous chapters, Social Innovation and the energy of TRANSITION are key theoretical frameworks used by practitioners, activists, stakeholders, policy makers, academics and citizens all together. The common ground and mission behind these two concepts is to collectively confront challenges and limits of our modern cities by marking a new era of shifts in governance, policymaking, citizenship, solutions and entrepreneurship. Social Innovation and Transition can be successful if practiced by a great range of individuals and corporations, meaning that it is co-acted by both the top-down as well as the bottom-up structure. This research field wants to spot the practices by both sides and specifically how Pakhuis de Zwijger as an expertise and debate center brings them together.

Active Citizenship is another key framework that undoubtedly goes in line with Social Innovation and Social Sustainability. By saying so I mean that Anthropology as a field of Social and Behavioral study puts extra emphasis and significance on the forms of citizenship through a range of conventional to more alternative forms of it. In this master course we study the behavior of human being in a diverse and multifaceted framework that is designed upon the triple bottom line, referred to otherwise as *People-Planet-Profit*. In specific, the article of Micheletti and Stolle explains this behaviour through various dynamics from temporal, spatial and environmental aspects in order to restore and rethink certain ideals and principles that will contribute to more just, peaceful, eco-friendly and more long-term contexts for citizens and animals' well being. Active citizenship implies that citizens are aware, conscious and act individually or collectively as well as responsibly in order to cope and deal effectively with societal concerns that impede the society to grow effectively.

Now it is high time for citizens to take action in order to hold others accountable and more responsible towards them through the agency that is given to them. Grassroots initiatives and associations in collective actions for the common good offer citizens practical opportunities and activities the chance to be 'active citizens'. Active citizenship means that residents and citizens are involved in processes that concern them so as to reach a more democratic and just output leading to socially sustainable societies. In turn, citizens become

responsible and perform their daily duties and responsibilities having an impact on the larger context challenging the globalistic pressures that root in the ongoing global capitalist system. A set of key values that circle the notion of 'Active Citizenship' includes democracy, tolerance, participation, respect, solidarity and justice.

*"Citizenship as participation can be seen as representing an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents".*  
(Lister 1998).

### **2.3.1 Case study: 'city-making'**

When people from different disciplines, origins, cultural and ethnic backgrounds come together, they can foster and develop notions of solidarity, ownership, responsibility and active citizenship that are beneficial to all different parties involved in those processes. For these reasons, Pakhuis de Zwijger, as proved so far to be holding an important role in the transition of Amsterdam, has been implementing projects of co-creation for the past years. Envisioning to supply Amsterdammers with opportunities through which they can jointly be part of collaborative and democratic processes for the common good, program makers of PdZ have developed various projects. In this case, Amsterdammers are given many opportunities to be part of city-making practices and 'active citizenship' performances. There is a series of trajectories that citizens get involved in order to spot and design local policies together with people from the Amsterdam's government, knowledge institutions, creative industries and ordinary inhabitants. When program makers from Pakhuis de Zwijger coined the term "City-making", they wanted to involve in this meaning all those people that act collectively for the common social good. Active citizenship can be translated as 'City-making' when it comes to collective performances and practices of people that envision their cities to be more just, diverse and be responsive to their needs. As director of Pakhuis de Zwijger, Egbert, explained through our discussion,

*'City-making is making things visible and telling the stories of all sorts of people in our city. For us, active citizenship means city-making.'* 19.4.2017

Through this civic-approached concept, called 'city-making', citizens are given the opportunity to act as mindful human-beings performing responsibly towards the social, economic, environmental and cultural development. An important asset to this mission is

bearing in mind past social and environmental injustices so as to prevent repeating similar mistakes. This idea underpins the existence of 'city-making' and transition as a form of bottom-up approach that prioritizes citizens over corporate governance and envisions further human well-being and democratic civil society. In addition, being conscious about the past and curious about the future can lead to 'caring is sharing' practices. In turn, taking care of each other as well as the urban contexts we live in makes citizens more aware, compassionate and responsible. More just and tailored urban patterns can be designed by and for urban people when curious for modern urban development in democratic, responsible and resilient terms.

"Alongside this shift was the rise of the 'good governance' agenda and its concerns with decentralised governance and increasing the responsiveness of governments to citizens' voices" (Goetz and Gaventa 2001)

### **What city-makers do?**

Urban planners, academics, grassroots representatives, local citizens, civil servants, students and social entrepreneurs can be city-makers. This term is purposely so broad in order to address as many topics and attract as many followers as possible. From an elderly asian person to a very young European child. Common ground of all city makers is that they are inspired by social innovation that does not emerge from top down institutions (government) or mechanisms, but rather from bottom up initiatives (citizens) sharing principles of common ownership (<https://citiesintransition.eu/f-a-q/>). They all practice daily innovative actions and contribute to the solutions that affect their daily and future life on both local and global scales. For instance, their practices can vary from running voluntary schemes in order to raise respect for women on a local scale to leading campaigns for agricultural alternative foodways in markets. In short, through our interview with program maker Quirine she explained that

*"City maker is every pioneer that never stops and continuously seeks the social change by contributing to social innovation. There is no specific explanation of who a city-maker is because in fact we want to involve everyone!"*

A city-maker, otherwise placemaker, envisions a more in depth interaction between the community, the residents, stakeholders, civil servants together with city amenities and the environment. In other words, city-makers strive for such human and social interactions that

put extra emphasis on the social development and well-being of people (citizens in this case) as well as nature's well-being. This social glue is used as a tool that will lead to beneficial interactions that citizens, governmental and corporate powers will make use of, both on individual and collaborative scales. The outcome of this dynamic process aims at empowering the residents as well as the common places as co-creators of this transition. Bringing together key stakeholders and engaging initiators of various socio-cultural initiatives that will share their ideas has the great potential of developing/ designing activities that will redistribute the commons back to the community. A process by and for people that will equally spread out senses of belonging, co-creation, participation, active citizenship and human interaction.

“It's a whole paradigm shift and it's a big deal.

(Karssenbergh, Laven, Glaser and van 't Hoff, 2016, 28:338)

### **2.3.2 21st century skills!**

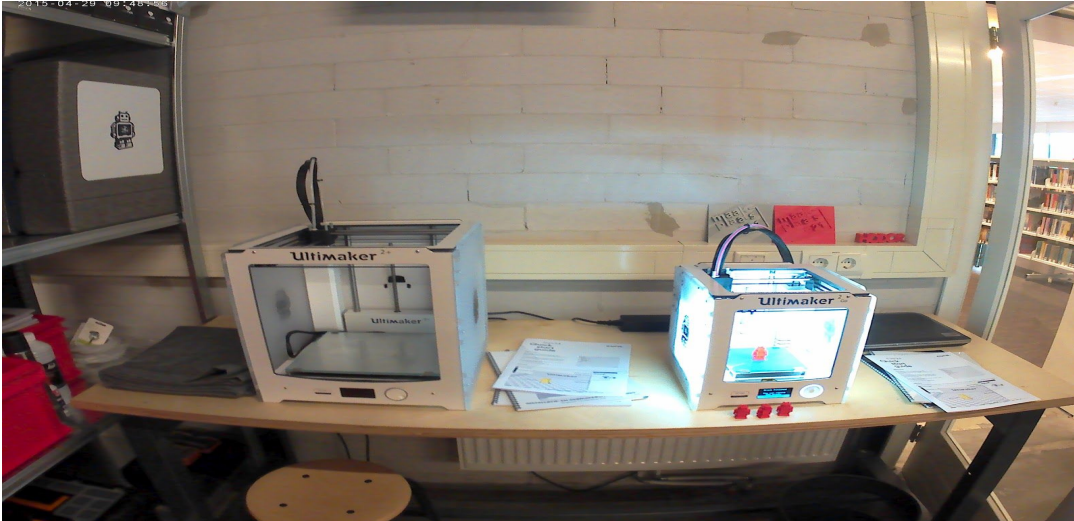
The 4Cs are a collection of skills and competences that intend to further educate and develop citizens in the fields of :

1. Communication,
2. Collaboration,
3. Critical thinking and problem solving as well as
4. Creativity and Innovation.

These are called 21st century skills that our academy together with other knowledge institutions and individuals aim to inspire and facilitate young generations in acquiring them. The article '*What is 21st Century Learning and Citizenship All About?*' explains why these skills are important for our active citizenship. It is essential to educate young generations, so they develop mindsets in the fields of Global awareness, digital and civic literacy. As a result, such competences have the potential to create future active citizens that will recognize their active role in society, the extent to which they can apply those skills in order to contribute to a more sustainable world. Moreover, they will be able to better spot and communicate, in on-line and off-line methods, issues and solutions that concern their urban and rural context they live in.

Projects and trajectories under the flag of 'Maakplaats' are designed upon concepts of community development, equal participation, cohesion and pluralism. Residents and various stakeholders have come to the conclusion that by working together, it is more feasible to reach certain goals such as future education and urban sustainable citizenship. More globally aware and locally involved citizens can lead to more sustainable, self-sufficient and constantly developing societies. Pakhuis de Zwijger program makers together with their

partner stakeholders approach the concept of active citizenship through a civic lens supplying citizens with access as well as awareness to the arena of political and social rights.



(3d printers in Maaksplaats workshop)

- **2.3.2a Case study: Maakplaats#021 and link to 21st century education**

At this point, I will introduce the case study of Maaksplaats (makerspace) as another strand of active citizenship that targets mainly young children. This is a project of the library OBA (Opebare Bibliotheek Amsterdam) that is based in Waterlandplein, North of Amsterdam. This neighbourhood, mainly consists of people with less financial competences that does not offer very advanced opportunities to the local children. As explained by program maker Peter during our interview focusing on Pakhuis de Zwijger's partnering with other stakeholders, he mentioned that

*“libraries nowadays are perceived as more old-school. What is more attractive for using such common spaces to lend books than combining with interesting activities for youngsters of the neighbourhood?” 12.4.2017*

Even though Amsterdam is a very innovative and successful city, high urbanization and modernization ratios are continuously fostering the great development of local segregation. Therefore, in order to prevent this Pakhuis de Zwijger along with other stakeholders in the city have come up with local trajectories.

*“Placemakers sensed a need for more sustainable and local involvement in the programming of the permanent podium. In order to reach this phase of ‘transfer’”-<http://placemakers.nl/en/portfolio-item/waterlandplein-neighborhood-amsterdam-north/>*

“It’s all about kids” is the motto of this joint partnership between OBA, Waag society, the School of Applied Sciences as well as Pakhuis de Zwijger. The idea was conceived in order to reduce the segregation of the local neighbourhood in terms of access to technology and further other-than-traditional education. Further to that, another basic incentive was to bring these children one step beyond towards the 21 century skills.

### **2.3.2 b “Maak je buurt!”**

On May 3rd I attended a ‘Maakplaats’ workshop to see with my own eyes what this is! When moderators explained what would follow I was told that day was dedicated to the workshop “Maak je buurt!”. This weekly program is targeted at children at an age range between 6 to 16 years old after school hours. The activities that they follow cover a large scale of interests, however they have mainly to do with city-making and 3d printing. In relation to the former, children have the possibility to play a city game inside the facilities of the library. Moderators of Pakhuis de Zwijger commute to this place once a week and introduce to children ideas such as city mapping and environmental challenges. After the young players were asked *“How do you feel and what do you like/ love/ hate in your neighbourhood?”* they had to draw on the map and link all those places that create the above mentioned feelings.

In a second place, moderators asked the children to spot on this map places they come across on their daily routine. For example, where the bakery they use is placed, their house, school or playground. This memory city game intends to refresh in their minds important spots of their daily life and draw the importance they have in citizen’s life. Besides that, a very successful and appealing to the young creative and curious minds of this area are the 3d printers. After drawing on the library’s computers with auto-cad techniques, the children designed and 3d printed their own houses after having spotted them on google maps using software tools. All those ideas and techniques are designed on a basis where those children will be equipped with knowledge from a very early age that in other cases they would not have such possibilities. Further to that, this concept aims to involve those children in city-making practices and turn them into more aware and conscious about their local area. This time, active citizenship focuses on early age stages so as to create future active, involved and responsible citizens.

Pakhuis de Zwijger along with all those stakeholders has an intention to brighten up such neighbourhoods and offer capacities without any economic benefit. On the contrary, the social impact this trajectory has is by far more important and especially with an extension in the long term. They are not only planning on filling the empty hours of the children after school, but mainly to equip them with important skills and knowledge they will be able to use further in future. In this respect, young citizens make use of the library not only for lending books, but also in order to “do stuff”. This is the main reason why this program is called “maakplaats” ( makerspace).

According to that, the city of Amsterdam has launched a 4-year-funding project targeted at the local public libraries of the city. In this regard, it is planned that 10 out of the 26 brand libraries will have facilities and programs as the ‘Maakplaats’. Heading with the motto of “Do stuff instead of only lending books” librarians, that at the moment are getting trained, will be able to teach themselves all those 21st century skills using technological tools and modern ideas for children of the local areas.





- **2.3.3 Case study: 'Eat to meet' and link with 'Interethnic Contact' theory**

“Amsterdam welcomes many new residents. People who fled their country and who have found a safe shelter in our city. These new Amsterdammers will have to find their place in our society and we are keen to help them by hosting a series of network dinners. Every month in Pakhuis de Zwijger.”-web page Pakhuis de Zwijger.nl

Starting off the promotion of the events “Eat to Meet” program makers of Pakhuis de Zwijger use this motto in order to further explain and justify the existence of these network dinners. It all started back in 2016 when the first “Eat to Meet” was thrown in Pakhuis gathering together old and new Amsterdammers. Before August 2016 there wasn't any refugee camp in Amsterdam. During a ‘table of 50’ that takes place on a regular basis in the building of Pakhuis, program makers came up with the question *“How can we contribute as Pakhuis to the welcoming of newcomers?”*

Right after that, 3 program makers of Pakhuis de Zwijger started organizing events that combined food and music, elements that were used as common ground to build human relations between newcomers and old Amsterdammers. Throughout the year of 2016 they launched a number of 10 “Eat to meet” gatherings in Pakhuis de Zwijger.

*“There is nothing to discuss in “Eat to meet”. It’s just a safe place to interact, but we don’t decide for them how to interact.”-*  
Interview with Mara 9.5.2017

It suggests a gathering between people that interact while eating food, listening to music with the intention of building a network and create friendships. When they register online, they are asked whether they consider themselves as newcomers or locals- in case they are

locals, they are kindly asked to contribute by donating an amount of 10/20 euro in order to help the newcomers cover their travel expenses to reach Pakhuis. The way they identify themselves is the only criteria to apply as locals or newcomers and it's a subjective selection. The audience of newcomers is mostly made up of people from Syrian, Afghanistan, Uganda. Program makers get in contact and publish these events on Facebook in arabic on the page of "Refugee start force" or through the refugee shelter in Amsterdam so as to attract people. Further to that, the project was designed with the intention to launch a body of specific themed workshops and activities taking place in the facilities of Pakhuis de Zwijger. Some examples could be documentary screenings with regards to refugees 'on the move', buddy projects in order to bring together local volunteers and newcomers so to create relationships through which every newcomer can have access to vacancies or internship opportunities.

Such initiatives go in line with the concept of 'Interethnic Contact Theory' developed by B. Martinovic, F. Van Tubergen and I. Maas (Martinovic & Tubergen & Maas, 2009). All three of them have claimed through this piece that interaction among newcomers and ethnic groups can result in more beneficial outcomes for the former. This occurs due to the fact that newcomers have potential access to the labor market and apart from that they can develop skills and adopt local practices that will lead to a better integration. For instance, they are more exposed to the local culture and tradition so they can more easily learn the Dutch language. Needless to mention, such practices and outputs can also decrease anti immigrant sentiments such as fearing the other, prejudice, stereotyping and conflict between the two or more ethnic groups involved in each activity each time.

In conclusion, I came to the realization <sup>1</sup>that Pakhuis de Zwijger highly values the importance of networking and bringing people together so as to achieve certain levels of Active Citizenship. For this reason, program makers of Pakhuis along with other stakeholders from Knowledge institutions such as the University of Amsterdam, OBA library, Kennisland, Waag Society, the refugee Shelter of Amsterdam and many local and European city-makers and individuals have conceived, designed, implemented a series of different programs.

Concluding this chapter, I broke down the theoretical concept of Active Citizenship by introducing each trajectory in a row. First, 'City-making' as a concept of Placemaking that values the movement and energy of bottom-up initiatives as a means for social change, networking, sense of ownership and belonging in times of civic restructuring and transformation. 'Maakplaats' lies in the second stage representing a tool for engagement that

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<sup>1</sup> OBA; Openbare Bibliotheek Amsterdam, <https://www.oba.nl/oba/english/central-library.html>

is basically targeted at young children so as to educate and supply them with 21st century skills, significant tools for civic local and global awareness turning them into responsible, aware, active, critical and creative citizens. The last trajectory that Pakhuis de Zwijger program makers together with other Dutch stakeholders planned, is 'Eat to meet' as a reflection of bringing together newcomers and local residents of Amsterdam so as to further incorporate and engage newcomers that will enjoy principles such as sense of belonging. Next to that, it also aims at leading to practices that decrease anti immigrant sentiments and prejudice and simultaneously foster networking, newcomers' integration and harmony within the society.

## **2.4 Reflections and Recommendations**

However, an academic ethnographic research without the critical part would be half-job! This is the time to be critical, to provide my personal anthropological insights and recommendations on all these case studies and projects analyzed beforehand in the text. Being involved in all these programs, having had numerous formal and informal interviews and discussions with people from both within and outside Pakhuis de Zwijger, offered me the great chance to develop a personal critique from a fresh and international perspective, meaning a non-Dutch angle in which I got involved only since last February.

As an internal researcher of this cultural and social center, I want to pose certain questions that will further give all the readers the opportunity to view all this transformation from my perspective.

*How does the Dutch transformation relate to the International transformation that Pakhuis de Zwijger wants to achieve?*

*How the 'Polder model' reflects the multiculturalism that Pakhuis de Zwijger wants to embrace?*

*Is this so-called transition another neoliberal, western, global southern form of benefit?*

*Is there Democracy in Neoliberalism?*

*What kind of diversity are we talking about?*

*Who is considered Amsterdammer or Newcomer?*

*Who owns the city?*

*How do we face up to gentrification?*

When exiting the doors of my ethnographic field for the last time on May 16, thus cultural organization of Pakhuis de Zwijger, I was full of intensely mixed feelings. My coworkers had prepared for me a double warm celebration, for my birthday and a farewell celebration for the

last day working as an intern and researcher. On one hand, I felt sad for leaving that charismatic cultural center, on the other hand emotions of saying goodbye to such an experience felt somewhat relieving. Even though I felt more than welcomed to conduct my ethnographic research, collect all my data and work with those employees, deep inside I never felt integrated. This is a result of very specific situations that occurred throughout my research period that made me feel more than a temporary intern, rather than a researcher that could contribute with my knowledge and experience.

Being surrounded by Dutch coworkers and listening to them only speaking in their own language without minding me not understanding is a fact that created inside me feelings of being on the sidelines. Further to that, when back in January I had agreed with them on the terms of the internship, I was told that as every intern, I would also be supplied with a laptop from the organization to work on. However, when starting my internship, I never received a laptop, unlike all the other interns, and after a certain amount of weeks I did not have a desk to seat at anymore. As a result, I made my decision to work in other rooms, such as kitchen or later on move to the desk of a colleague that quit her internship for personal reasons. When dealing with issues as such I felt that my presence has been just a temporary working experience on the platform 'New Europe- Cities in Transition'. Such feelings were inescapable!

Looking back and recalling my very first days of the fieldwork I felt so enthusiastic! When I decided to conduct my research in Amsterdam and specifically this cultural center I had created really high expectations, believing in its international spirit and prospective networking opportunities. *"This place is so promising! J. introduced me to everyone and they know about my research plan. I feel so welcomed!"*- (Field notes from my ethno-diary!, 14.02.2017).

In fact, the latter (networking opportunities) proved to be very effective and helpful for my academic research and career path. Nevertheless, I noticed that the international mood is highly notable from the outside, but not from the inside. In saying so, I refer again to the internal Dutch thinking and working that is inevitable due to the majority of Dutch employees and the strategies/ policies emerging from a high degree of Dutch mindset and perspectives.

Despite being a wonderful place for discussions, debates, creativity, networking, emancipation and urban development, Pakhuis de Zwijger has missed an ultra important factor- DIVERSITY. The majority of its visitors is white, Dutch, highly educated, higher class people, thus power dynamics is on their side. By referring to the '*polder* model' again, we see that decision-making processes and debating for communal issues are core principles of the Dutch (The Economist, 2002). Therefore, dealing with topics in such ways is not as attractive for everyone that is welcomed at Pakhuis de Zwijger. As a matter of fact, this reveals the

great unintentional exclusion of newcomers, people from lower layers of the society and people with lower educational background.

- “*Not involving everyone is hard!*” (discussion with Peter)
- “Diversity is missing!” (discussion with Quirine)

As mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, for Social Sustainability in order to function, certain ingredients should be thoroughly promoted: equity, human well-being, democratic civil society and democratic governance. In fact, nobody can doubt about Social Sustainability in Amsterdam, however that is still a work in progress. Not every citizen of Amsterdam is supplied with equitable services neither governmental practices are entirely democratic. Governmental schemes are undergoing transitions so as to fully promote Democracy as a form of reaching out every citizen of this city while providing them with democratic and equitable principles.

After going in depth analyzing all these case studies and having spotted certain limits when it comes to integration and diversity concepts, I will make some statements about *what can be further improved*.

### **2.4.1 Pakhuis de Zwijger**

Let us now have a quick look into the internal organization and implementation of all these programs discussed before. The majority of program makers is Dutch, coming from various educational disciplines such as Sociology, Urban planning, Architecture, Anthropology, Finance, Communications and Journalism, etc. All of them are very highly educated people that, however, design all these programs according to the Dutch standards and traditions. If we take into consideration the so-called ‘polder model’ for once more we see high levels of collaborative decision-making processes, high participation in institutions or organizations and as a result, high civic influence due to this equal participation. However, this, being such a Dutch talent and tradition, provides agency only to Dutch inhabitants while it suggests a factor for exclusion of the non-Dutch. After a deep look at registration rates at events and programs in Pakhuis de Zwijger I came to realize that topics such as New Democracy, Gentrification, Urban Development, etc are attracting mainly a Dutch audience.

*Who is considered Amsterdammer or Newcomer? I, coming from a Mediterranean country for studies in the Netherlands, living in Utrecht and conducting my research in Amsterdam, am I considered Newcomer or Amsterdammer? How am I placing myself within such a divide?* Designing programs for Newcomers as the ‘**Eat to meet**’ should internally incorporate people from the target group they want to address and motivation, eating traditions and habits should be taken into high and continuous consideration. Organizing this kind of events, people from all ‘these different’ cultures and traditions should contribute their insights, needs and wills.

There is no *'one-size-fits-all'*, such practices will definitely lead to continuous segregation, widening of the divide 'us versus them' and foster otherness. Examining and implementing techniques addressing target groups that 'we' want to incorporate should be in line with dynamic perspectives and pluralistic views. In this regard, my suggestion is that every event like 'Eat to meet' should be focused on specific target groups, rather than welcoming every other-than-Dutch inhabitant of Amsterdam. By inviting everyone and being open to 'all' can boost the divide of Dutch versus non-Dutch because exactly newcomers can easily identify as non-Dutch and segregation will kick in automatically.

Discussions about **Democracy** should engage everyone and pay equal attention to people voicing their needs and opinions. *Who are 'we' to talk about 'them' if we don't know who 'they' actually are.* This 'Polder model' representing the Dutch tradition dealing with various issues and struggles reflects only the Dutch perception and association with societal topics. *How does the 'Polder model' reflect an international welcoming to all those people that Pakhuis de Zwijger wants to embrace?* By designing programs that tie mainly with Dutch principles will undoubtedly lead to segregation, marginalization and divide between the various ethnocultural groups. When preparing and implementing such practices that aim to engage, welcome, incorporate people from all different backgrounds, we have to bear in mind where they are actually coming from and take into serious consideration their roots. Therefore, I **challenge** the traditional, oldschool so-called *"no matter where they are coming from/ no matter what their origins or roots are"* because this perception leads to growing polarization and othering. On the contrary, I stand for the adoption of acceptance and inclusivity techniques that will mostly embrace the other\* rather than pointing out cultural and ethnic differences among the various ethnic groups. Specific evenings that will attract, embrace and host the desired population each time can more easily bridge these peoples. At the same time, I want to underline again that aiming at specific goals and target groups (either culture, age or background-wise) should be paired with ideas that involve representatives of those groups. We have to speak their language\* in order to attract, engage and understand them. These other\* cultures should be studied, taken into mind and upon them, we have to adapt and adopt policies based on equity, integration, democracy, inclusion and interculturalism.

All these terms describe the existence of a just, free and democratic society where multiple peoples and cultures live together tolerating, interacting and embracing one another. Thus, what integration and interculturalism mean is better understood as acts or practices that lead to equal engagement of people from different ethnocultural and racial backgrounds into the democratic society and have equal access to civic and human rights regardless of their gender, culture, age, religion or sexual orientation. Interculturalism, on the other hand is the coexistence and interaction of various ethno-cultural majorities and minorities. Governmental policies striving for interculturalism promote cross-cultural understanding, mutual respect and

recognition. When referring to equity, otherwise equality, I mean that all citizens are fully and equally granted the same human and fundamental rights - such as access to information and data, representation, freedom of speech and free selection of religion, cultural and educational rights, etc. Therefore, there is a great link between all these terms explained above: equity, integration, interculturalism and inclusion whose common ground and crucial component is democratic, human-centered and respectful policies that foster mutual and deep understanding of both sides, both locals and newcomers.

A look at the article “The rise and fall of multiculturalism? New debates on inclusion and accommodation in diverse societies” of Kymlicka ( Kymlicka, 2010) proves why multiculturalism has failed and suggests new forms of inclusion and interculturalism. This term is not only the celebration of differences in culture, rather is a set of policies based on cultural recognition, just political participation and economic redistribution. Therefore, there is a deep need of implementing strategies and policies that will focus on strengthening the interaction of ethno-cultural groups while at the same time are challenging the hierarchy and their power relations. An ideal framework will absorb and treat equally all those groups and there will be no hierarchy and hegemony of the powerful over the powerless- thus power relations will be evenly distributed and all citizens, both ethno-cultural majorities and minorities will be equally granted the same citizen rights. No discrimination will be noted in such frameworks and democracy will be constantly promoted. Interculturalism is a step beyond as a better version of multiculturalism to get past all previous injustices and put extra emphasis on these terms and components that interculturalism aims to embrace and promote.

### **‘Bottom-up or Top-down’?**

To end, as far as the question “Bottom-up” or “Top-down” is concerned, I came to the realization that Pakhuis de Zwijger lies in between. It does not represent any governmental body, neither the citizens themselves. Indeed, it is the arena that all parts involved come together, discuss, interact, analyze and make decisions dealing or tackling global issues such as Digitalization, Globalization or Gentrification that have local effects.

Nonetheless, through some discussions I had with initiators of ‘bottom-up’ movements based in Amsterdam I noticed the confusion around this divide and Pakhuis’ involvement. In other words, initiator A. defined Pakhuis as a totally ‘Top-down’ representative due to its close collaboration with institutional bodies such as the Academia, the City Hall and the European Union. (8.3.2017). At the other end of the spectrum, initiator B. (May 2017) perceives Pakhuis de Zwijger as an absolute ‘Bottom-up’ actor based on its capacity to gather people from

grassroots movements. As a personal statement and recommendation, I would suggest that clearer position within this divide with specific projects would be essential if Pakhuis wants to rethink and recenter itself.

## 2.4.2 Amsterdam

Another very important aspect that we should keep in mind is the extremely high cost of living in Amsterdam. Many people are struggling with making ends meet that make them prioritize certain needs. Amsterdam is definitely a neoliberal city in which all this pluralistic spectrum, in terms of citizens, is not equally treated to and is favouring marketization. High modernization and polarization highlight the need of adopting new policies that will reflect other forms of dealing with neoliberal, western, global Southern conditions and will eventually address obstacles such as inequality, segregation, gentrification and marginalization. As Ho Karen stated in the article on ‘Situating global capitalisms: a view from Wall Street investment banks’ (Ho, 2005) capitalism, globalization and neoliberal states establish sovereignty and hierarchy. Therefore, what human rights are we talking about if not everyone is eligible to pursue them in Amsterdam? Not everyone can afford all the educational, cultural and other rights and services in this expensive city. Amsterdam is a great capital to live in, but it is exclusively affordable for more wealthy and mainly Dutch people.

*“Is Amsterdam a city for everyone? Can we live all together? What kind of city will Amsterdam be and what kind of jobs will offer? ”* (discussion with Egbert about the future challenges of Amsterdam, director of Pakhuis de Zwijger, 19.4.2017)

Globalization, capitalism and neoliberalism as modern, post W<sup>2</sup>W2 and post Cold War frameworks are products that are posing a great conflict between the corporate power and class power. As a result of the deep recession after the Cold War, capital as a product of the neoliberal governance and hierarchy tends to greatly differentiate those two classes that inherently brings them in a state of unequal and countering power relations. In other words, the powerful are in control of the powerless and this is also notable in Amsterdam. Higher class and lower class citizens are not equally granted various services, rights and distributions such as educational, cultural, financial, housing and other sorts of citizen rights. This hierarchy and hegemony of the powerful over the powerless is highly emphasized in the Dutch capital, suggesting another tendency to new forms of precarity, socio-cultural dominance and neoliberal forces. As stated by Harvey David (Harvey, 2007) “The contestation of neoliberalism, and indeed capitalism remains ultimately one of class struggle”,

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<sup>2</sup> WW2: World War 2



in effect neoliberalism and capitalism go hand in hand strengthening the countering of the different classes that favours the higher over the lower one.

As a result of a deep ethnographic research and scientific analysis, this so-called transition and transformation is designed and originating from western, Dutch and powerful forces that despite wanting to ease and facilitate the welcoming and integration of newcomers yet less powerful peoples and classes fall into the loop of neoliberal, hegemonic, dominant and developed tactics.

*Is this Dutch transition another form of neoliberal practices reflecting only the desired transformation stemming from western, white, powerful mentalities? Is it another tool like 'FAIR TRADE' that deep inside represents another hierarchical dominance of the powerful over the powerless in financial, social and political terms?*

**The city of Amsterdam and Pakhuis de Zwijger** can achieve higher levels of inclusion, participation, equity and interculturalism while at the same time combating continuous segregation and growing polarization among the different ethnic groups. Policies, programs, strategies and numerous techniques should stem from an interdisciplinary, international-oriented, efficient and culturally diverse background in order to predominantly attract this so much desired 'cohesive, equitable, socially just' audience. Social justice is interconnected with the notion of inclusion and equity as tools of participatory voice. Celebrating symbolic practices based on cultural differences creates space for disneyfying outcomes, rather than building intercultural dialogues envisioning shared human rights policies.

Where does this 'just and equitable' strand of the Dutch transformation lie if it does not promote an actual mutual understanding and democratic representation? There should be a social contract between citizens (either Amsterdammers or Newcomers) and the public sector which would create equal opportunities for all to develop themselves. By saying so, I mean that citizens pay taxes to the government and comply with the government's laws while the latter in turn should offer its social services such as housing, health, goods, education, etc. That is the gap in which all this energy of transitions rose and is called 'accountability paradox', namely the negative friction between the social services that are not equally distributed to all citizens of Amsterdam. (Golam, 2013:6). As a result, this unofficial partnership between the government and the citizens is problematic and does not promote 'win-win' benefits due to the great disproportion of cohesion, justice and diversity. Modern institutional approaches drift away from the socio-political demands of all citizens and this leads to segregation, inequality and asymmetrical relationships.

Further, another example that definitely strikes me is the procedure of making an appointment with the City Hall of Utrecht (Gemeente Utrecht). The web page is exclusively in Dutch “[This webpage is in Dutch](#)” meaning that someone wanting to make an appointment for citizenship issues has either to translate it via a translating tool or reach out directly on the phone. When I had to book an appointment to issue my BSN number in order to register with the city, I felt far from welcomed in the Dutch society, while for Dutch speaking people is a much easier procedure despite the fact that it addresses all citizens of Utrecht. That situation explained to me that I am eligible to apply and claim my European citizen rights but however I am supposed to undergo specific steps in order make use of these rights. As such, I had to translate this information into English by myself or ask for the help of an employee at the City Hall. Utrecht and Amsterdam are impressively international cities and cases as such express that newcomers might be welcomed, but are inferior when it comes to citizenship cases.

All in all, studying the cultures, needs, roots, and backgrounds of all the peoples inhabiting Amsterdam and adopting policies, strategies, techniques and programs that definitely reflect interculturalism with a special focus on building space for interaction, dialogue, mutual understanding and respect can potentially counteract the western, powerful neoliberal influence. Cultural anthropology is the ultimate research study that taps into the existence of cultures and identities ‘on the move’ reviewing past, present and future behaviors.

*“Representative media, sports or intercultural events and gatherings can unite people, while bringing to light insights of the newcomers’ culture. Such practices can prove to be successful from the perspective of mutual understanding and sense of belonging.” (Keranidou, 2017)*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.utrecht.nl/city-of-utrecht/living/formalities/how-to-make-an-appointment/>



## Exiting the field!

Overall, proceeding to the concluding part of this thesis, I will provide an overview of what has gone throughout the text. A logical sequence of all the theoretical concepts, results out of an ethnographic analysis, data triangulation and anthropological personal position within the ethnographic fieldwork were used to help me respond to the major question of How Amsterdam as a city in transition promotes Social Sustainability.

At first, I presented my fieldwork, as in the main case study of Pakhuis de Zwijger and Amsterdam as the city where Pakhuis is based along with an analysis of how these two poles are related. In the main text, wanting to respond to the major question I used an analysis of subsidiary questions with cohesion deriving from a historical perspective with regards to the city's infrastructure and background leading to modern practices and strategies. What makes the conclusion differ from the previous theoretical and empirical analysis is the structure I will use in order to provide my ethnographic results.

To make this presentation of the end product easier to grasp and comprehend, I will use a linear analysis of my perception, knowledge and discoveries about Pakhuis de Zwijger and the city of Amsterdam before and after the ethnographic research. In my eyes this presentation appears as a table of notes wherein the two top sections are referred to Pakhuis de Zwijger, before and after the research. The bottom sections, both before and after as well, are linked to the city of Amsterdam.

Before	{RESEARCH}	After	
Pakhuis de Zwijger	<b>1B</b>	Pakhuis de Zwijger	<b>1A</b>
Amsterdam	<b>2B</b>	Amsterdam	<b>2A</b>

### **Pakhuis de Zwijger- 'Before'- Section 1B (before)**

In the so-called section of Pakhuis de Zwijger- 'Before' the image and knowledge I had as a visitor is that it suggested a Debate, Cultural center near the city center of Amsterdam wherein many different partners from interdepartmental backgrounds would collaborate for various issues. These are: Innovation, Social-Political-Economic-Cultural transformations, Urban and Social development as well as Placemaking (Otherwise city-making) not only on an Amsterdam level but also for other Dutch and European cities.

### **Amsterdam- 'before'-Section 2B (before)**

Amsterdam has always been very attractive to me due to its internationality, diversity, innovative spirit and environmental attitude both on behalf of citizens and governmental side as well. For instance, even before moving to Holland I was flirting with the idea of cycling culture, open mindedness and so internationally oriented practices and attitudes, such as an excellent level of spoken English, vacancies available for Internationals and Expats, high rates of attracting international students and citizen oriented policies. After moving to the Netherlands, this image and knowledge were further boosted by characteristics such as the European Capital of Innovation (otherwise iCAPITAL), strong cooperation between the bottom up structure and the government as well as notions of Transitions, Active Citizenship and Social Innovation. What is more, the DIY spirit was deeply introduced to me through many interesting projects based in Amsterdam such as grassroots initiatives with neighbourhood interventions wanting to tackle or even ease local improvements with regards to urban gardening, upcycling techniques and community movements for arts and crafts.

### **{RESEARCH}**

The core theoretical concepts integrated in the master narrative of Pakhuis de Zwijger contribution to Amsterdam's Social Sustainability are:

**-Social Innovation**, explained through the award of iCAPITAL, as European Capital of Innovation in 2016 and 2017 as well as Amsterdam as an 'ecosystem' deriving from its capacity to bring together people from different socio-political levels resulting in collaborative practices for the common good. 'Amsterdammers make your city' is the end product after the prize of iCapital, revealing core principles of transparency, equal redistribution and urban innovation and Pakhuis de Zwijger plays an important role in this procedure by being a core member of the 'ecosystem' among: The city of Amsterdam, Kennisland, Stichting de Waag NL, Amsterdam Economic Board NL, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions and Pakhuis de Zwijger.

**-Transition**, explained through two main case studies launched by Pakhuis de Zwijger. “New Democracy” as a theoretical framework aims to stimulate people from various perspectives to collaboratively rethink, reshape, co-design and co-create their city. On the other hand, “New Europe-Cities in Transition” is a hands-on online platform that connects representatives of bottom-up initiatives from across Europe and intends to scale-up and make these movements visible in the European arena. Both case studies from theoretical and practical angles want to establish new norms of Democracy, Sense of belonging and transparency through a shift away from traditional governmental strategies to more modern, citizen-centered and results-oriented practices.

**-Active Citizenship**, explained through three case studies, ‘City-making’, ‘Maakplaats’ and ‘Eat to Meet’. All three trajectories coined and implemented by Pakhuis de Zwijger were introduced to further engage and educate active citizens, regardless of age, gender, origins, financial background. Rather, they all aim to incorporate citizens on local levels so as to further contribute to the development of their areas being equipped with common responsibility, sense of ownership, awareness, interculturalism and bringing citizens (both locals and newcomers) and civil servants to more even levels when it comes to decision-making processes.

As a matter of fact, this ethnographic research gave me the great opportunity to investigate from within such important frameworks and concepts. At this point, where I am writing the final part of my thesis, I feel more than grateful to my professors, colleagues and friends that supplied me with opportunities, knowledge, faith and trust leading to the current overview and final outcomes with regards to Amsterdam’s Social Sustainability.

#### **Amsterdam- ‘after’-Section 2A (after)**

After all this deep investigation, I came to conclude that Amsterdam is a very innovative city with high levels of multidimensional partnerships among residents, civil servants, knowledge institutions, citizen movements and the private sector. They all envision citizen-centered innovative and creative ways with regards to societal topics. However, very high levels of Globalization and Neoliberalism impede the city’s growth up to a certain extent and spread sentiments of inequality, exclusion and segregation.

#### **Pakhuis de Zwijger- ‘after’-Section 1A (after)**

When it comes to Pakhuis de Zwijger after the presentation of empirical outcomes, the analysis reveals that this Social enterprise, in fact is the ultimate debate, creativity and cultural center. Not only individuals but also institutions are welcomed into this organization and the case studies provided beforehand explain that Pakhuis wants to embrace and

address everyone inside and outside of this city. Nonetheless, diversity is a very important strand of Social Sustainability that in this case is missing!

Therefore, even though Social Sustainability is a matter of fact in Amsterdam, though it does not address everyone that makes it limited in itself. Desiring to respond directly to the major question *'How Amsterdam as a city in Transition promotes Social Sustainability'* I will answer by saying that Pakhuis de Zwijger in fact contributes to Amsterdam's Social Sustainability but up to a certain degree. Having left out specific layers of Amsterdam's society suggests a reason for further research on how to incorporate everyone, make them feel 'welcomed' and turn this city into a more equitable one that leads to citizens' well-being and more democratic governmental practices, as Social Sustainability suggest!





(We own the city- ©'New Europe- Cities in transition')



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