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# Consumption and encounters in public spaces between Dutch and Latin American Amsterdammers



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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the integration process of Dutch and Latin American inhabitants of Amsterdam through the uses and representations of public and private spaces in the city. This paper tackles the issue of consumption as a potential barrier to integration among Dutch and Latin Americans by analyzing people's decision-making process when choosing where to spend their free time.

This research concludes by stating that the extent of consumption as a barrier for people's encounter in public spaces varies over situations, being especially affected by the weather conditions. The later was found out to be determinant over the availability of the set of choices in the cities, especially green urban spaces, and therefore on the relevance of economic capacity as a requirement for accessing to shared urban places.

## Preface

Immigration has existed since the beginnings of humanity, with people moving from and to everywhere based on different reasons. The topic, rather relevant nowadays, has been deeply studied, as also the efforts to control it. Related problems have been always on the spot, as unfortunately were not the opportunities that newcomers bring in their bags, together with their expectations as dreams.

As an international student but also due to my life story, conflicts and integration processes of migration are a reality that I discovered already a while ago. Since this year living in the Netherlands, the new scenario served as another case where observations about how people mingle with diversity, and therefore happened my interest on this specific country.

I have spent days and nights discovering the Netherlands and its cities. Living in Amersfoort, studying in Utrecht and spending time in Amsterdam gave me also the opportunity of seeing diverse urban environments and its characteristics. On those times, my own process of integrating while keeping my traditions was full of surprises, some good and others not so much.

What I find exciting is the way that, by comparing our own thoughts with other people ones, we can also understand a bit more about ourselves and recognize them as unique. Once I was on a terrace with a group of Dutch people I asked them why the many Moroccans and Turkish people I was seeing every day at the supermarket or the station were not there with us, sitting on the next table. Answers were mostly of silence and deeper thoughts. What was going on? Didn't they know about the bars? Were they going to other places? How were those places? Could I join them as well?

Due to language barriers and the bare existence of Latin American residents, my research moved to Amsterdam, a worldwide city known for its diversity and tolerance. The question has raised up: where do they go here? Do they meet at the places they spend their free time? Why? Why not? Is it that they prefer other spots? Or are some invisible barriers in between?

In this process, I came to know that, as always happen, complex situations demand an in deep analysis. Twelve interviews were carried on among Dutch and Latin American Amsterdammers, to whom I am deeply grateful to for sharing their testimonies, opinions, doubts, and one of the most precious treasures in this land: their time.

Through their perspectives, I learned about the many ways different people enjoy their free time and their reasons for choosing what to do and where to go according to their possibilities. This research, structured by the AVEO scheme, helped me to discover that their choices are not fixed but as dynamic as the basic definition of the urban public spaces, as the reader will discover on the following pages.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all the people that contributed to this thesis but also to my whole process as a Master student at Utrecht University. Thanks to my girlfriend, who full of patience and love walked on my side during this time; thanks to my family, that regardless distance they were always with me giving me strength and reasons for pursuing my dreams, wherever they were; thanks to my friends and to my Uni colleagues and professors, and specially to my professor supervisor, Dr. Isle van Limpet, for her feedback and advises; and of course, all those people that encouraged me to take the challenge of studying abroad and living an unforgettable experience, with a special mention to the Geosciences Faculty of the University of Utrecht and the Dutch Ministry of Education for trusting on me and awarding me with the Geosciences Scholarships and the Holland Scholarship, respectively.

## Introduction

Even before the existence of the Netherlands as a Republic as we know it nowadays, immigrants came to this place looking for a better life. Different immigration waves across the centuries, led this country to have a heterogeneous population, where 11.3% of its inhabitants are born overseas, a number that increases to 22.1% if their second generation ethnic background are considered<sup>1</sup>.

One of the biggest problems associated with migration is their integration in the community, which implicates a huge set of variables such as collective characteristics of their cultures, individual aspects based on life courses and also settings in the host country that will make their inclusion process more or less difficult.

Several research have provided information about the integration process in the Netherlands, mostly related to immigrants inclusion or exclusion from the labor market and economic activities (Lobsterman et al, 2012; van der Leon, J., 2003), their integration through relationships and ties (Ersanilli, E. & Koopmans, R., 2010; van Tubergen, F. & Maas, I., 2007; Martinovik, B. et al, 2009; van Oudenhoven, J. P. & Eisses, A. M., 1998) and their success or difficulties for mingling with locals due to cultural differences (Poppelaars, C. & Scholten, P., 2008; Darwish Murad, S. et al, 2003; Verdder, P. & Virta, E., 2005). Nevertheless, most of those studies focused on the country's largest immigrant minorities: Turkish, Moroccan and Dutch Antilles (van Oudenhoven, J. P. & Eisses, A. M., 1998; Darwish Murad, S. et al, 2003; Verdder, P. & Virta, E., 2005; Korteweg, A. & Yurdakul, G., 2009; Stronks, K. et al, 2001), leaving on a side other groups that for different reasons are not considered when immigration in the Netherlands is discussed, as is the case of the Latin American community. The latter are about 2% of Amsterdam's population and are growing since the last half of the twentieth century (Pardo, 2012). Their cultural proximity to Western behavior plus their spread among the country set them on an invisibility position for other residents as for policymakers and media (van Vliet, C. & Hengeveld, G., 2011).

Studies about interethnic contact in Dutch public spaces have already been carried out by several scholars, with a focus on how those encounters happen and lead to social cohesion (Peters et al 2009;

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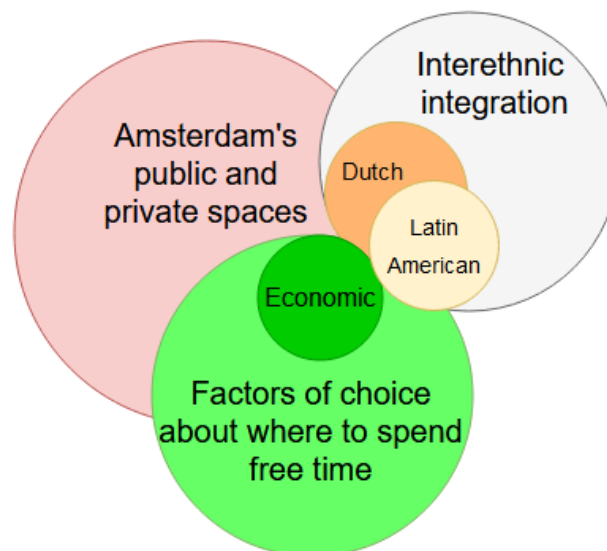
<sup>1</sup> <https://opendata.cbs.nl/statline/#/CBS/en/dataset/37325eng/table?ts=1518544426882>

Peters & de Haan, 2011), acceptance of multiculturalism (Jay et al, 2012) or in relation to constructions of identities by opposition to other minorities (Lieshout & Aart, 2008).

Numerous books and articles have researched the importance of some of the following elements in determining whether people to spend time or not at certain places: weather (Gehl, 2011; Andrade et al, 2010; Lin, 2009), seating (Gehl, 2011; Metha, 2009; Von Schonfeld & Bertoni, 2017), proximity to their home (Boone et al, 2009), other visitors to the area (Lichter et al, 2017; Boone et al, 2009), perception of safety (Visser, 2017; Malone, 2002), personal preferences, as well as the economic capacity of potential users (Zukin, 1998; Atkinson, 2003). That outlines a high volume of potential reasons, which combined with peoples priorities will define where they go on their free time.

Instead, this research focuses on certain issues that have yet to be studied in the Netherlands, filling a gap in the literature. This study carried out an analysis of interethnic encounters between natives and Latin American inhabitants in Amsterdam's city spaces, with a focus on the decision-making process of both groups when choosing where and how to spend their free time. Among the many different factors related to people's choices this thesis takes a special interest on the economic factors over others, due to an increasing process of privatization in the cities' public spaces and its subsequent threat to democracy, equality and integration in urban environments (Zukin, 1998; Atkinson, 2003; Kohn, M., 2004; Low, S. & Smith, N., 2006).

Figure 1 shows how this thesis articulates different topics and subtopics for analyzing how different groups meet with others in the city by the places they go when spending free time and how that affects their integration in the community:



Source: Created by the author.

Figure 1: Interplay of topics.

As shown in the above schema, this study tackles the issue of interethnic integration in Amsterdam's public spaces by considering a set of subtopics all together. There is the need of considering the offer of public spaces in the city, but also the main choices the residents take. Therefore, an interethnic perspective must be taken into account when analyzing where people choose to go, but especially

why they do that, together with their representations of the set of possibilities and how much attractive they are for them.

## Literature

### Public spaces and encounters

Mitchell (1995) stretches the importance of public spaces in democratic societies, related with the capacity of different groups to encounter and not just tolerate but to show mutual respect and interact (Valentine, 2008). Even if this concept is shared by others (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Brenner, Marcuse & Mayer, 2012), is not particularly clear how to get from the encounter of people to the development of democratic and equal relationships between them. What it is known is that there are some pre-requirements for that to happen, as socialization among diversity. As mentioned by Amin & Thrift (2002), plural cultural expression and identifications on a face-to-face scale are needed for the mere existence of communities and encounters (Amin & Thrift, 2002).

Additionally, Gordon Allport developed the “contact hypothesis” theory, linking the coexistence of two different groups in the same physical space with the reduction of prejudice and the promotion of social integration (Valentine, 2008). Behind negative concepts, he argues, one can find the lack of knowledge over the different, and by sharing spaces with them, the person will switch from a feeling of anxiety or even threat to a sense of familiarity, followed by an increased feeling of comfort and control over the situation.

But, how likely is a multicultural encounters among diversity to happen within a residentially segregated city? This phenomenon has been widely studied by scholars, and the results show occasional frequencies (Slater, 2006; Boterman & Van Gent, 2014; Lees, 2016). What is of relevance in this study is the analysis of integration or segregation in public spaces, taking into consideration the positive effects of that encounter in terms of tolerance, respect, and acceptance within a community. As said before, the focus will not be over residential distribution but the choices and use of public spaces in the city.

The domain-based approach (Slim & Ahas, 2014; Van Ham & Tammaru, 2016; Amin, 2002) gives special interest on integration-segregation processes according to the places where the individuals decide to hold activities, also mentioned as “*segregation in different life domains*” (Van Ham & Tammaru, 2016, pp. 953), due to the limitation of understanding the phenomenon just based on people’s residence places, when is it possible to think that their integration or lack of thereof might also be determined by others they may meet on their daily activities.

### Opportunities and constrains of consumption spaces for low-income groups

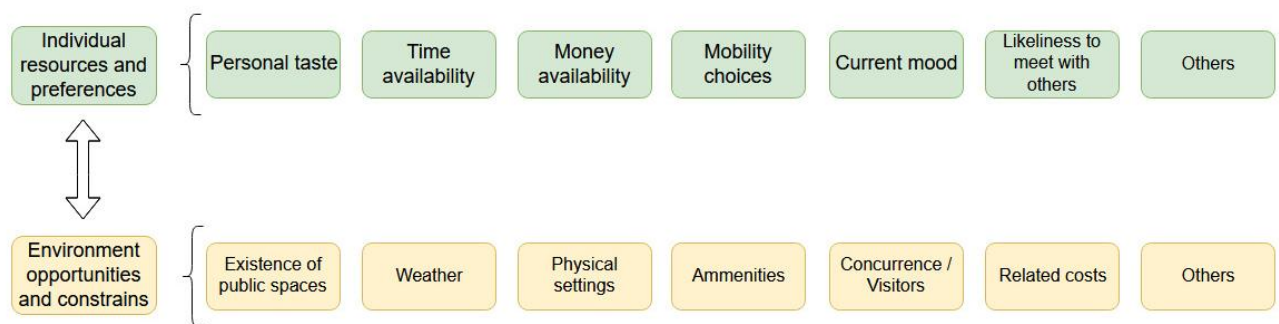
As stated before, options of places for spending free time by doing any activity are endless in theory. In contrast, real life gives a limited set of opportunities according to people’s capacities. Some places have explicit requirements for people to access (dress code, membership, fee, etc.) while others even if do not have visible boundaries, their location or even subjective elements –such as not feeling welcome- might work as barriers for specific people to come in. Therefore, the only existence of public spaces in the city is not enough for comprehending the potentials encounters that could take place

there. Instead, inhabitants' capacities must be taken into account if the aim is to know who uses those places and who could be excluded from doing so.

Due to the wide set of variables related, the assets and structure of opportunities scheme -AVEO, by its initials in Spanish- (Katzman, 1999) will be used in this research. This analytic instrument is based on the systemic conception of a phenomenon, which requires a multiplicity of actors and dimensions to be considered. Its main advantage is the possibility of splitting the analysis into two different phases: on the one hand, to conceptualize what is offered (and not) by the market, the civil society and the state, and in the other hand, to clarify what can a person access according to their limited amount of resources (physical, economic, time-related and cognitive). The match between the requirements for accessing to a certain good with what an individual can offer will determine his or her capacity –or lack thereof- to buy, rent, loan or use that good or service.

In this research, as pointed out in the AVEO scheme, there are two spheres to analyze. The first one is the offer of public spaces created by the government in possible association with the market and civil society organizations and its characteristics (economics, design, legal, etc.), together with regulations in the use of certain public spaces that might attempt to people's intentions of spending leisure time. The other sphere refers to the decision process of spending leisure time at a specific place, considering individual resources and preferences in accordance to the opportunities and constraints defined by providers of public spaces.

The interplay between people's resources and the characteristics of the environment will define the choice of places where an individual might choose to spend time at. This schema can be seen next:



Source: created by the author.

Figure 2: Assets and requirements for the use of public spaces –AVEO based-.

There can be several elements to consider when analyzing people's choices about where to spend their free time at, although this research will focus on the economic element and its role in terms of choosing where to go or not for leisure activities.

This is not an omission of other key elements of the decision-making process, but a deeper focus on how an essential factor on people's choices can play a role on a scenario which might have several consequences on citizens' contact in the city.

This is relevant due to the increasing levels of privatization of public spaces, understanding this as a process in which private institutions (mostly companies) overtake the management of public spaces



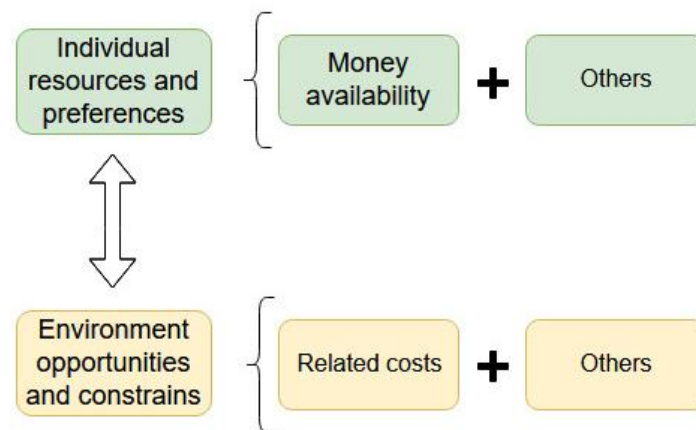
in association with local governments, which also means being an authority in terms of determining rules and restriction drawing (Newspaper “The Guardian”, 2017).

The privatization of public spaces together with the threat of social fragmentation makes this issue a key element when analyzing possibilities of integration among different economic groups (Madanipour, 1999), related to their consumption capacity as a requirement for spending time in privatized areas (Barata Salgueiro, 1995; García Ballesteros, 1998).

Despite the fact that this was outlined as a problematic issue by some scholars (Low & Smith, 2006; Mitchell, 2003; Zukin, 1998), it seems that there is an underestimation of its effect on people’s decisions or on its relevance as a constraint for the encounter among different groups of people. Due to the conceptualization of economic success as a result of individual effort, the fact of being excluded from an activity or a place due to lack of economic resources is not seen as problematic but as a normal and predictable situation.

Whereas economic discrimination is seen as a natural market selection, other kinds of discrimination could be outrageous. For instance, if in the Netherlands, the reason for a person to be excluded from a place is explicitly racially based or because of his/her need to use a wheelchair, the situation can end up as a public scandal, but the situation is rather different when the reason is economic. Instead of questioning the prevalence of some characteristics above others for a social alarm to happen, this argument is related to the possibility of naturalizing a process of social exclusion, and therefore weakening the effects that the privatization of public spaces might have in terms of integration among inhabitants of a city.

Without excluding other criteria that might be determinant in the choice of where to go to spend time, this research will focus on economic resources and constraints related to those places, which sets the conceptual map as is shown below:



Source: created by the author.

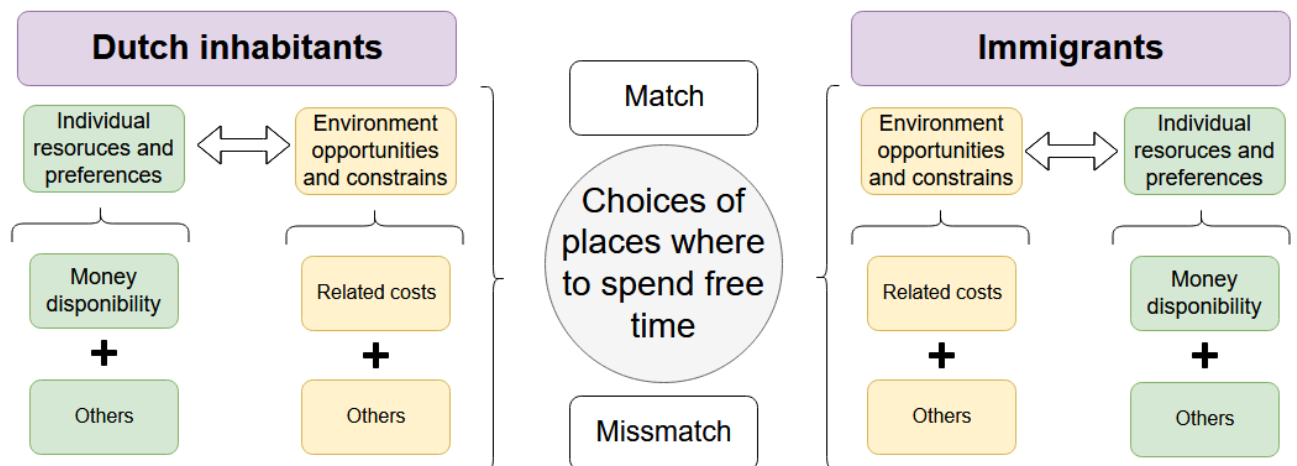
Figure 3: Main assets and requirements for the use of public spaces –AVEO based-.

But what does the economic perspective has to do with interethnic encounter? Because of the relation between their condition of immigrants and their low income (Rashid, 2004; Picot & Hou, 2006), partially explained by educational levels, lack of social capital and language related barriers among others (Putnam, 2000; Lancee, 2010). Due to immigrant’s higher probabilities of having a lower income, it is expected that they will be the ones that fees or costs related to the use of public spaces will affect the most.

Studies about inter-ethnic encounter in public spaces in the Netherlands (Jay et al, 2012; Lieshout & Aart, 2008; Peters & de Haan, 2011) have addressed this subject under the concept of the contact theory, analyzing potential effects of inter-ethnic interactions on peoples’ attitudes and acceptance. Yet, their approaches were on individuals’ representation over those spaces or alternatives (Peters & de Haan, 2011, Lieshout & Aart, 2008) or legal frameworks that could allow minorities for being part of the decision making related to the construction of those sites and their management (Jay et al, 2012).

What has not been studied in-depth yet is the non-encounter on public spaces in the Netherlands. The literature does not address the possibility that ethnic minorities do not meet with the native population due to economic constrains related to the affordability of some public spaces where people’s capacity of consumption is a must for belonging.

Therefore, it appeared to be necessary to ask the different actors involved about their conceptions and use of public spaces. Policymakers related to public spaces were interviewed; mainly to understand their perspectives of public spaces and the design and management that would make them more or less prone to guarantee a wider access amongst different citizens. The next step was to ask immigrants and Dutch inhabitants about their decision-making processes when choosing a certain public space to spending leisure time at, together with the possibility or not of encountering others, building the following map:



Source: created by the author.

Figure 4: Conceptual map.

The possibilities of both groups to match or not at their places of interest are as relevant as the elements that might make them choose their favorite places, with a special focus on cost related activities and their budget for spending free time in the city.

### Can public spaces be safe environments?

Even though there is vast literature about public spaces and their definition (Mitchell, 1995; Amin & Thrift, 2002; Valentine, 2008), it is not easy to agree on a common one. That is probably due to the many disciplines and perspectives that can analyze them. Legal approaches may focus more on the

property of land and buildings, together with the right or not access, while others might focus mainly on their physical characteristics. Lofland (1985) and Delgado (2011) synthesize both of them in two elements: 1) Open and legally accessible place for the majority of people; 2) Property that belongs to the government. From a wider view, Delgado (2011) highlights public spaces and peoples access as a recognition of human beings rights to encounter with others in a context of freedom and equality for their mutual understanding. His political perspective does assume that there are no neutral ways of managing (or not) cities, and more specifically, public spaces.

There is a growing privatization of public spaces, which is seen as a threat for the antique conception of those places as the basis of citizens' encounter and participation, from a sort of Greek Agora perspective (Minton, 2006), where encounter and discussion over diversity, in terms of ideas, opinions or people's characteristics, can take place. This might be of importance for the distribution of those ideas and perspectives located on the other side of the street of media mainstream or predominant opinions (Kohn, 2004).

The risk is due to the elements that distinguish those new public-private spaces. Shopping malls, cafés, bars or stadiums are conceived as buildings for everybody to assist and participate, but as ownership might be in private hands, those are the hands that will write the rules and terms for people to access them (between national/provincial legal frames). But there have been several examples where private decisions did not harmonize with constitutional rights, such as the person that, in the beginning of USA-Iraq war in 2002 went to a Shopping Mall in New York wearing a t-shirt claiming for world peace and ended up rejected (and handcuffed) from the mall (Kohn, 2004). Due to public demonstrations and pressure demanding public speech, the person was released without charges, offering a great example of how "privately owned" and "public spaces" are two different concepts.

But maybe the most common constraint over full accessibility is related with service fees for attending a place: a dinner at the restaurant, a cappuccino at the café or an entrance fee in the National Park. Although that requirement makes those places not accessible for those who cannot afford the required fees, they will be considered as public spaces in this research because there are also places for people to gather and spend time at as fee-free parks or squares.

The interplay between this variety of places is of high interest in this thesis because of the possibility of a sort of white flight (Lichter et al, 2017; Crowder et al, 2012; Boone et al, 2009; Zukin, 1998) in terms of public space choices from fee-free places to privatized ones, maybe because of the exact reason of going to a different place than those ones that cannot afford a coffee or a beer at the bar.

Public spaces and its conception has evolved over the last century, but it has been of permanent interest the construction of *quasi-streets* (Zukin, 1998: 827), a mix between the urban public space but with an addition of private management on behalf of the aesthetics and the perception of safety in between walls, guards and CCTV –closed- circuit television- systems (Zukin, 1998; Atkinson, 2003).

The need for warranting safe environments is central to cities in order to attract investors, and is reproduced on a lower scale by malls and business districts to attract consumers, but clearly not all of them but those with enough resources to look as attractive shoppers, which give them the power to indirectly set the rules by demanding safe and nice environments to spend time and money.

It is hard to find opponents for increasing safety at places, but the real problem is about the ways being chosen for achieving it. According to Atkinson (2003: 1830), a frequent policy is to go after the "*dangerous or non-consumers*", those that might threat others by their simple presence. After visualizing them as dangerous, the next step is to get rid of them.

The strategy could be to reject them before they step in, with money and consumption capacity potentially being used as a tool: make services more “exclusive” (Zukin, 1998) together with raising the prices. This can be also defined as gentrification (Atkinson, 2003), because of the power capacity of a group to set standards in terms of quality and prices. As in residential dynamics, gentrification over public spaces and consumption will increase the prices by the businessman’s intention to offer this attractive and potential customer the *experience of a latte*, instead of the traditional coffee the worker used to consume (Atkinson, 2003).

In conclusion, this research takes into consideration public spaces as those that, independently of their ownership, allow everybody access to them, even if a fee is required. There are excluded those places that due to its characteristics, encourage people to be more a spectator than an active participant (Kohn, 2004).

### Free time, leisure activities and consumption

Free time can be conceptualized as having no obligations or “must do” activities for a certain period of time. Options on how to spend that time are wide and diverse, thus different scholars worked on several categorizations for describing and analyzing them.

Gehl (2011) focused on the compulsory-voluntary element, conceiving the activities that a person must do independently of his short-term preferences, such as commuting to work or going to the market for buying goods. In parallel, activities of interest are the ones that people realize not because they have to but because they wish to do so. This contrasts with those activities that people might have to do in some public spaces such as commuting, working or parking a vehicle.

According to Anic & Tonic (2014), Overs et al (1997) focused on the activities themselves, in their basis action: sports, nature, art and music, organizations, education, entertainment and culture, volunteer, games, crafts and collecting, while Anic & Tonic (2014) used the same structure but focusing on the environments they occur.

Related to the places there is a difference between Anic & Tonic (2014) and this research. The places where activities occur is considered of relevance here because there are activities a person can just do at home: lying down on the couch, taking a nap or watching TV shows, etc.; some others can be done at home but also somewhere else as reading, listening or playing music, having a drink, eating, etc.; others are just possible to do outside: walking the dog, running, having a drink at the terrace, hanging out in the square, going to a specific place, meeting an unknown person, etc.

For this research, the last two types of activities described above are the ones of interest because of the possibilities they offer of meeting with another person, who can be friends, family, neighbors or strangers that might create/expand somebody’s network or just expose them to an encounter with somebody new.

## Case presentation

### Immigrants in the Netherlands and Amsterdam

The case of analysis is Amsterdam, the most populated city in the Netherlands, a country that on 2016 had 16.979.120 inhabitants. Data for that year showed that 5.3% of the population did not have Dutch citizenship and 11.4% were considered second-generation immigrants<sup>2</sup> ([www.cbs.nl](http://www.cbs.nl)).

Within the country, the Randstad Area, a conglomerate around Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht holds 8.1 million people and a gross regional product of 367 billion euros, becoming the most important region of the country in demographical and economic terms (Mabielek, K., 2016). Related to immigration, 47% of its inhabitants have a non-native background, being 33% of it non-western (CBS, 2016). That goes in the same line of several articles (CBS; 2016; Neal, 2013; Arango, 2000; Toos Beentjes, 2018) which strength the importance of big cities for immigrants due of its higher job opportunities, networks of compatriots and related services, facilities and products.

Inside the Randstad Area, Amsterdam is the city with more immigrants (first and second generation), both in absolute and relative numbers (CBS, 2001), but also in relation to the focus group in this research: Latin Americans. Amsterdam is their biggest host city by hosting twice the number than Rotterdam, the following city on the ranking (Barajas Sandoval, 2008). Expats are also the reason why the city continues to grow, even with a negative net domestic migration at a country level; which means that even if old residents choose to leave the city, the continuous and increasing amounts of international newcomers will increase its population (Mabielek, K., 2016). But even if the demographic growth might be seen as positive, it also brings into consideration challenges related to cultural and integration issues.

Differences between newcomers and natives are visible. According to the Amsterdamse Burgermonitor (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2015), native Dutch have obtained higher levels of academic qualification than the average Amsterdammer (60% against 50%), which sets expats in a disadvantaged position when seeking for job opportunities. Besides that, and changing previous results, both groups feel attached to the city (85%), much more than to their districts and neighborhoods.

Migration is not new in the Netherlands. After World War II, the country received great amounts of Spanish and Italian workers, who came to fill the gap between demand and supply of manual labor that Dutch people could not cover. In the 1960s another big wave of immigrants reached the country, mainly from Morocco and Turkey. Later on it was mostly Eastern Europeans who covered the high demand of labor force. In 1975 the independence of Suriname was proclaimed, and with it approximately 150.000 of their inhabitants moved to the Netherlands (Peters & de Haan, 2011).

The Dutch case is quite exceptional in terms of migration policy. Instead of having a national approach, the local government of the city of Amsterdam is the one that decides how to deal with the issue (Pardo, 2012). While in the 70s the first experiences for welcoming programs were designed, in the later decade, a multiculturalist approach was consolidated among migration policies. In the late 80s and early 90s, the Scientific Council for Governmental Policy –*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het*

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<sup>2</sup> Mother, Father or both were born abroad.

*Regeringsbeleid (WRR)* - created a report that admitted the failure of the approach of the time, by stating that the multiculturalist approach had led to social fragmentation (Pardo, 2012: 177).

Later on, a new methodology was developed, focusing on the common elements that immigrants and nationals shared rather than on the diversity that seemed to threaten national values. Therefore, the aim became to homogenize by silencing dissonances within society, by addressing the requirement of integration in the immigrant, and not giving much relevance to the necessary role local society needed to play in that process (Vasta, 2007).

So far, the situation has not dramatically changed. Several governmental policies have been applied in order to offer opportunities for newcomers to learn the Dutch language, trying to equalize job opportunities and access to education and providing social housing (Rae Milligan, 2003; van Kempen et al, 2005). What has not been on the agenda so far is the role of public spaces and places for leisure as relevant scenarios for social integration with minorities (Pardo, 2012).

### Latin Americans<sup>3</sup>

The 70s was a breaking decade in the history of Latin America, where the majority of countries turned from democracies to military dictatorships, characterized by several and systematic human rights violations against political and social activists (Caetano & Rilla, 2005; Galeano, 1971; Halperin Donghi, 2005). In that context, opponents to the regimes chose to leave their homelands.

In 1973 the last Chilean dictatorship started and prosecutions among its opponents were carried out. The same happened in Uruguay that same year and in Argentina in 1976, a context that set the conditions for a massive Latin American emigration to European countries (Pardo, 2012; Barajas Sandoval, 2008; Caetano & Rilla, 2011).

By invitation of the Dutch government, Chilean political refugees were invited to immigrate, which helped the acceptance of other political asylum seekers from South American countries (Pardo, 2012). This population was mostly highly educated and with high levels of activism and leadership (Pardo, 2012; Toos Beentjes, 2018). Additionally, the civil society was actively involved in supporting those families by creating welcoming groups for assisting the newcomers, such as the *Organizatie Latijns Amerika Activiteiten* (OLAA).

Once the dictatorships in Latin America were overruled, migratory flows did not stop, they just slightly changed in terms of the reasons motivating people to migrate, and therefore their characteristics. Instead of solidarity movements seeking for a common idea of justice and freedom, newcomers went to the Netherlands mainly looking for better jobs and education opportunities than the ones they could access in their own countries.

Nowadays, Latin Americans are not a group of significant relevance in Dutch political or academic scenarios (Barajas Sandoval, 2008), mainly due to the fact that there are now larger minorities, such as Turkish, Moroccans or Surinamese (Pardo, 2012; Toos Beentjes, 2018). Complementary perspectives highlight the heterogeneity of Latin American population and its spatial spread –contrary to the ethnic enclaves model (Neal, 2013)- but also a closer cultural distance from Dutch and western values and traditions, as expressed by Pardo (2012): *“Latin American migrant group, because of being out of the Islamic-western conflict of global scope, makes its integration problems less visible, making*

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<sup>3</sup> Countries located in any of the Americas with Spanish or Portuguese as official languages: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

*its way through society without creating great tensions behind the cloak of a western and Catholic identity” (pp. 193).*

Because of Latin American’s lack of relevance as a minority group in the national context, Dutch databases include Latin American people together with African and Asians (except Japan) as “Non-Western”. That makes impossible to know how this group is characterized in terms of education or socio-economic development.

### **By countries**

Due to the collaboration of Onderzoek, Informatie en Statistiek - Gemeente Amsterdam, there is some information about the number of people by country of origin in the city, as the following table shows<sup>4</sup>:

Latin American population in Amsterdam by country of origin							
Country	Homeland Population	Amsterdam population				Relation Amsterdam/Homeland	Relation country of origin/Amsterdam population
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative	Cumulative		
				Frequency	Percent		
Argentina	43.298.264	1.362	8.11%	1.362	8.11%	0.0031%	0.16%
Bolivia	10.737.266	229	1.36%	1.591	9.47%	0.0021%	0.03%
Brazil	207.749.810	4.578	27.26%	6.169	36.73%	0.0022%	0.54%
Chile	17.916.971	1.061	6.32%	7.230	43.05%	0.0059%	0.12%
Colombia	48.228.607	2.373	14.13%	9.603	57.18%	0.0049%	0.28%
Costa Rica	4.820.782	117	0.70%	9.720	57.88%	0.0024%	0.01%
Cuba	11.421.590	282	1.68%	10.002	59.56%	0.0025%	0.03%
Dominican Republic	10.530.929	2.488	14.82%	12.490	74.38%	0.0236%	0.29%
Ecuador	16.144.346	822	4.90%	13.312	79.28%	0.0051%	0.10%
El Salvador	6.298.489	57	0.34%	13.369	79.62%	0.0009%	0.01%
Guatemala	15.920.077	111	0.66%	13.480	80.28%	0.0007%	0.01%
Honduras	8.814.019	77	0.46%	13.557	80.74%	0.0009%	0.01%
Mexico	124.612.397	1.058	6.30%	14.615	87.04%	0.0008%	0.12%
Nicaragua	6.085.528	64	0.38%	14.679	87.42%	0.0011%	0.01%
Panama	3.929.105	66	0.39%	14.745	87.81%	0.0017%	0.01%
Paraguay	6.639.157	27	0.16%	14.772	87.97%	0.0004%	0.00%
Peru	31.383.479	857	5.10%	15.629	93.07%	0.0027%	0.10%
Uruguay	3.430.277	240	1.43%	15.869	94.50%	0.0070%	0.03%
Venezuela	30.553.587	922	5.49%	16.791	100.00%	0.0030%	0.11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>619.264.322</b>	<b>16.791</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>16.791</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>0.0027%</b>	<b>1.97%</b>

Self elaborated table. Sources: Onderzoek, Informatie en Statistiek - Gemeente Amsterdam; CEPAL.

Table 1: Latin American immigrants living in the Netherlands and in their homeland by country of origin.

The table shows on the bottom right hand the size of the Latin American population in relation to the whole city –which does not even reach 2%-. In the same line as expressed before, this might be one

<sup>4</sup> Amsterdam population from South-American countries: Data from 1-1-2018; includes both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of inhabitants with foreign background; people with double citizenship (Dutch or other) are also included.



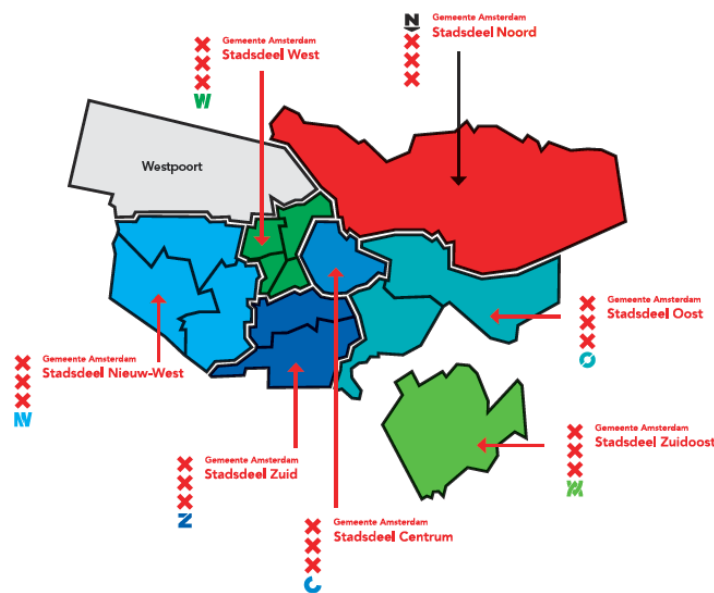
of the reasons why the group is not of significant interest among scholars or policymakers, compared to the 7.4%, 5.8% and 5% that Moroccan, Surinamese and Turkish population represents within the city (CBS, 2018).

Brazilians are the biggest group among Latin Americans, representing more than a quarter of the whole group (27.3%), followed by Dominicans (14.8%) and Colombians (14.1%). Related to the size of their population, Dominican Republic is the most overrepresented country: 0.0236% of their homeland population lives in Amsterdam; on parallel, Paraguay is the more underrepresented one with a 0.0004%.

Although the size of the Latin American group is still smaller than other minorities, there is constant trend to growth during the last two decades in the country, which should make them relevant from a social and political perspective (Pardo, 2012; Barajas Sandoval, 2008; CBS). Therefore, it appears necessary for scholars and policymakers to have a better understanding of their necessities, opinions and perspectives.

### **By place of living in the city**

The city of Amsterdam is divided into 8 districts: Centrum, Westpoort, West, Nieuw-West, Zuid, Oost, Noord and Zuidoost, while some of them are sub-divided into *buurten* or *wijken* (neighborhoods), as shown in the following map:



Source: [www.amsterdam.nl](http://www.amsterdam.nl)

Figure 5: Division of the city of Amsterdam by districts.

In relation to their spatial distribution in the city, the most relevant element is the lack of a high concentration of Latin Americans in a specific district, affirming what was found by Barajas Sandoval (2008). With the exception of Westpoort (less populated district also for any ethnic background) and Noord, every other district host a 10-20% of the group, making difficult for this research to focus solely on a specific area and justifying the need to take the whole city as a case analysis.



Latin American population in Amsterdam by districts				
Districts	Total population		Latin Americans in Amsterdam	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
A Centrum	86418	10,51%	1965	11,7
B Westpoort	370	0,04%	6	0,04
E West	142728	17,36%	2914	17,35
F Nieuw-West	146700	17,84%	2316	13,79
K Zuid	141438	17,20%	3030	18,05
M Oost	128690	15,65%	2669	15,9
N Noord	91324	11,11%	1392	8,29
T Zuidoost	84567	10,29%	2499	14,88
Total Amsterdam	822235	100,00%	16791	100%

Self elaborated table. Sources: Onderzoek, Informatie en Statistiek - Gemeente Amsterdam.

Table 2: Latin American immigrants living in Amsterdam by districts.

## Research questions and goals

### Questions:

**To what extent could consumption be a barrier for the encounter between Latin Americans and Dutch natives in public spaces in the city of Amsterdam?**

- Are there differences in the way both groups spend their leisure time?
  - Where do they go?
  - Which are the main factors on the decision making?
    - Is affordability a relevant factor in the choice?
- How are perceived consumption and non-consumption spaces by the respondents?
  - Does the same people go to both of them?
  - Are there different behaviors accepted in both places?
- Does consumption shapes people's spatial experience of public spaces?
- How likely are individuals to meet with ethnically diverse groups in public spaces?

### Goals:

1. To provide information about the places where the studied groups spend their time and why they choose those spots in the city.
2. To visualize how much does money mean in relation to other variables such as cultural preferences over leisure activities development.
3. To fill a gap in the literature, connecting the capacity of payment for access to public spaces and its potential threat in terms of deterring interethnic encounters between Latin American and Dutch Amsterdammers.
4. To give insights about how to improve people's integration on public spaces in the city.
5. To extend knowledge about the Latin American community in Amsterdam and their use of public spaces.

## How - Methodology

Due to the high complexity of the system of assets and opportunities, the already mentioned AVEO scheme was the strategy of analysis. Therefore, not just people's characteristics but the way in which they interplay with the environment can be better understood. If both spheres are not taken into consideration, there is a lack of perspective on what is restrictive or not, or in other words, there can be a better comprehension of the extent to which the environment and its characteristics enables people to make their choices by accessing services such as a bar, a restaurant or a green space.

The strategy for data collection was to use mental mapping techniques in order to help people when remembering, mentioning and reflecting over places by giving insights into the way they conceive, experience and therefore produce spaces (Shields, 2013; Lefebvre, 1991; Leary, 2009). They were used for triggering their reflection over where they go and the reasons why, plus bringing into the conversation all the places where they can spend time in. It was expected that the possibility of seeing the whole area will show them places they can go sometimes but they might see as "leisure activities destination", as could be a bench on the sidewalk or a square nearby.

Together with the map construction, the interview looked at neighbors' speeches about their choices when they decided to spend leisure time outside of their homes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted both with Native Dutch inhabitants and Latin American immigrants for knowing what their preferences are over the opportunities and constraints they find among the existing set of choices.

Interviews were expected to provide sufficient information to answer all of the research questions: representation of the set of choices and choosing process; likeliness to meet and interact and destination preferences.

In parallel, policymakers and other key actors were interviewed in order to understand their perspective on the phenomena of inter-ethnic encounter: if it happens or not but also which elements they consider more or less determinant on the situations, together with their opinion of choices among the city.

### Field work:

#### Respondents<sup>5</sup>:

During the fieldwork, 12 people were interviewed. As this research aims to know about both Latin American and Dutch inhabitant's choices for spending their free time, it was necessary to balance the sample between locals and Latin Americans.

For a better comparison of both groups, the idea was to interview young people, from around 20 to 40 years of age. As it was necessary for them to have some knowledge about the city, it was a requirement to have been living in the city of Amsterdam for at least 6 months or being regular visitant (on a daily basis) due to his/her studies, job, etc.

The way of getting in contact with respondents was quite different between Dutch and Latin Americans. The later were reached by Facebook groups of Latin American inhabitants in the

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<sup>5</sup> The real names were replaced by pseudonyms to preserve the respondents' anonymity.

Netherlands and Amsterdam. It was also of help the contact with the NGO *Casa Migrante*, which works with Spanish-speaking immigrants in order to provide them with assistance and orientation about diverse topics (such as legal, language, cultural activities, etc.). All the interviews to that group were conducted in Spanish and translated by the author to English. On the other hand, Dutch respondents were acquaintances or friends of them. Some of them were not completely confident to have an interview in English, but language was not a problem during the conversations.

A summary chart and a short description of the respondents is presented below:

Name	Origin	Gender	Age
Angela	Dutch	Female	20
Kelly	Dutch	Female	28
Kim	Dutch	Female	24
Lisa	Dutch	Female	27
Lucas	Dutch	Male	27
Nico	Dutch	Male	20
Carol	Colombian	Female	20
Francisco	Peruvian	Male	40
Irene	Colombian	Female	22
Jimena	Aruban/Venezuelan	Female	23
Laura	Colombian	Female	22
Martina	Mexican	Female	23

Source: created by the author.

Table 3: List of interviewees and main characteristics.

#### Dutch group:

**Angela** is a Dutch girl of 20 years of age. She was born and raised in Beverwijk. She is living in Amsterdam for a year, but since she was a kid she felt attracted to the city because of its *air of acceptance* in contrast to her perception of her hometown as rather restrictive and conservative.

She used to live in De Pijp, but as prices were so high, finding suitable accommodation was problematic. Nowadays she is close to Amstel Station, which is located next to the school she goes for studying Special Effects Make up.

She normally moves all around the city by bike, but her favorite areas are those where she can find alternative or underground spots, because she considers these are the places “where cooler people are”. Because of her work/internships as makeup artist, she does not have a fixed office in the city and she goes wherever there is a film shoot or any other work to do.

**Kelly** is Dutch and is 28 years old. She lived in Alkmaar from the time she was born until she was 24, when she moved to Amsterdam. Then, she lived with her sister in the West district, afterwards they moved to the South and it has been a year since she is living in the East.

She works for a bank in the South district, but according to her, she is around that area just for her job, otherwise “there is not too much to do”. Most of the times she meets with friends is not just around her house but also nearby her friend’s.

In summer, she prefers to spend time outside, but when the city gets colder she likes to find *gezellig* places, where the atmosphere plays a key role for chilling and having a relaxed time with friends.

**Kim** is a Dutch student of 24 years of age. She is currently sharing an apartment in the South district, but before used to live in the West, the East and the Center. From her perspective, the West is the most diverse area, with shops and restaurants run by different ethnic groups; East is seen by her as the place where families live, and because of that a bit more quiet, but quite convenient because of the proximity to some of her regular activities; Center is also a busy place because of tourists and students; lastly, South is where she considers most of the wealthy people in the city live.

She travels by bike all around the city, but because of where her friends live, she spends a significant amount of time in the Eastern district. Still, proximity is one of the most important reasons for choosing where to go, especially when choosing green areas.

Besides studying, she also works but the places depend on the projects she is working on. She also practices sports in different places around the city.

**Lisa** is a 27 year old girl. She was born in Alkmaar but when she was 19 years old, she moved to Amsterdam. For 5 years, she has shared an apartment located in the South district. About that area, she thinks is quite *chic*, with big houses and a more residential style. She considers it is a boring but safe area, and because of that thinks it was a good place to live when first moving to Amsterdam.

She works at a bank in the South District, where she spends little time. Most of her choices were close by the East district, where nowadays she lives with her boyfriend.

In her opinion, the West district and parks are the best ones because of social mixing, but when she goes out for food, she ends up at non-ethnic places because she considers there are no relaxed places for a long dinner but more “eating and leaving”.

**Lucas** is a Dutch man of 27 years of age living in the West district for the last 2 years, when he moved from a little city located a in the north of Enschede.

He works in the software business and most of his time is spent outside of the office. Because of that, he needs to travel around the country every day. That is why, he says he needed to have a car, but due to parking limitations, he bikes every day from home to his parking place, where he takes the car to wherever he has to go to.

Lucas has not too many favorite consumption places, because every time he goes out he likes to find new brown bars in the city. He is proud of Amsterdam’s tolerance and open mind, and he prefers to refer to immigrants as “foreign people” because he considers the first word has a negative association.

**Nico** is 22 years old, he is a graduate student and has been a resident of Amsterdam for less than a year. Before that, he lived in Slovenia for half a year and the rest of his life was spent in Alkmaar.

He is currently living next to *Spaklerweg Station* in a former prison, which nowadays is home to several young people. He says he loves the place, but its future is uncertain because they might get the order to leave the building at any time. Normally he travels around the East district, but his favorite bars are those which mix a good environment and a fair beer price.

He has a strong opinion about segregation in Amsterdam, considering it as one of society’s biggest threats. Related to immigrants and their integration, he thinks it is something Dutch people normally agree on in a theoretical level, but in practice, it is never an actual priority for them.

### Latin American group:

**Carol** is a 20 year old girl, born in Colombia but raised in Spain until she was 13. From that moment on she has lived in the Netherlands. Nowadays she lives in Purmerend, but because of the time she spends in the city, she also considers herself as an Amsterdammer. Her favorite spots are located in the Center district, but she also frequently meets with friends at parks and at their houses.

She studies social work and does her internship at the NGO Casa Migrante.

From her perspective, Dutch people go much more often than Spanish to bars and restaurants, but that wouldn't represent a big problem because here people would have more money to do so. Still, she misses meeting on the streets with her friends after an impromptu call or message – instead of planned activities.

**Francisco** was born in Peru 40 years ago, but since he is 18 he has been living in the Netherlands. He used to work in Cusco (Peru) in the tourism industry, where he met a Dutch girl who later became his girlfriend. They are not together anymore, but from that relationship, he has two Dutch kids. Immigration policies pushed him to become a Dutch citizen in order to stay close to his family.

Later on, he had other kids, worked on many places but returned to the tourism industry. Nowadays, he has a company that brings Spanish speakers to the Netherlands and takes Dutch travelers to Peru.

His house is in Zwolle, but he spends half his time at his girlfriend's place, located in the West district, close to Sloterdijk Station. As he mostly works online, his office could be at his place in Zwolle, nearby Sloterdijk or at different cafés around the city.

Football is his hobby. He used to play, but nowadays because of time constraints, he is the head coach of an amateur football team where Latin American immigrants play.

**Irene** and **Laura** study Education for development in an Erasmus Mundus program. They are both Colombian, but because of their studies, they have been in Amsterdam for 6 months. Before that, they lived in Barcelona. Irene is 23 years old and also lived in Paris, while Laura is one year younger.

They both live in the East district, and they are absolutely satisfied with Amsterdam's public spaces. From their perspectives, there is always something to do all around the city.

When comparing the life in Amsterdam with Bogotá, their hometown in Colombia, they think they could hardly get used to the cold weather and culture. Because of that, they have tried to interact with locals in parks and streets but they quitted after not having too many answers.

**Jimena** is a 23 year old girl, born in Aruba, although her parents were both from Venezuela. She is also studying Social work and working at the NGO Casa Migrante twice a week.

Her sister, also from Aruba, was the first one to move to Amsterdam, but Jimena joined her when she was still 17 years old, under the care and responsibility of her older sibling. Since then, she lives in the Center. She likes that area because it is busy. Besides that, she moves around the city and loves to spend time at the parks, where she finds herself more comfortable around the diverse crowd.

She has friends both from Aruba and locals, but she considers the Aruban group more as a family. With them, she meets mostly at houses for drinks, food or for movies, while with the Dutch ones, the plan is mostly to go out.

The country she was born and raised, Aruba, is a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Since 1636 until 1986 (pauses in between) it was a colony of the Netherlands. Later on, it became an autonomous country even though it belongs to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Nevertheless, based on their common characteristics (such as climate, cultural traditions) together with their geographical proximity and immigration, Aruban people are tied with other Latin American countries, especially their neighbors: Colombia and Venezuela.

**Martina** is a Mexican girl of 23 years of age. She studies her bachelor in Architecture, and one of her main interests has to do with public spaces and interactions.

Nowadays she lives in the West area with her Dutch boyfriend, whom she met years ago when he was living in Mexico. They chose to live in the West district because it is where she thinks the best balance between locals and immigrants is.

She loves to go out for food, but has no preference of Latin American places over the rest, as she has also no big interest in meeting with other Mexicans because she considers a passport is not enough reason for being friends.

Related to public spaces, she thinks local governments just think on the Dutch way of using public spaces, not taking into consideration the preferences of other minorities such as Latin American, Moroccans or Turkish communities.

## Processing and analysis

### Choices in the city

As stated before, the conceptualization of public spaces is a matter of discussion among scholars, so there is no reason to be surprised when people, out of the field of urban studies, struggle when thinking about them.

This study included every place open to most of the people (Delgado, 2011) besides ownership, the most intuitive way of distinguishing public and private (Madanipour, 1999). The reason for such an open definition was precisely to hear about the wide spectrum of places where people decide to go: classical public spaces, such as parks or squares, or by contrast, private owned and customer-oriented places, like bars, restaurants or cafés. For a better understanding of the options and choices over places in the city, the complete picture must be taken into consideration in order to analyze where people go, where they do not go to and why they choose as they do. Such clarification was given to the respondents before their interviews aiming to gather high-quality data.

Among the respondents, there was a consensus related to the extent and diversity of Amsterdam's opportunities for leisure activities, but spatial distribution was also highlighted. A high density of population enables the settlement of commercial clusters among the territory (Glaeser, 2011), which might help to explain the perception of offer not just in the city center but also in surrounding areas.

### Places

As expected, there was a big variety of places mentioned by every respondent. Google Maps was used at every interview as an aid for the interviewees but also for observing the territorial distribution of their favorite spots in the city. Below is a brief summary of the most popular spots for spending free time in the city of Amsterdam according to the people interviewed:



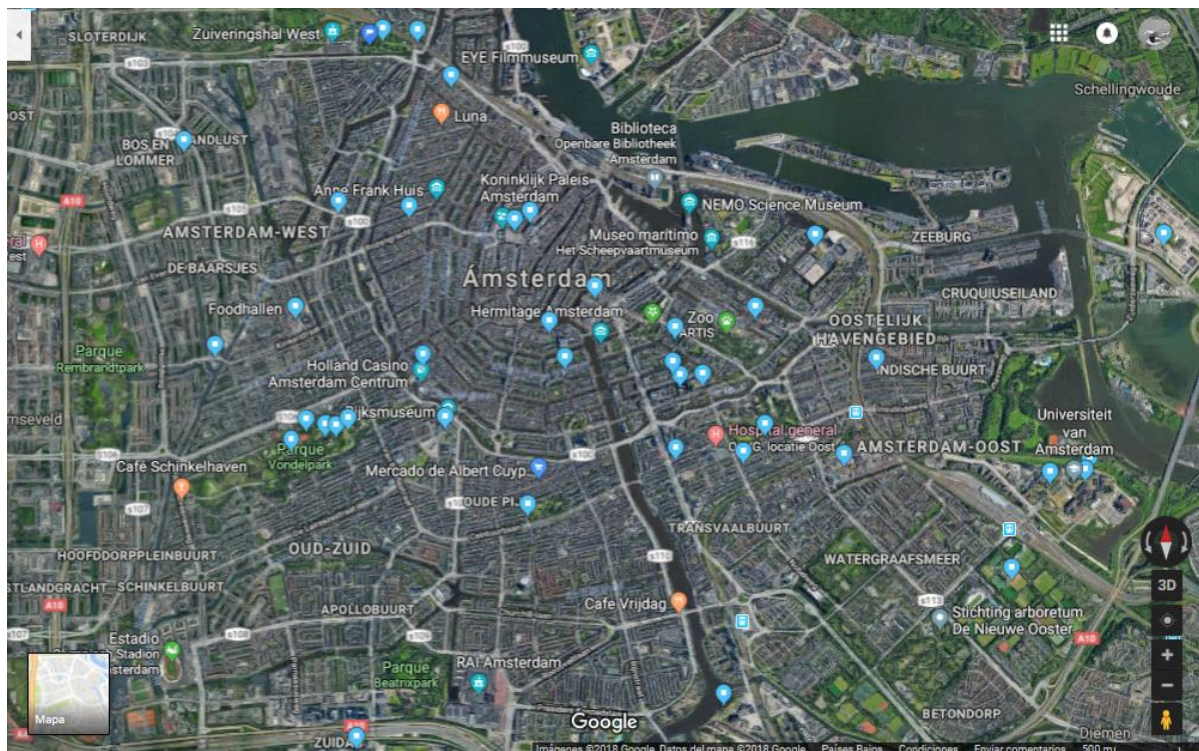
Most mentioned public spaces	
<b>Parks and squares</b>	Vondelpark
	Oosterpark
	Flevopark
	Marina Park
	Westerpark
	Nieuwmarkt
	Waterlooplein
<b>Bars, restaurants and cafés</b>	De Hallen (food court)
	Scandinavian Embassy (café)
	Leidseplein (surrounding bars and restaurants)
	Rembrandtplein (surrounding bars and restaurants)
	Other food establishments
<b>Other places</b>	Sport clubs

Source: created by the author.

Table 4: Most frequently mentioned destinations for spending free time in Amsterdam.

According to the location of those places, the following map shows there is a high concentration of favorite spots in a ratio of 3 kilometers from Central Station with the main exception of Vondelpark, which was the most mentioned place and is located a bit further away from the specified area. Also, its particular shape and orientation make it up to 4.6 kilometers distance at its western point.

In the following map, every destination marked on blue represents a spot that respondents identified as a regular destination, without distinguishing between its purposes (leisure activities, work, the practice of sports, etc.).



Source: [www.google.nl/maps/](http://www.google.nl/maps/). Tagged by the author.

Figure 6: Map of Amsterdam's central area, with marks on mentioned places by interviewees.

## Parks

As an urban landscape feature, parks are widely appreciated due to its many functions as providers of active or passive recreational spaces (Solecki & Welch, 1994; Adinolfi et al, 2014) but also due to an association between “the green” and environmental benefits and relaxed atmospheres.

Together with it, green urban spaces, and parks in particular, are key to social cohesion and interactions. Several researches (Peters et al 2009; Adinolfi et al, 2014; Sennet, 1990) have proved the importance of parks when analyzing people's encounters, due to the high diversity of attendants in ethnic terms, together with the higher possibilities of informal and casual encounters among them.

In fact, Peters et al (2009; pp. 98) have studied the use of urban parks from an ethnic perspective, concluding “(...) *that urban green places offer opportunities to different ethnic groups to relax and enjoy outdoor life in a green and relaxing environment. Our study suggests that urban parks can be seen as inclusive places, that is, places where people of different ethnicities spend their leisure time*”.

Within the whole group of respondents, the most popular places identified for spending free time were city parks. Elements such as the more relaxed vibe, heterogeneity and low costs were mentioned as reasons for people to choose them, while other specific characteristics such as number of tourists and allowance for barbecuing might lead people to go to one or other park in Amsterdam.

Between all the green spots, Vondelpark, the biggest in the city (47 hectares) and built in 1865 was identified as the favorite. Compared to other green spaces, this park is a landmark for inhabitants of all around the city, while smaller ones -such as *Ooesterpark* or *Westerpark*- are mostly chosen by those who live close to them or travel close to those parks.

*I think Vondelpark is the place we go. We grab some beers and chill there. That's the place we go to. (Lucas, male, Dutch, 27 years old, software technician).*

*Vondelpark is the most famous park in the city. But it deserves it: it's the most beautiful park. But a bit crowded sometimes.*

(Kim, female, Dutch, 24 years old, MSc student)

When looking at the reasons that led them to choose the park, geographical location is a strength of the Vondelpark, as it is situated between South, West and Center districts. It is perceived to be easily accessible to the majority of inhabitants, which seems to lead to a wider range of attendants, highlighted as positive among respondents:

*Yeah! And I also sometimes go to the Vondelpark, because is really central, and everybody living in the East, South or West can reach it easily.*

(Kim, female, Dutch, 24 years old, MSc student)

*All depends on the location, I think. Vondelpark is really diverse. You can find any kind of people. There are multiple entrances: north, south, east and west. You can enter this park from any place. Other parks are also accessible but I think are mostly accessed by people that live around the park. (...) Because parks are places where*



*everybody can meet everybody. They are accessible for everybody, they are free and always open, or almost.*

*R – Is that an added value for you?*

*N – Yes, definitely!*

(Nico, male, Dutch, 22 years old, MSc student)

*I go there a lot. When I was living on the West I was going to Vondelpark, which is a bit touristic but I still like it a lot, because it's big, so you always have space, plus there's always a lot of people to see, which is nice.*

(Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee)

In the same line, Peters et al (2009) affirm that urban parks are more inclusive green places than non-urban green areas and that urban parks can promote social cohesion as other places cannot do.

The choice of going to parks is not exclusive of any of the two groups but shared by both Dutch and Latin American inhabitants. The same can be said in reference to the **weather** when they answer. Climate conditions are important factors over people's use of public spaces and also over outdoor permanence. When there is rain, cold or wind, pedestrians are fewer, and activities are shorter and mostly constrained to commuting or other essential activities (Gehl, 2011; Amin & Thrift, 2002). Studies in different cities (Cheng & Ng, 2011; Taleghani et al, 2013) have shown how weather and thermal comfort affect the way people use and experience outdoor urban spaces.

As suggested by Bosselmann (1984) at Gehl (2011: 175): *“Most of the times, people outdoors require direct sunshine and protection from the wind to be comfortable. On all but the warmest days, parks and plazas that are windswept or in shadow are virtually deserted, while those that offer sunlight and protection from the wind are heavily used”*.

*There are parks at every neighborhood. And now that the weather is nicer, I love going there to lay down in the sun, or to sit, to have a picnic or whatever.*

(Laura, female, Colombian, 22 years old, MSc student)

*I always go around Beukeplein, and I walk around this area, because when it is nice and warm I go to the Oosterpark for a BBQ or go to other places for a drink.*

(Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee)

Not all but some answers mentioned the **scale** factor as relevant for choosing where to go. Compared to the massive and well known Vondelpark, Oosterpark stands to be a good alternative: fewer people and closer to home.

*Yeah, sometimes I go to parks and chill with friends: picnic and laying down in the sun. We used to do that at the Oosterpark, when I used to live closely. (...) is sort of hidden, so is not that everybody knows it. But when it was like 30° C, all the students from the area used to go to the Marina Terrain. But maybe there are just 60 people when at Vondelpark there can be thousands. Is really a hidden spot.*

(Kim, female, Dutch, 24 years old, MSc student)

Instead of overcrowded spaces where, especially in Amsterdam, tourists represent a big group, small places located further away from the very city center are chosen by locals, where their condition of “hidden jewels” in the city makes them especially attractive for locals, or at least for those who want to be away from popular and overcrowded places.

Both Latin Americans and Dutch people mentioned parks as frequent destinations for spending their free time, plus, as said above, being the place where its attendants are more socially mixed.

In terms of interaction, even if some consider there is not too much of it between attendants, others might think that still are higher chances to happen rather than in bars or restaurants.

*Since I have been here, I have just talked with one person, besides mandatory encounters as the cashier or a doctor, let's say. There has been just one person that came to me for a chat. At the park where I spend some time, I used to say hello to people but nobody was answering. So I don't do it anymore.*

(Laura, female, Colombian, 22 years old, MSc student)

*R – Do you see any difference in the interactions between people at the park than at the terrace?*

*J – I think I would ask something to a person easier if I'm at the park rather than at the terrace. I think at the terrace I would just ask something functional to an employee there rather than to another person.*

*R – Why?*

*J – I don't really know. I think it is... It could be because you're paying for something, so there you're more on your own space. And the park is free, let's say.*

(Jimena, female, Aruban-Venezuelan, 23 years old, BA student)

## Streets, canals and squares

Other public owned areas such as streets, canals and squares are seen in different ways by interviewees, perceiving those spaces as good spots for spending free time with others. Having had experiences in other cities where meeting on the streets is a more common plan were of relevance for some of the respondents in the way they perceive the life “between buildings” (Gehl, 2012).

*When in Spain, we were mostly meeting in the streets. You were going to the street, hanging around there and that was it. In here is not that easy because the weather doesn't help too much for it. You cannot just go out and meet at the square and that's it, as we used to do in Spain, where everybody from the neighborhood got out and we sat and chatted there for a long time and that was it. Here you cannot do that. [You cannot go to...] The square, the park or whatever.*

(Carol, female, Colombian-Spanish, 20 years old, BA student)

The streets, as mentioned before in relation to parks, are accessible to everybody. In contrast, streets and sidewalks are spaces that people must pass through to do other activities. Even if somebody's aim is to go to the office, that person will necessarily walk on the sidewalk and cross streets or parks, leading to that space being the only one where everybody has to be at, at least for a while. As studied by Gehl (2012), quality of public space is a determinant factor over the amount of time people will spend on it: *When outdoor areas are of poor quality, only strictly necessary activities occur. When outdoor areas are of high-quality, necessary activities take place with approximately the same frequency -though they clearly tend to take a longer time, because the physical conditions are better. In addition, however, a wide range of optional activities will also occur because place and situation now invite people to stop, sit, eat, play and so on.* (Gehl, 2012: 11)

In comparison to other places, streets are seen as open and diverse, which gives them a more democratic status, where people can meet with everybody, and become the most authentic realm, according to the collected testimonies.

*You meet more people in the street, people that you didn't know yet. Because in the square there are different kinds of people; and you meet with a specific group, and it might be that you will meet a new person if a friend that you're meeting with brings another person along.*

(Carol, female, Colombian-Spanish, 20 years old, BA student)

*F – We live outside our houses, and from the street is where we learn from the most.*

*R – Is it?*

*F – I think so.*

*R – Why? What do you learn there?*

*F – I think the street is where real life happens. At home they teach you the theoretical part, but on the street is where you practice that all.*

(Francisco, male, Peruvian, 40 years old, tourism businessman)

Francisco's exaltation of street's "real life" has a clear similarity with Carmona's et al (2013: 111) conception of streets as a "*public space in its purest form*", in juxtaposition with the management and security that gated communities, private owned shops or malls might have (Kohn, 2004; Goldberger, 1996). It is the idea that, aside from those security measures, real life happens at those places where people can meet with others without the control and mediation of private owners or managers, as expressed by Goldberger (1996) at Hannigan (1995) according to Atkinson (2003:6): "*cities are preferable to their urbanoid clones because they are more 'authentic', by which he means that they possess elements of roughness, serendipity and creativity which are missing in the Disney-style version*".

In certain areas, notwithstanding exclusion from places, there is also the association between this atypical way of meeting with others in streets or squares and criminal activities, instead of regarding a re-definition of those spaces by the ways they are used (Tani, 2015; Lefebvre, 1991; Leary, 2009).

*There were lonely seats in the middle of the squares, but that didn't facilitate the encounter within the community at all. So specially women, they used to meet at public squares and used to talk standing, because they had no space for seating (...).*

*Then we discovered the Municipality had realized about that, and it was not a coincidence not to find nice places for sitting and meeting. Amsterdam Government, or Dutch, discourage more than three people meetings because they think that leads to the creation of criminal groups or gangs. Even though, they never took into consideration the rest of the community.*

(Martina, female, Mexican, 23 years old, BA student)

In several western countries the idea of “street culture” is strongly related with gang activities (Jacobs & Wright, 1999; Stewart & Simons, 2010; Malone, 2002), and therefore those meetings should be avoided, forbidden or at least moved somewhere else. The latter is expressed by Atkinson (2003) when suggesting that the main way of solving problems related to street bands is to exclude them rather than their resolution. The ways in which some young immigrants are using public spaces are not accepted. From the perspective of some of the Latin Americans interviewed, street encounters are seen as potentially problematic as well, but that case is not fully accepted. There is also a shared view of streets as places for encounters and community building (Cosco & Moore, 2002 at Malone, 2002), or as expressed by Rojas at Hou (2010: 36) when studying Latin American communities in Los Angeles, United States: “*Streets are an integral part of the community fabric because they bring people together by allowing for mobility and social exchanges*”.

Back to negative associations between hanging out and criminal activities, fear appears to justify the implementation of security programs (CCTV or safety agents) or fenced alternatives. The targets might be immigrants but as it usually happens (Casey, Goudie & Reeve, 2008; Loughran, 2014) when public safety is discussed, homeless.

*There are parks with some homeless people but there are also police officers everywhere, so there are not many places where you actually cannot go.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

Sometimes, those alternative uses of public spaces could be seen as a threat to public safety, but it may as well be that narrow perspectives do not consider other potential uses of public spaces which, even if they are not related to crime, they would not be in line with most common uses by Dutch people. That is the case with the use of squares as an extension of houses, mostly related to the needs or traditions people might have when interacting or meeting with relatives or families.

*Their families -among Turkish community- are big, and they often have big dinners with friends, relatives, neighbors. As spaces inside their houses were rather limited, they needed to extend their living spaces to the public sphere. Public spaces were not designed for them.*

(Martina, female, Mexican, 23 years old, BA student)

Both alternative uses of squares as extensions of houses or as a place to gather in the evenings (without any gang or criminal motivation) are a clear tension of representations of spaces and spaces of representation (Lefebvre, 1991; Leary, 2009). While policymakers might think of squares as spots for daily short meetings, other users will give them a different use and meaning, which could easily

lead to a clash between the *status quo* –or the supporters/guardians of the traditional use-, against those users with those alternative definitions (Tani, 2015; Malone, 2002).

On the other hand but also related to alternative spaces of representations, other respondents simply might not even think to meet at those spaces at all because of physical elements and ways of experiencing them:

*R – And is it a choice for you to meet at the square nearby here or others?*

*L – Mm no, I don't think so. I never met at a square, I think. I guess I cannot find a reason to meet at a square.*

*R – Wouldn't it work as a park?*

*L – No, I don't think so. It feels different.*

*R – Not that gezellig?*

*L – No, actually not gezellig!*

(Lucas, male, Dutch, 27 years old, software technician)

In contrast with other cities where people might gather in other places, Paris was an example of youngsters meeting at the side of the *Seine* River when having a drink or picnicking with friends. Besides, it was seen that Amsterdam's inhabitants were not choosing canals as favorite destinations for chilling and spending the day. Looking for reasons, private properties and a feeling of invading private owned land was the biggest explanation:

*I – If I would live where some colleagues live, closer to the Center, I'd go more often to the canals. Because is not that full as Dam Square, but there's still people. And you can go to a café around there or just sit on the canal. Is nice to see people and boats passing by.*

*R – And do you take your own drinks or...?*

*I – Yes, sometimes. But not that often because people here drink much more often at bars than on the street. I used to live in Paris and the most popular plan was to take a bottle of wine and sit right on the side of the river.*

*L – Sometimes I sit here [on the side of the canal] but not too many people do it.*

*I – I think is because of the boat houses. It seems you're invading a private property.*

*L – Yes, you're like getting into their houses.*

(Laura, female, Colombian, 22 years old, MSc student &  
Irene, female, Colombian, 23 years old, MSc student)

## Bars, restaurants, café and other consumption places

As alternatives to homes, squares or parks, consumption places rise up by the influence of an increasing relevance of consumption activities within new patterns of leisure and culture (Zukin, 1998; Gordon, 2007). Without ethnic background distinction, those places are quite popular spaces for meeting with friends.

Classical approaches do not consider privately owned business as public spaces in the city, but nowadays transformations have led to a wider concept of publicity, where commercial streets and

terraces are places where people regularly assist, and therefore, they must be considered when analyzing the interaction among citizens. The “public-private” condition is also dynamic, as stated by Hibma (2018, interview), considering that places transform during one simple day, being a simple and empty space, a place where terraces set or the marketplace takes place, and consequently their temporal managers and on ground authorities (shop, bars and terraces owners). Therefore, their hybrid condition of public and private, plus their nowadays relevance, make them of interest for this study but also as a frequent choice for Amsterdammers.

Among respondents, they gain predominance as a destination for leisure activities when, because of weather conditions, parks are not good alternatives, or when the nature of the plan is inherent to the place, such as visiting a recommended restaurant (Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee; Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee; Jimena, female, Aruban-Venezuelan, 23 years old, BA student), tasting the best coffee (Angela, female, Dutch, 20 years old, makeup artist; Martina, female, Mexican, 23 years old, BA student) or discovering historical bars in the city (Lucas, male, Dutch, 27 years old, software technician). In those mentions, the places they choose become not as a random place for having a meeting but the main reason for this activity to happen.

*I love eating, and I love going out to eat. (...) At the Kinkerstraat there is a place called De Hallen. It's like a... like a mall but a bit hipster. They have also a cinema, exhibits and also a food court with different kind of food. I like going there because there are many choices.*

(Jimena, female, Aruban-Venezuelan, 23 years old, BA student)

When looking into the most common food and drinks establishments for people to go to, unlike parks, there are no clear patterns but high diversity on the answers. Even on an individual scale, respondents do not appear to be loyal customers but likely to discover new places.

*I always look for new restaurants. So I mostly look at the East because there are so many and so nice.*

(Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee)

Coinciding with previous studies (Torre, A. & Rallet, A. 2010; Ravenscroft, N. & Markwell, S., 2000), proximity is a relevant reason for people to choose where to go for dinner, drinks or a coffee, although some others are willing to move further if is for checking out a specific spot or for getting closer to a friend. Proximity and location are relevant factors on people's choices and travels, but according to van Lenthe, F. J. et al (2005), this is even more determinant when commuting to leisure places rather than other mandatory activities such as working or studying. Recreational activities, because of their condition of “optional activities” (Gehl, 2012), become more sensitive to proximity than when obligatory activities. In the latter, even if a person is not happy with going far away for working/studying, will go there even though the location is far or hard to reach.

Together with locations, the way of moving in the city but also its relevance for people lead them to choose places closer or further to home, as expressed below:

*With some friends, they always want to hang out just where they live, but I'm a bit more flexible, so I can go all over the town, while some people concentrate in their own neighborhood.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

*I can tell you places I go for a drink. Those [that] are nearby my place (...). This is easy to get to because I can go by foot, so it is easy.*

(Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee)

The atmosphere is also an important factor for choosing where to go, especially among the Dutch respondents. It is tightly related with the *gezelligheid*, a Dutch word, which, used as an adjective over an environment, can be translated as conviviality, coziness, and fun. It could also be used for describing a social and relaxed situation. This relevant but also fragile condition can be related to many elements such as lightning, furniture, customer service or a vibe that a person can feel. Because of that, it is of big relevance but also a definitely subjective condition for making a person go or not to a place.

*It has to be gezellig, good atmosphere. (...) It needs to be kind of informal but nice looking at the same time. I don't mean fancy but nice.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

*L – There are other places where you can eat cheaper, such as Surinamese food, but I don't go there because I don't like the atmosphere. There is mostly like ordering, eating in half an hour and then you're gone. And I like to sit there for the whole evening.*

*But at those places there is more mix and diversity on people's background than at the places I go to. (...) But still, I'd like the social mix part, but I choose not to go there because I'd like to spend a longer time at a place with a nicer atmosphere.*

(Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee)

The importance of the atmosphere and a good service rather than fast food chain is determinant for some respondents when choosing where to go. Last two examples came from two of the Dutch testimonies, both of them bank employees, and probably with higher incomes than this sample average, inferred from their professions. Therefore, this could be an example of market segmentation of private establishments and how a more sophisticated atmosphere or a nicer service could lead to some people with more economic capacities to choose for higher quality options.

There is a general perception of certain groups that will go to bars and restaurants, together with an idea of going out in Amsterdam as an expensive activity, and therefore exclusive for those that can pay for it.

*Well, Amsterdam is expensive for going out. If you're from low-class is not that easy to go to a bar like those ones. So you need some money for going out a bit often.*

(Carol, female, Colombian-Spanish, 20 years old, BA student)

Restaurants, bars or other private establishments are of relevance for when analyzing people's choices but also the afterward segmentation by their offer of goods and services. Therefore, there is a certain tension between a wider variety of choices and quality standards and a risk of exclusion of those that

would not be able to afford certain services. In contrast to parks, these places are naturally for-profit organizations insofar as their goal is to create attractive places for potential customers. In relation to that, there is a potential risk of excluding certain groups by an increasing exclusiveness of exotic products and their correspondent –high- prices (Zukin, 1998).

The association of being native Dutch with having more incomes is spread not just among Latin Americans but also Dutch. All of them, anyway, say there are exceptions and cases where foreign people are wealthy but because of personal preferences would not go to certain bars or restaurants.

*I think capacity influences a lot the places you go to and then the people you can meet, of course. Because Dutch people always have more money than us, so they can go to many other places and more often.*

(Irene, female, Colombian, 23 years old, MSc student)

*I think De Hallen is... Mostly Dutch people with high incomes, because food and drinks are a bit more expensive. Terraces depends where you are. In Leidseplein is gonna be a bit more expensive than a terrace in the eastern side, you know? Sometimes terraces are cheaper (if they are not in the center).*

(Jimena, female, Aruban-Venezuelan, 23 years old, BA student)

When asking about the reasons behind those differences in their consumption capacity, Kelly's opinion was in line with studies (Putnam, 2000; Peters, 2010; Lancee, 2010) that conceive social capital and networks as crucial for the access to a wider range of opportunities, which therefore leads to higher chances of obtaining better education, jobs and income.

*R – Do you think most of the times native Dutch people have better jobs than others or not?*

*K – Yes, I think so. And I think companies don't discriminate for giving a job. I think moving to a different country makes things more difficult because of the language and other barriers. Starting your life at a new place is not impossible but is more difficult, for sure.*

*It takes time to get your new life running. There are many things to figure out. You need to build a social network in order to get better job opportunities. You probably won't have networks before coming here. So I think indirectly is much more difficult for immigrants to get a good job and a good income.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

## Houses

Homes were not of interest at the start of this study, but became a relevant finding as the place where people meet with others and is of interest when other factors (economical, weather or even the size of houses) affect their decisions to meet there or go somewhere else. Therefore, the idea of house as



a relevant destination for meeting with friends within the set of possibilities became a sensitizing concept for the research, as a rather relevant space for analyzing people's encounters.

Two of the respondents (Lucas, male, Dutch, 27 years old, software technician; Angela, female, Dutch, 20 years old, makeup artist) said it was important to live in houses with spaces for meetings, and because of that, meeting at home was an attractive alternative.

Another relevant element was the closeness to friends to invite them over:

*K – I think could be a great time if we stay with friends at home. But I only do that with friends I know for a long period of time. I wouldn't invite my brand new friend for coming over for the whole evening. Maybe I do, but just for having a drink and after that we go somewhere else. (...)*

*R – I understand. So, there is a step-by-step friendship where you become more open?*

*K – Yes, is like that. You open your house to old friends. Is not that easy to invite a friend to stay to sleep over because the night might become too long. We don't easily do that.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

On the other hand, it seems that Latin American respondents did not have such a barrier. Instead of that, houses were seen as good alternatives for meeting with friends, due to economic or practical reasons.

*On the other side, we don't have to go to a terrace for meeting with friends. You can be at your place, and meet with them in there. Maybe if is warm but not that much, you can take out some chairs, put some music on and spend your time at the street. And that's a difference with them. For us, every place is good for spending time with friends.*

(Francisco, male, Peruvian, 40 years old, tourism businessman)

*And when you go out, if you go to the terrace and you get some beers, is super expensive when compared with the cost of buying a six pack at the Albert Heijn, for instance. And going to parks or somebody's house ends up being much cheaper.*

(Irene, female, Colombian, 23 years old, MSc student)

## Dutch and Latin Americans. Choices and integration

### Places and reasons

Analyzing the choices made by both Dutch and Latin American city dwellers, the first thing that must be mentioned is the importance of weather conditions in selecting where to go to spend free time. A common pattern in every interview were parks being the first choice as of favorite places to go, but also the importance of weather conditions for choosing those spots.

*N – [Vondelpark] is the most popular place for hanging out with friends. You go there for a drink, mostly in the afternoon. I have never been there when is dark. It is a nice place, the biggest park in Amsterdam.*

*R – Why wouldn't you go later?*

*N – Because when is dark, I think the atmosphere is not that nice. I think there are streetlights all over the park but... I don't know. I don't hang out there when it is dark.*

(Nico, male, Dutch, 22 years old, MSc student)

In parallel, going out for a drink or for food was also a common activity for both groups, although it was more frequent among locals, who even considering it as a difference with how is in other places when choosing where to spend their leisure time.

*I think for us is more our way of living, while maybe Canadians –or other- people could see going out at the restaurant as a special occasion. I think for us is very normal.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

Related to attendants, the use of parks, as mentioned before, was seen as both groups as the best in terms of social mixing. There is a shared opinion about the diversity of groups that choose to hang out around there, and along with that, their positive evaluation about that mix.

*L – There are not so many [hipsters] at the park. In there, you can find mostly students and athletes, but the true is that I won't know if people that I see at the restaurants practice sports or not because they won't go on sport clothes anyway. (...). But there's much more diversity at the park. There're different kind of people at the park.*

*R – How do you find that?*

*L – I really like the combination. I think it is quite important, because is always so easy to just hang around with people that's exactly as you are. And in the park there's more difference, so that's good for me.*

*R – Why do you think that mixing is not happening at the bar or restaurant?*

*L – Because it is more expensive. When you don't have a high income, there's no reason to go to the restaurant. But the park is for free. And is the same with students. They don't go to restaurants very often because of the money, but they go to the park because it is free.*

(Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee)

Even though money (or the lack of it) appears not to be the main reason for people to choose to go to the park –like good weather or a chilling vibe would-, the economic factor is seen as the main reason for some people not to go to other places where consumption is required. For that reason, people's incomes are not seen as relevant for their encounter at green places but as one of the factors for a higher grade social mixing at the Vondelpark in comparison with a less probable one in bars or restaurants.

As said before, economic reasons are not the only ones that can explain the encounter of people at certain places however they do contribute to a better understanding of how and why those encounters happen. There could be situations where the capacity of paying for consumption will determine a person's decision to go to a bar, but that will be the case just if that is his/her wish or preference, as illustrated by Francisco in the next quote:

*But even if people have same money, they will go to different places because is also a matter of taste. I have many Latin friends who have money, but they will prefer to go to the park for some beers rather than going to the bar where they need to wear a tie.*

(Francisco, male, Peruvian, 40 years old, tourism businessman)

Francisco's testimony allows to rethink about the meaning of the tie that a person prefers not to wear, or on the other side, the alternative outfit that he would choose and the hypothetical rejection effect his clothes would generate in the rest of the audience. Clothes, as could be music or the atmosphere, is another choice based on personal tastes and its relevance, and therefore, its rejection for wearing or not on a specific way, could represent for a person the rejection of his identity and ways of living.

Related to that, interviewees were asked about their perceptions of the acceptance or rejection of different styles and looks. The way to do so was to make them think of past situations they might have experienced in which their own ethnic groups were a clear minority.

Both Dutch and Latin American respondents defined *kroegen* as the most Dutch places in the city. Those were described as brown bars, normally quite old and with a customer service oriented to locals. Menus are normally in Dutch, and the chances of being served in English are considerably lower than in other regular establishments.

Although some of the answerers described these places as having a quite open atmosphere, others expressed their lack of desire to go there due to a perception of hostility or non-hospitality by the staff or other customers, which was also the case of other ethnic places as a Turkish café, as expressed by Jimena, Nico, and Lisa:

*J – The truth is if I arrive at a place where there's only Dutch people I feel a bit intimidated. I don't like it, and I don't feel at home. I don't know if you have seen those little Dutch cafes, where there's mostly white Dutch people. If I'm the only non-Dutch, I don't feel cool with that.*

*R – How's that?*

*J – Don't know. I guess it is just because I'm the only non-white in there.*

*R – Do you think that's only your opinion or also from their side?*

*J – No, I think everybody is conscious of that. I have heard that a lot. But maybe is more about me.*

*R – Did they tell you something?*

*J – I think is more the way they look at you. They stare at you and you're like "Why is he staring at me?"*

*R – Okay. And did you ask them about that way of looking at you?*

*J – No. Because when I feel like this I don't like it and I leave.*

(Jimena, female, Aruban-Venezuelan, 23 years old, BA student)

*R – Could you mention non-Dutch places?*

*L – There are a lot. In the West there are many coffee houses where lot of Moroccan and Turkish people meet and play games. They don't serve alcohol but coffee or tea. But there is not one white person, Dutch I mean.*

*R – Have you ever been in one of those?*

*L – No. I get the feeling I won't belong to the place, let's say.*

*R – Not welcomed?*

*L – I don't know. Maybe yes, but I don't know.*

*R – And are there really Dutch places?*

*L – (...) there are also some brown bars that... Actually I don't know if I'd go there. I wouldn't dare, I guess.*

*R – Like with the Turkish café?*

*L – Yes, exactly.*

(Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee)

When talking about Latin places in Amsterdam, there was a widespread idea among both groups of an absence of authentic Latin places, just events or theme-bars or restaurants where the products and decoration were related to diverse countries, where Mexico was the most mentioned case.

*There are Latin events, but not Latin places. We are all spread across the city. There are celebrations of Latin culture, such as salsa or bachata clubs or Mexican restaurants, but I couldn't say they are Latin places.*

(Francisco, male, Peruvian, 40 years old, tourism businessman)

*And there are also some Latin places, but actually there you can find a lot of Dutch people as well. Because I think that's something attractive for Dutch people, to be around different cultures, different vibes, and not only the Dutch one.*

*But I couldn't say there is a Latin place. Even though I could say there are places well known by their Latin music or environment, but just not with Latin people.*

(Jimena, female, Aruban-Venezuelan, 23 years old, BA student)

*K – We have some Latin American bars, or at least they tend to be. There is "Escobar" nearby. They have some Colombian influence, I think. And in front of that one, there is a Mexican restaurant or so. But they are food bars, nothing special.*

*R – Why are they Latin places?*

*K – Because of the names and what they offer, I'd say. Maybe some drinks or special cocktails [that] they sell. Maybe there are not Latin American places but they try.*

*(Laughs)*

*R – But are there a lot of Latin Americans?*

*K – No, no.*

*R – Ah, so may be more like a thematic bar?*

*K – Yeah, yeah. That's true. And there are some other places that are more for take-away food that seem to be more real. But I'm not much into that, I'm sorry.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

### Integration and acceptance over diversity

Most of the answers related to the openness of Dutch people towards diversity and immigrants were a bit ambiguous. While there is not a perception of rejection of immigrants, some doubt about the idea of Dutch people as being wide open to others and tolerant to diversity and multiculturalism.

Interestingly, the ones that consider Dutch people as intolerant are the Dutch testimonies themselves. One of the reasons could be their privileged position for listening to other Dutch's opinions about

interethnic encounters that might not be said out loud on behalf of politeness, or in other words, there might be higher chances to listen to not too positive comments about immigrants in groups to which immigrants do not belong to.

Perceptions of feeling not welcomed are definitely subjective at some cases, even because other's attitudes or actions might not be explicit -as described in the previous testimonies-, but in other cases, the rejection and its reasons can be interpreted as a case of discrimination:

*L – (...) once in Den Haag we got explicitly rejected for being Latin Americans.*

*R – Ah, okay...*

*L – Yes, the bouncer told us we couldn't get in because we were Latin people.*

*R – And what did you do?*

*L – Nothing. I didn't want to get into a discussion or fight for that. I simply left the place.*

(Laura, female, Colombian, 22 years old, MSc student)

Nowadays, the tensions between local values and immigrants' traditions are seen worldwide (Pardo, 2012; Malone, 2002), but they have become especially relevant when cultural differences are bigger. Still, the phenomenon is too complex and is hard to set the limits between multiculturalism, respect, and acceptance.

*L – There is a bit of everything. I think it is a really open city for immigrants if your lifestyle goes with the city.*

*R – How is that?*

*L – If you try to blend in with Dutch people, you're fine. I think everybody will like you. If you try to create a gap between Dutch people and your own community, I guess you will irritate Dutch people.*

*R – How does that blending in would go in terms of also keeping with their own identities? Would that be a conflict?*

*L – No, not at all. Mmm... Okay, that's a hard question. No, I don't think blending in has something to do with rules. It is more about how you act with other people. I think if you respect other people, that's enough.*

(Lucas, male, Dutch, 27 years old, software technician)

On the other side, when those constraints are too tight are going too far –according to the newcomers-, the situation might led to a segregation where people will feel rejected due to their ways, preferring to be surrounded by those who share their traditions and views, which then might lead to further cultural distances. Integration is positively seen but not to be paid at any cost.

*If there is no space where your identity is accepted, why would you like to integrate to that community?*

(Martina, female, Mexican, 23 years old, BA student)

*But something else is to integrate and forget your culture. I don't think you need to assimilate. You can speak and respect Dutch values while you keep your own culture. I think that's important because that's you, your identity.*

(Jimena, female, Aruban-Venezuelan, 23 years old, BA student)

Other responses highlight the complexity of people's behavior considering the Dutch ways to interact with others besides their acceptance or rejection.

*I think Dutch people are quite down to earth, we're not very expressive as some others could be, so that might lead a person to think they are not welcomed, but actually they are. It is just we don't express it on such an enthusiastic way as an American person would do by shouting a lot.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

In the same lines goes the testimony of Irene and Laura, who argue that it could be a mistake to interpret the way Dutch interact as rejection, while it might simply a difference in terms of what Latin American people could do in the same situation.

Far from thinking they are excluded because of that, they see it is a benefit of living abroad because people will not judge them because of what they might do right or wrong. Still, that lack of interaction might lead in some cases to situations where nobody will be likely to help as they think it could be if it was in their home country. In other words, such indifference of others could be positive for people not to feel judged, but in the other side, when any assistance is required, the lack of interaction is not seen as positive anymore.

*I – I think here is really particular, super European, because you're here with your friends and you feel everybody is watching you. Everybody is on their own business, and nobody looks at what you do or do not. Everybody is minding their own business.*

*R – Do you see that as a good or a bad thing?*

*I – Well... Depends. I find it different, but it is not negative.*

*L – For a foreigner it is comfortable. Because nobody will complain or make a scene for what you do. And as you're not from here, of course there are many things you did differently than how you should do. But nobody is judging you because nobody cares about you. That is different to some other places where people might shout at you. Maximum in here is ringing you with the bike bell.*

*I – But it's also that sometimes you might feel the pressure when walking or biking because they want you to go faster. Because they don't care about your problems and they don't mind helping you with that.*

(Laura, female, Colombian, 22 years old, MSc student &  
Irene, female, Colombian, 23 years old, MSc student)

In general, there appears to be a common willingness to mingle despite punctual discrimination situations, which is similar to what Barajas Sandoval (2008) found out in her research: besides the fact that a 91% of respondents have felt discriminated, a 62% of the total considered to be accepted by the Dutch society. It is interesting to see how both outcomes interplay together: a great majority have felt discriminated but they still consider themselves to be accepted by the host society. One of the explanations could be a perception that those discriminators are isolated cases and do not represent society's majoritarian opinion.

## Differences and difficulties between each groups

Even if both groups have a positive perception over the general process of integration between Latin Americans and Dutch people, the two also find certain differences between each other when building interethnic relationships and interacting.

In general, Dutch testimonies did not have deep information about Latins but just vague perceptions, while Latin Americans considered knowing more about the other group, which enabled them to make more accurate comparisons about their social behavior.

The contrast between both perceptions and uses are also a way to show the difficulties those people face when trying to interact with others. Sometimes because of places, other times because of social uses or time availability, differences in the way both groups socially interact can make the encounter harder or easier to occur.

### Dutch characteristics

When asked about the main differences between the groups, Latin respondents highlighted the warmth of the weather in their previous countries, which they directly associated with their cultural traits. The concepts of “warm culture” or “cold culture” are hard to define, but according to collected opinions, the concept relates to the easiness to meet others, as well as physical and symbolic distances among people. Other responses also pointed out to the steps and formalities related to meeting with friends in Dutch groups.

Related to daily interactions, according to Irene, Dutch people are not that likely to interact with others, even if it is at the park, at the queue of the supermarket or at other situations. Agreeing with that, other respondent said:

*M – (...) is hard to make connections with people that's not related with your study or job, especially with Dutch.*

*R – Is it?*

*M – Yes.*

*R – Was that different in Mexico?*

*M – Yes, there it was much easier to set a conversation with somebody you don't know yet. I think the weather and people's warmth help a bit.*

(Martina, female, Mexican, 23 years old, BA student)

Distance between people can be seen on a physical or a symbolic perspective: the former is related to the objective distance between objects, while the later points out to the subjective representations of ties with others, where the closest are the most intimate friends or relatives and the furthest are unknown individuals which the person might not have had any encounters with. The wide range between ones and others could be seen on the many intermediate steps between both poles but also on the difficulties with moving over that axis.

According to the physical distance and how is handled by both groups, Francisco, a frequent attendant to dancing clubs, suggests Dutch are less likely to get closer to others, even when the activity requires it. Together with it, he hypothesizes, the reason would be that in the Netherlands people are not used to that closeness to happen and, because of that, how that is interpreted among Dutch males and females.

*When I go dancing salsa is a good example. Sometimes when I get there, I can take a Cuban girl to dance and we hold each other tight, close, and we dance, have fun but that's it. Every time I take a Dutch girl, she stops me every time I want to get closer because she prefers distance, even when dancing salsa. It happened at least 10 times that also when we dance they say "just in case, I'm not interested in anything else", and I'm not either. But they link physical proximity and contact with other intimate intentions rather than just a friendly dance. I think it is because, as they say, Dutch guys want something else than dancing if they make physical contact as when dancing.*

(Francisco, male, Peruvian, 40 years old, tourism businessman)

In terms of symbolic distance and how this can be conceived, Kelly's testimony is of relevance when mentioning two factors related to meeting with friends or friends of friends. On one side, as discussed before, there is this idea of a process that needs to happen for an acquaintance to visit one's home. The time between seeing a person for the first time and finally opening the doors of the house to them appears to be of relevance, while this element was not mentioned by the Latin group.

If there is a meeting between friends, chances that one of them brings an extra guest seem to be higher among Latins. While ones find that normal, others think it should not be the case.

*And something else that is different in Amsterdam is the unlikeliness of people to bring somebody else with them to a meeting you have already planned with some other people. That's not what we do here, normally.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

The previous element might be related as well with the structured planning of social meetings among Dutch people –as they stated-, compared to the unstructured ways in which Latins respondents socialize. There seem to be stricter rules on those meetings between Dutch people according to the different responses obtained, which can be seen on the meaning of expected guests and participants, starting times and punctuality but also when arranging an appointment. Related to the last point, both groups consider Dutch people more difficult to make an appointment with. Explanations are diverse: some mention how busy their social agendas are, but others add the unlikeliness of Dutch to change former plans for that meeting to happen.

*I think people in here are socially busy, so there is not too much place for the unplanned. It's not like "oh, we do not have anything to do, so come join us". Sometimes you plan for over a week or even over a month in advance to do something on a Friday night. So, that's different. People may have a full agenda.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

*C - And that's a big difference. In Spain you just went out to the street and you were doing something. Here you must arrange... Arrange to meet at somebody else's place or at another place; it was without talking, without arranging anything, you were just going outside. (...) Here is more about the plan, where are you going, what are you doing...*

*R – And did you got a bit Dutch in that sense?*

*C – Yes, I had to.*



(Carol, female, Colombian-Spanish, 20 years old, BA student)

*F - But is hard to make friends in here. I have tried a lot, and they are honest and good people. But most of the times you try to meet, the answer is the same: "I cannot, I'm busy". And is hard, but...*

*R – What would a Peruvian say in that case?*

*F – I think we all have to work, we have stuffs to do, that's normal. But sometimes you can be a bit more spontaneous, or even flexible to change your schedule, which is almost impossible for the majority of Dutch people. "Let me see my agenda: week 32 at 7pm", and that's hard!*

*(Laughs)*

*Actually is not a bad thing at all, but is more difficult to meet then. I think anyway most of them may have free time, but maybe is a time they want to spend by themselves.*

(Francisco, male, Peruvian, 40 years old, tourism businessman)

When asked about interactions at public spaces, differences came up by showing Latin people tend to be more willing to start a random conversation with others than Dutch people, which goes in the same line as Peters et al (2009) when researching about social interaction in urban parks in the Netherlands. He found out that Dutch people did not look for interactions when at the park, while Moroccan and Turkish immigrants did but did not dare to take the initiative for that to happen.

The idea of Dutch people not being much likely to interact was shared by both groups, as also was the recognition of a Dutch way related to their traditions and not to any kind of discrimination, in most of the cases.

*I'd say, if we speak the same language and we are by coincidence at the same bar or so, we will probably hug or so and start a conversation as if we were best friends. In here, if I'm sitting here and there is a Dutch person for 3 hours and nobody else at the bar, he might not talk to me at all. They are open people but not that impulsive. Dutch people need much more time for breaking the distance between people.*

*They are nice and friendly, but there is a lot of people that says Dutch are boring. And I don't think so. We are friendly and warm on our way, and we might think they are boring. But they are not. They are just different.*

(Francisco, male, Peruvian, 40 years old, tourism businessman)

*R – Let's say you're at a bar by yourself and next to you there's a table with some people. How do you think interaction would be between those tables?*

*L – No, won't happen. Dutch people don't do that.*

*R – Not even among them?*

*L – No. If we're Dutch and those at the next table as well, we won't speak.*

*R – So it has nothing to do with ethnic background?*

*L – No, absolutely no.*

(Lucas, male, Dutch, 27 years old, software technician)

## Latin Americans and other immigrants

According to afterward feedback, one of the most difficult parts of the interview was the one related to the Latin American population in the city. Dutch were asked about their opinions about this subgroup, sometimes comparing it with the wider group of immigrants in the city.

Most of the answers started with vague descriptions related to certain stereotypes which consider Latin people as fun, happy, with a strong temperament and even good dancers.

*I think there's a more positive image of them. I think people think positive about Latin Americans. And I think that's because of their fame of fun, happy countries. They're positive and party countries, so people will assume they are bringing that party and happiness to the Netherlands. I have never heard something negative about Latin Americans in here as I did about others such as Moroccan people or whatever group. It is so easy to judge!*

(Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee)

When digging deeper into the reasons for that lack of knowledge about the group, the causes were diverse. Some answers highlighted the nonexistence of a Latin hub in the city as other minorities have because of quantity and distribution in the city but also because of an easiness to be unnoticed among majorities.

*Well, I like Latin American people. But I don't really see them at all. I haven't talked much to a Latin Americans. I don't think a lot of Latin American people are living here, but I'm not sure. Maybe I didn't notice.*

(Lucas, male, Dutch, 27 years old, software technician)

*N – I think nobody has a problem with Latin Americans. But I got the feeling there are not so many. Maybe a 0.5% of the whole population? How many are they?*

*R – Almost 2% considering 1st and 2nd generation.*

*N – Really?*

*R – Yes.*

*N – That's quite a lot, actually.*

(Nico, male, Dutch, 22 years old, MSc student)

Comparing with other minorities, Moroccan and Turkish were the main target of negative opinions and frequent associations with illegal activities. Besides that point but also because of the same contrast, the positive opinion about Latin people was also founded on cultural proximity, who are seen as similar to Europeans. Together with it, shared values make relations smoother and tensions are less likely to happen as with other groups.

*R – Are those the groups you think people perceive as the most problematic ones?*

*K – Yes. That has to do with the Islamic culture. They have very different ways of living, such as the way they treat men and women, so there is more tension between their cultures and Dutch, much more as with Latin American or Indonesian.*

(Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee)

*But nobody thinks they [Latin Americans] are scary as some people could think about people from Egypt or so. Yeah, people have completely different ideas about people from that side of the world [Egyptian region] than people from Latin America.*

(Kim, female, Dutch, 24 years old, MSc student)

*There is less of a stigma about Latin American culture than Eastern-Europeans. We can see some far cultures as problematic, but with Latin Americans, we actually see them as exotic and fun.*

(Angela, female, Dutch, 20 years old, makeup artist)

This idea is also shared by Latin people, who find themselves as an accepted group in society. They consider Dutch people even like to join activities related to Latin music or food because they associate Latin American immigrants with the idea of fun and friendly people. As shown by previous research (Pardo, 2012; Barajas Sandoval, 2006), this group also consider there is a much closer cultural distance to them than to other minorities.

*There's plenty of people that love Latin culture. They like also Mediterranean culture, and as we have Italian or Spanish roots, they also like us on that way. If you make a Salsa Party, is probably going to be packed with people. They find some of our situations and events as gezellig.*

*Comparing to Arabs, Africans or Asians, we are seen differently. But I think is because they forget we have a western culture. For example, about music, we have all grown up listening to the same international artists, such as The Carpenters, The Beatles or The Rolling Stones. Of course, we have some "valsas" while they listen André Hazes, but we have lot of common points!*

*Of course we have differences on some traditions or behaviors, but is not as different as might be when comparing with Turkish or Africans.*

(Francisco, male, Peruvian, 40 years old, tourism businessman)

Due to those roots mentioned by Francisco together with cultural uses, physical appearance is a relevant element for understanding why Latin Americans are not that noticed in the city. The sum of both factors has an outcome of a minority which dresses, looks and acts in a way which is not that different to what western people do, and therefore they fit better into the society, as expressed by Lisa during her interview. On the same line is Nico's opinion:

*I think is also because of physical characteristics. You might not notice a person with American or Latin American background when walking on the streets as you could do with Asian or African people maybe.*

(Nico, male, Dutch, 22 years old, MSc student)

Summarizing, even if there could be contrasts over preferences about where to go or the reasons why, there is a shared opinion of both groups being culturally close, which facilitates the process of integration. At same time, that makes the Latin American group less visible than other minorities as expressed by Pardo (2012) or by Barajas Sandoval (2006: 113): "a community that easily adapts and dilutes into the host society and is barely visible within the international community living in the Netherlands".

## Interethnic integration in Amsterdam's public spaces

The first thing that must be said relates to the diversity of answers and therefore uses of public spaces in the city. Despite that fact, some choice's patterns were found among respondents. Parks were the highlight of Amsterdam due to its relaxed vibe, access to green spaces, affordability and accessibility for most of the inhabitants and for being the places where social mixing (in terms of ages, places of residence, economic positions and ethnic background) has more chances to happen.

For a place to be the most popular among a diverse group of inhabitants, there has to be a double condition: the place has to offer a real opportunity for access (in terms of accessibility) and people have to choose it over others. As stated at the beginning of this thesis, AVEO scheme allowed us to have a better understanding of how assets meet with opportunities, mediated by people's capacities and choices on one side, but also by place's requirements on the other.

Parks have shown to be widely accessible places. There is no fee for entering and neither a required consumption for staying. Considering also they are located all around the city and the most popular (Vondelpark) goes through the city and offers access from every cardinal point, chances of reaching at least one of them are quite high.

Moreover, rules are looser than at other places. Several testimonies mentioned the possibility of drinking alcohol and barbecuing as a benefit when choosing to spend time with friends. In contrast to squares or streets, where alcohol consumption is forbidden and barbecuing is not even possible, parks stand as places where a wider range of activities are more likely to happen. Alcohol consumption as a social activity is not exclusive of parks. It could also happen at bars or restaurants, but their prices are higher and customers are a more homogeneous group. Hence, green spaces are good alternatives for when people without a big consumption capacity want to meet with friends and have a drink.

In terms of barbecuing, a popular activity in the Netherlands during spring-summer times, this activity could just happen at parks or houses, although the last option does not seem to be very realistic considering rent prices for houses with a backyards in Amsterdam are quite high and young peoples' possibilities to afford them being low. Therefore, parks become relevant. Unless a person has enough money for a big house with an open place, there is no other place in the city where they could barbecue. This point is of rather relevance when analyzing the whole group of public spaces because there are not many alternatives for barbecuing at other privatized spaces (rather than homes, as mentioned before). Drinking can be easily happen at bars, where no mortgages or loans are needed. For such activity, the choice of a privately owned place over a public and open place could be easily made, increasing the possibilities of high incomes people to move to other places. Instead, if a person wants to barbecue with friends there is no easy substitution.

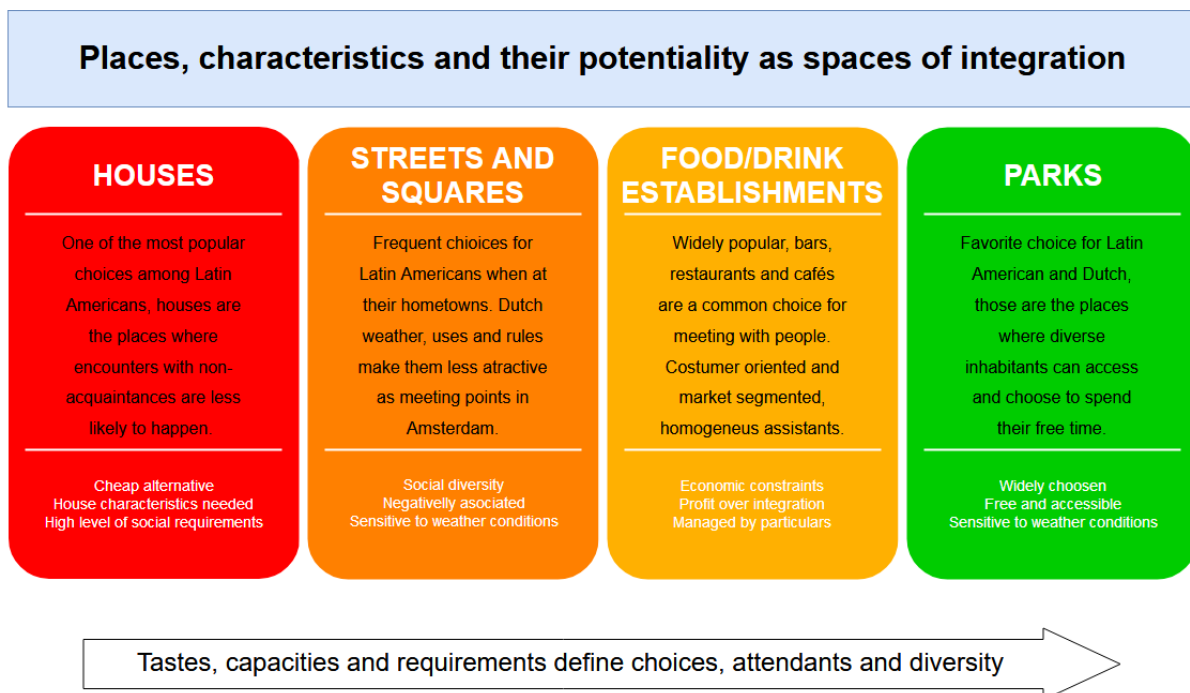
All things considered, it could be said that park's success is based on the following reasons:

- Low requirements for accessing and using facilities.
- Unique characteristics over alternatives in the city:
  - o High social mix
  - o BYOB –bring your own beverage- place, thus cheaper
  - o Barbecuing is allowed
- Green space in the city center areas
- Favorite spot for enjoying summer times

As in AVEO, reasons for a choice to be made come from both sides: places requirements and people's desires and assets. Unlike other state-owned public spaces (squares, streets, and canals) or private

owned ones (food/drink establishments, houses, etc.), parks are where both Dutch and Latin American choose to meet and where they think random encounters and interactions are more likely to happen. Considering what has been said, an analysis of public spaces' choices needs to consider the whole set of characteristics and constraints of every place for understanding their interplay with people's choices and therefore the condition of those places as bridge spaces between different people.

Houses are by definition private and closed, and no unexpected encounters will happen; streets have no requirements to be used rather than the person's wish, which is not shared by Amsterdammers; bars, restaurants, and cafés are somewhere in the middle. Considering the diverse offer, widely popular bars or events can attract different kind of people, while specific places might attract certain groups, i.e. Kroegen and Dutch people. Other elements related to the goods and service will make the place more or less segmented and exclusive. Lastly, parks are highly accessible, provide unique facilities in the city and are the favorite of both groups.



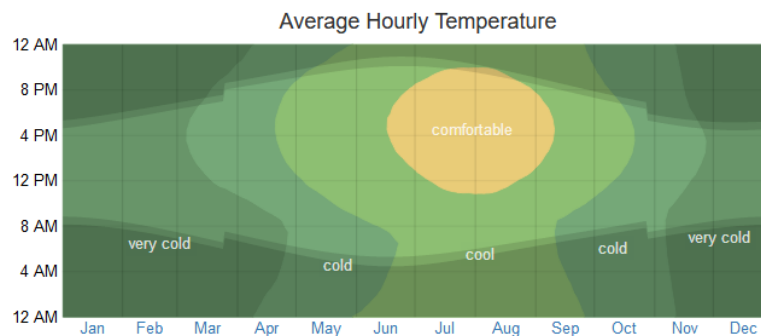
Source: created by the author.

Figure 7: Potentiality of places as spaces for integration.

These testimonies, which are in line with the literature (Peters, 2010; Gobster, 2002) sustain that parks are a positive choice for an interethnic encounter. Getting closer to a definitive answer for this thesis' research question, leaving on a side the economic element as a relevant factor for people' encounter, there is a key element that needs to be taken into consideration: the weather.

According to different sources ([www.climatestotravel.com](http://www.climatestotravel.com); [www.weather-and-climate.com](http://www.weather-and-climate.com); [www.weatherspark.com](http://www.weatherspark.com)), Amsterdam has an oceanic climate, with diverse seasons during the year. While in summer, the average temperature is 17°, in winter times it drops to 3°. According to the city's records, the city perceives 750-850mm of precipitations per year, which is not extremely high as the number of rainy days are: 133.

Considering the necessary weather conditions for going to parks, sunlight becomes an important variable. Because of its latitude, the hours where there is sunlight varies between 2 in winter to 7 in summer.



The average hourly temperature, color coded into bands: *frigid* < -9,4°C < *freezing* < 0°C < *very cold* < 7,2°C < *cold* < 12,8°C < *cool* < 18,3°C < *comfortable* < 23,9°C < *warm* < 29,4°C < *hot* < 35°C < *sweltering*. The shaded overlays indicate night and civil twilight.

Source: [www.weatherspark.com](http://www.weatherspark.com)<sup>6</sup>.

Figure 8: Average hourly temperature and light in Amsterdam.

As widely studied by scholars, weather is a rather relevant factor in people’s activities (Gehl, 2012; Böcker et al, 2013; Brandenburg, C., 2001), especially when there are related to leisure activities (Blazejczyk, K. 2011; Sabir, M. et al, 2010) mainly because, besides exceptional alerts, people will not stop going to work if it is raining, but chances of not going to an open green space are quite high. While mandatory activities are still running, when people have the chance to choose places, such decision will be much more influenced by weather conditions, as mentioned in every interview.

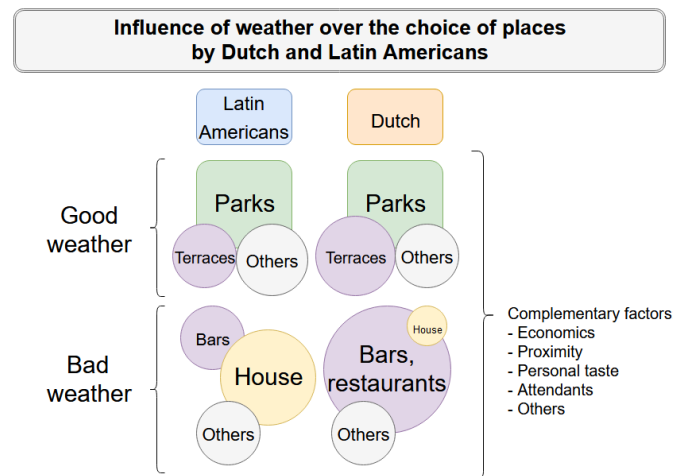
Weather conditions are important in this analysis because even parks were defined and described by the respondents as their favorite place for spending their free because of several reasons already mentioned, their choices will be strongly constrained by precipitation, temperature, rain, humidity and other factors that might affect their comfort in being outdoors (Böcker et al, 2013; Blazejczyk, K. 2011).

As seen below, parks are positive places in terms of integration, but their choice is rather limited during the year. Hence, other spaces will substitute green spaces as the spots for spending free time. Then the options are less and the favorite choices are not shared between both groups. While Dutch respondents frequently mentioned bars, restaurants, and cafés as places where to go, Latin Americans did chose to go there but also to meet at somebody’s house to make it easier and cheaper. Taking into account the variety of private establishments and their aforementioned segmentation, it seems chances of those interethnic encounters to happen, tend to reduce considerably.

Weather conditions then became a great influence on people’s choices, considering weather as good or bad based on the absence or existence and the characteristics of wind, temperature, and sunshine among other factors mentioned before. Therefore, the first is related to the conditions when individuals consider to spend time outdoors and the last as the one for when indoors activities are of a higher preference. Then, decision-makers, factors, and places interplay in a dynamic way where the

<sup>6</sup> Scale originally in Fahrenheit. Converted to Celsius by the author.

existence or not of certain weather conditions leads to a further importance of other elements. A summary schema could be shaped as follows:



Source: created by the author.

Figure 9: Main preferences according to weather conditions.

According to collected testimonies, weather conditions are a determinant factor over people's choices. Without considering other reasons as irrelevant, the weather seems to be a key factor as it acts as a mediator between people's economic capacity, taste, proximity and other reasons in their decision of where to spend their free time.

When the weather is considered good, most of the respondents head to the parks, where, as seen before, the conditions for interethnic encounter are higher. When the weather is bad, then the choices seem to be more segregated by ethnicity.

## Conclusions

### **To what extent could consumption be a barrier for the encounter between Latin Americans and Dutch natives in public spaces in the city of Amsterdam?**

Regarding the previous analysis of the twelve testimonies of Amsterdam's inhabitants, it could be concluded that consumption indeed works as a barrier for interethnic encounters, especially when due to adverse weather conditions green urban spaces are not the preferred choice anymore. Therefore, the weather was found to be a determinant factor for people's choices. This mediator effect provided climate a great power on the importance of other reasons and consequently the chances of the analyzed groups to match in their choices.

The extent of economical factor as relevant for people to choose where to spend free time must be analyzed in relation with the other possible reasons that are potentially relevant. Besides, the weight of those factors vary between people, as its relevance change during periods of time (life, years, seasons, months or even days). The complexity of determining consumption as a barrier lays over the

multiplicity of elements –and its dynamism- that must be taken into consideration (weather, mood, money available at the moment, etc.), but it was clear the fact that free of charge activities and places were of preference in many cases, sometimes due to economic capacities/constraints and sometimes because of the quality of the spaces, among other reasons

When weather conditions were considered good for spending time outdoors, people's consumption capacity was not of relevance because of the fact that parks can be accessed for free, with these places being the preferred option for both groups. In situations when interviewees did not consider green spaces and their favorites choices were others, then their consumption capacity was more important. Even if both Dutch and Latin Americans mentioned bars and restaurants, the later regarded the cost of going out as being more of a problem than the first ones. Their alternatives were then to meet at homes more often than locals, even though some of them did mention that possibility as well.

Other reasons to choose to go to certain places were of relevance, making clear that people (from both groups) like to go out because of the idea of eating out or having a drink. Those decisions have nothing to do with the weather forecast but with their preferences of what they want to do when they have free time. In contrast to parks, private establishments are by definition sites that, instead of aiming for integration between different actors of the community, function on a logic of market segmentation. Squares are managed following a model of private ownership rather than being managed by the municipalities, as a way to get rid of management problems over street furniture and right of accepting or refusing admission, along with other responsibilities and powers.

Amsterdam's most popular squares such as Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein are examples of what was described before. Those iconic city places are not designed and managed for people to meet in the evenings but to provide a place for bars and restaurant to set up their businesses. According to the interviewees, going out in the city is not a cheap activity, and for some of them, its cost was a reason for meeting with friends at home.

This research was built over a theoretical framework based on the conception of public spaces as key spaces for tolerance and democratic access to the city, argument that has been strengthened by the collected testimonies. Because of this, the way people perceive green urban areas as places that foster social cohesion -by inhabitant's encounters- appears to be in line with the theory. Therefore, it would appear to be necessary to consider the relevance of those places in urban areas, even though the fact of sharing a place is conceived not as sufficient for integration processes to succeed but as a necessary stage for people to mingle with other citizens.

However, parks seem to be the public spaces for integration by definition, not just because they are free of charge but also because they appear to be the preferred option of both groups. Green urban spaces were described as widely accessible and highlighted because of their exclusive characteristics: there are no other choices in the city where users can access the same facilities. The problem related to these places is their lack of reliability in terms of being an everyday choice. Depending so much on weather conditions makes it a fragile option for throughout the year, especially considering the big percentage of days during the year where conditions are not optimal for outdoor activities.

In order to provide solutions for such a limitation which disables the city's favorite spot, there are two options: work against the constraints or provide alternatives as good as it.



## **Adapting to the weather**

Since its origins, the Netherlands had to overcome natural conditions and became a worldwide example of successful water management. The city of Amsterdam was created by the hard work of building over swamps, demonstrating it was always a possibility to adapt people to the place but also places to people's necessities.

Amsterdam Rainproof<sup>7</sup> is an organization which concentrates forces for creating a more resilient city against increasing rainfalls, which shows that efforts of working against natural weather conditions are still in use. Scholars have already studied the relevance of outdoor thermal comfort in different places around the world (Andrade, H. et al, 2010; Matzarakis, A. & de Freitas, C. R., 2001) but also in Dutch public spaces (Taleghani, M. et al, 2015).

In the same line, this research considers the possibility of also adapting Amsterdam's park for being livable places even when rain, cold and wind occur. Around the world, there are not so many experiences of urban winter gardens, but mostly shaded houses, umbracles, and greenhouses, where the main goal is to provide better weather conditions for the survival of plants that would not resist outdoors the whole year. Basically, the same idea is what could be done for inhabitants: to provide a structure for people to spend time in the park when natural conditions are not favorable.

An example of what could be done is Madrid's *Parque del Retiro* and its *Palacio de Cristal*, a former greenhouse and nowadays used as a place for art exhibitions. Originally planned for providing exotic plants a better environment, nowadays is a highlight inside the biggest and most popular park in Spain's capital. Although is not used as an extension of the park's green areas, it provides an example of how a park can contain an indoor space where climate conditions are adapted for the development of certain activities that could not take place outdoors.

Although architectural challenges are out of the scope of this study, it is of relevance to discuss the possibility of building an indoor structure in a central park that can host visitors that would not choose to go to parks because of adverse weather conditions. In doing so, Amsterdam could provide its inhabitants of an open, relaxed and inclusive place for a longer time during the year.

## **High-quality alternative spaces**

Besides adapting places for the weather, the other option is to create high-quality public spaces that might work as alternatives for when parks cannot be used. As seen during this research, people choose to go to places because they are perceived as good options. When there are no other better alternatives –private or public-, they will stay in public spaces such as a park, a football field or any other, no matter who is also attending it. Additionally, when public facilities are of a low quality, those who can afford better alternatives will choose these. Despite potential differences, this appears to be similar to what happens when high-income parents choose to send their kids to private schools, leading to a segregation of places between the ones for rich and the ones for poor people (Glaeser, 2011). What is of relevance is to keep in mind that those shifts are not always for racial reasons but for others such as seeking for a better quality of services and facilities (Frey, W., 1979).

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<sup>7</sup> [www.rainproof.nl](http://www.rainproof.nl)

A positive example of heterogeneous public spaces is the Cruyff Courts, a project led by the Cruyff Foundation which provides better conditions for children's development through high-quality sports courts, and as conceived by their creators, a safe environment to play outside ([www.cruyff-foundation.org](http://www.cruyff-foundation.org)). This case was brought to the analysis by Kim, who highlighted them as a positive example for Amsterdam's inhabitant's integration:

*K – Johan Cruyff has a foundation and he installs (sic) small soccer fields all over the town, in different cities in Holland. They are good quality and free for everyone. So when you see a Cruyff Court in the city, I always see a lot of people with different backgrounds playing together. So that is a good thing, I guess.*

*R – So in this case, these football courts, are high-quality?*

*K – Yes, that is important because kids can play there always, the whole year. And if it were real grass and were demolished and muddy, people would not like to play there anymore. And in this ones, rich people would also like to play there because it is of good quality.*

(Kim, female, Dutch, 24 years old, MSc student)

Cruyff courts but also other spaces are good examples that the quality of facilities and their reputation is of relevance for being a choice among the whole spectrum of the society, besides economic capacities or ethnic backgrounds. Hence, when planning urban spaces this element should be taken into account. If there were just good private alternatives, part of the population would prefer those and considering that for an encounter there are—at least- two parts that need to coincide in place and time, the first step for an encounter will already have failed.

### **Encounters, integration and limitations of the contact hypothesis**

Providing high-quality spaces to citizens is should be central for every municipality, although it is important to keep in mind their existence is not enough for a complex integration process to happen. For that to happen, the process would be much longer and difficult.

People's willingness to mingle with others is key in that process, both from immigrants and locals. Prejudgments and stereotypes are shortcuts for comprehending our surroundings but sometimes can lead to traps where the easy path becomes wrong and harmful. The only way to beat tricky simplification is by knowing, gaining knowledge and therefore understanding other's perspectives.

*(...) let's say I'm Dutch and I'm going out with my Latin American friends, we can go to the 'Fiesta Macumba', which is a Latin Party. At that moment, that person will get closer to the way of living of Latin Americans. She will try to understand other's culture. I think everybody is like that, right?*

(Jimena, female, Aruban-Venezuelan, 23 years old, BA student)

Sometimes, even with deep knowledge acquired, differences are too big and gaps become too wide. In other cases, bridges can be built by the provision of places of encounter, where fear of the unknown can be transformed into comprehension and a growing feeling of acceptance (Putnam, 2000). Even conceiving limitations of attitude's transformations, from an AVEO scheme perspective it could be said that not every opportunity is chosen by individuals, but its existence is required for its potential use.

Latin American inhabitants are in a privileged position due to a generally positive opinion about them. Still, not much visible in the social media or political discussion but cohabiting in the city, they found themselves different than locals. Their uses, times without agenda and warmth sometimes clash with a Dutch sober attitude, where no stridencies have place and other codes rule. On the other hand, Dutch society needs to conceive immigrants as equals and potential providers of development in the city by their contributions from different perspectives and backgrounds. Therefore, associations to criminal activities but also to charity must step on a side for letting positive and respectful perceptions overcome, as stated by some of the respondents:

*So I think it could really help to really welcome them, seeing them more as opportunities than as problems, asking what they want, because usually is not that much. And try to find a place for meeting in the middle.*

(Angela, female, Dutch, 20 years old, makeup artist)

*R – But related to spots in the city, are there places for interaction between minorities and Dutch people?*

*N – Yes, there is interaction but I think is limited. For example, this restaurant I told you has 15 employees and 6 or 7 Dutch volunteers. And there are a lot of people supporting the place by going there to eat.*

*R – That’s good. Still, isn’t that more charity or social service than integration?*

*N – Yes, it is about charity. Some people are going there just to help because they have a good heart.*

(Nico, male, Dutch, 22 years old, MSc student)

Perception of newcomers as opportunities for the city are also necessary for switching perceptions of pity and charity to their recognition as equals or even sometimes as privileged actors for helping Amsterdam to grow and improve.

There are challenges to overcome in order to build stronger ties between both groups, but those are mostly on people’s shapes than related to contents. Intercultural encounters are as challenging as exciting. For succeeding, as said in some of the collected testimonies, it is necessary not to expect to find the same behaviors and reactions than personal ones but to comprehend that shapes are not equal to contents. As mentioned by Francisco and Kelly, the same things can be said in different ways.

Public spaces are by its definition places for the discussion of ideas, where different people meet without fear of differences. Indeed, there is no need for a person to be somewhere they do not want to be, but tolerance is a quality that must be learned and exercised. It must also be considered that while some places encourage people from diverse origins to meet, others lead them to meet with people who share a similar background. For these people it is easier to fit in as there is no challenge to overcome, but is not real life but “urbanoid” constructions (Goldberg, 1996) which limits people from interacting with other communities.

A positive aspect of less controlled spaces is the chance for people to find out the limits, differences and therefore construct and reconstruct perceptions and identities (Malone, 2002; Peters, 2010). Society and its diversity are complex but also a unique provider of the richness of multicultural urbanities (Amin, A., 2002).

## Final thoughts

From the conception to the realization of this study different challenges had to be faced. First and foremost, the researcher's lack of social capital and networks in the city of Amsterdam was a big limitation. Contacts through friends were essential and of a big help, but could have also biased the study.

Moreover, language was a difficult barrier to overcome and a limitation in relation to the minorities that were approached. By not speaking Dutch, Turkish or Arabic, the biggest minorities in the country could not be considered as part of the research, therefore their rich perspectives and opinions about the subject could not be included. This is why, further studies for comprehending how the set of factors and variables interplay in the case of these specific communities, needs to be studied. Especially as these groups also seem to be those who carry most of the negative prejudgments and stigmas in Dutch society.

Not speaking Dutch was also a restriction for interviewing the native Dutch population. Less educated groups are those that speak English the less, but at the same time, they could be the ones that share more spaces in their neighborhoods with immigrants, as suggested by different testimonies that described areas like Nieuwe West as the more diverse but also as a district where people with lower incomes live in. Hence, their opinions could be of relevance for understanding how interethnic interplays in the city.

Yet, this study has shown agreements and differences among different inhabitants of Amsterdam, but also the relevance of the characteristics of public spaces offered in the city and how their quality, management, and facilities can set themselves as chosen just by certain minorities or widely preferred among inhabitants.

National, provincial and local governments are key actors in choosing models of public places management and therefore assume the responsibilities of the settings created in the city and how they will affect the set of encounters between their inhabitants. Parks and green urban spaces had been highlighted as places for social mingling, thus there is a decision of stakeholders to outsource the management of key spots in the city or to create high-quality urban spaces for fostering people's integration.

## Appendix

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## Media

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## Interviews

- Toos Beentjes, Director of NGO Casa Migrante. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Houkje Hibma, Responsible of public places at Gemeente Amersfoort. Personal interview, May 2018.

- Angela, female, Dutch, 20 years old, makeup artist. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Kelly, female, Dutch, 28 years old, bank employee. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Kim, female, Dutch, 24 years old, MSc student. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Lisa, female, Dutch, 27 years old, bank employee. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Lucas, male, Dutch, 27 years old, software technician. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Nico, male, Dutch, 22 years old, MSc student. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Carol, female, Colombian-Spanish, 20 years old, BA student. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Francisco, male, Peruvian, 40 years old, tourism businessman. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Irene, female, Colombian, 23 years old, MSc student. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Jimena, female, Aruban-Venezuelan, 23 years old, BA student. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Laura, female, Colombian, 22 years old, MSc student. Personal interview, May 2018.
- Martina, female, Mexican, 23 years old, BA student. Personal interview, May 2018.

## Interviews

### Questionnaires

#### *Latin American inhabitants*

##### **Ice-breaker questions**

- Where do you live?
- Since when are you living in Amsterdam?
- Where do you work/study?
- Which are the areas you mostly move around in the city?
- What do you do in your free time? Where do you go?
- How do you know those spaces? Why do you go there? Which are the main one reasons for you to go there?
- Can you show me where this places are in this map of the city? (*Gives map*)

*(If the person goes mostly to consumption oriented places)*

- Have you ever gone or met with friends/colleagues at places such as parks, squares or even corners/sidewalks/waterside? Why?

*(If the person goes mostly to non-consumption oriented places)*

- Have you ever gone or met with friends/colleagues at terraces, bars or cafés? Why?

##### **Comparison with origin-country leisure spaces**

- How was back home? Which places where your favorite ones for meeting with friends/colleagues in the city you grew up?
- Are there some differences with the places you normally go here in Amsterdam? Which ones?

##### **Inter-ethnic encounters**

- Back to Amsterdam, how would you say is the people that attend to the places you go (homogeneity/diversity in terms of ethnic group, economic status, age, etc.)?
  - Would you say are mostly Dutch people, immigrants from specific places or a mix of everything? If there is a mix, do they interact there?
- Do you think there are “Latin American places” in Amsterdam? Which ones?
- Why do you think they exist? What do they have in common?
- How do you think Dutch society sees Latin Americans within the whole group of immigrants?
  - Are we seen differently than others? How so?
- On the other hand, do you think there are places just for Dutch people in Amsterdam?
  - Which ones?
  - How are them?
  - Do you think people is willing to meet with others from different ethnic groups? Maybe they don’t care? Or even they try to avoid it?
    - Why you think that might happen?

### **Consumption barriers**

- How are Amsterdam public spaces for hanging around?
  - Are there expensive?
  - More or less than back home?
- Is it money (consumption) an element you take into consideration for going to this or that place?
- Do you think could be a problem for some people when spending free time?
- How do you think that could affect their chances of meeting with different people?
  - Do you think that was different in your former city?

### *Dutch inhabitants*

#### **Ice-breaker questions**

- Where do you live?
- Since when are you living in Amsterdam?
- Where do you work/study?
- Which are the areas you mostly move around in the city?
- What do you do in your free time? Where do you go?
- How do you know those spaces? Why do you go there? Which are the main one reasons for you to go there?
- Can you show me where this places are in this map of the city? (*Gives map*)

*(If the person goes mostly to consumption oriented places)*

- Have you ever gone or met with friends/colleagues at places such as parks, squares or even corners/sidewalks/waterside? Why?

*(If the person goes mostly to non-consumption oriented places)*

- Have you ever gone or met with friends/colleagues at terraces, bars or cafés? Why?

### **Inter-ethnic encounters**

- Back to Amsterdam, how would you say is the people that attend to the places you go (homogeneity/diversity in terms of ethnic group, economic status, age, etc.)?
  - Would you say are mostly Dutch people, immigrants from specific places or a mix of everything? If there is a mix, do they interact there?
- Do you think there are “Latin American places” in Amsterdam? Which ones?
- Why do you think they exist? What do they have in common?
- How do you think Dutch society sees Latin Americans within the whole group of immigrants?
  - Are we seen differently than others? How so?
- On the other hand, do you think there are places just for Dutch people in Amsterdam?
  - Which ones?
  - How are them?
  - Do you think people is willing to meet with others from different ethnic groups? Maybe they don’t care? Or even they try to avoid it?
    - Why you think that might happen?

### Consumption barriers

- How are Amsterdam public spaces for hanging around?
  - Are there expensive?
- Is it money (consumption) an element you take into consideration for going to this or that place?
- Do you think could be a problem for some people when spending free time?
- How do you think that could affect their chances of meeting with different people?

### Transcriptions

#### Angela

R – Can we start with a little introduction about yourself?

X – Sure. I’m 20 years old. I have lived in Amsterdam for about a year. I didn’t grow up in here but I always wanted to. First time, when I was 6, I said I wanted to live in Amsterdam. I think in here there is an air of acceptance, and I really like that. When I was little I was always the weird one.

I used to live around the corner [The Pijp], but it was too expensive, so I moved further. And I’m student, which requires a lot of internship so I cannot work too much. So that is why cheaper housing was a need for me, because...

R – Yeah, sure. So, for starting, where did you live before Amsterdam?

X – I was born, near Haarlem, and then I grew up in Beiver (?), where the Black Market is. I think is the biggest in Europe.

R – The Black Market?

X – Yes. All the clothes are really tacky but food is really nice.

R – Ah, okay. So you normally live at...

*(Opens Google Maps).*

R – Here we are at De Pijp, right?

X – Yes. So I live here *(Marks at the map)*.

R – Is it the South district?

X – Mm, I never have been good at that, to be honest.

For me to live there is super cool, because is kinda close to where I study.

R – Where is exactly this place you live in?

X – Is pretty close to Amstel Station. You can get there in about 20 minutes, time I also need to get from there to my school, which is really nice.

R – Cool. 20 minutes by bike?

X – Yes. Maybe even a little less.

R – Cool. Where is your school?

X – My school is... Let me put the directions on Google Maps.

*(Points the place in the app).*

Right there. So by bike maybe is even 15 minutes.

R – That's great.

X – Is where the RAI Convention Center is. Is really big.

R – Ah, yeah! I know that place. Great. So, where else do you move around?

X – Well, my boyfriend lives in Newmarkt, I don't know if you know that area...

R – Sounds familiar...

X – It's really central. It's... So I'm at school most of my time but I have to do little works all over the place, not just in Amsterdam. Because my work is freelance, so I go everywhere.

R – What do you do?

X – My school is about make up for special effects and theater, so wherever people needs me I'm going. For instance this weekend I'm going to the beach because of a filming.

R – Ah, okay. So, your boyfriend is in the Center, you live in the South, study around De Pijp... Let's say you have a free afternoon...

X – Where do I go?

R – Yes.

X – I go to the movies a lot. My biggest interest is movie, so I go a lot there when I can. Otherwise I like to do this kind of stuff, like sitting on a park with my friends when the weather is nice. Dutch people, as soon as there's sun we're outside.

I also like going to parks or pubs. My boyfriend also gives a pub quiz every Monday, nearby The Hogeschool of Amsterdam. Is not a university but something like that.

R – Ah, yes. I know it.

X – So every Monday I use to bring friends to participate at the quiz. But now that I moved to a bigger place is much easier to bring friends over because is enough space, so I now invite many friends. Because here at De Pijp I didn't have a living room, just my bedroom.

R – Ah, okay.

X – So no space... Like "Have a sit, on my bed".

*(Laugh).*

R – So which parks do you go to?

X – This [Saphatipark] or Vondelpark... The big ones basically.

R – Is it one of the biggest?

X – Well, actually no, but is in the very center. And also because this area is where let's say "Amsterdam lives", so is not very touristy around here but focused on people living here. So if you walk from Princegracht or where the canals are, is more like shops, offices... And here is bars and supermarkets and all kind of stuffs that are more suitable for people that lives in the place than tourists.

R – Great. So you said parks, meeting at home...

X – Yeah.

R - ...and you said something about bars as well.

X – Yes. Mm, I'm not a very "going out person". Clubs are not my type, not the music I like, not the people I like to hang around with... So, bars I like smaller, alternative, like rocky bars. I like to talk to people and that's why I don't like clubs, because you have to shout the whole night for having a conversation and I don't like it.

*(Laughs)*

X – So after a few beers I like sitting and catching up with people. And that's at different places, because everybody knows a nice place and recommends it to you.

R – So this is how you choose bars to go: because of friends' recommendations, because of music, because of the environment that...

X – Yeah, 100%. So I like to go to places that are small and people recommend me because are great, not just because commercials say that, so I... Yeah, because I feel like... I don't know, I like more to listen to people that to commercials.

R – Okay, that's good. It seems to me you also mentioned the weather as an element as well.

X – Yes, when is nice is great.

R – Yeah, but what about when is not sunny?

X – I don't know. I guess I'm going to the movies and I try to take people there as well, but it is not easy because movies are expensive, but also still bars or stuffs. But when the weather is bad it is hard because people doesn't feel like going out when it is raining or so, and you have to go outside to get anywhere. But I still like to try to meet with people now that I'm living in the city. It is a big city, but for a big city, a capital, it is not that big. So you have the possibility to move around the city in not so long time. Some people mind moving but I don't, so I can go anywhere. Also it is nice to go to Leidseplein, where a concert venue is, and it is where my first visit to Amsterdam was, so I know that area a little bit better, so I know that area pretty well. Also Paradise, super close to there.

R – Great. Another part of my interview is related to places where Dutch people go. Of course that is quite a generalization, but I'd like to tell me if you can find really Dutch places in Amsterdam.

X – It is hard because Amsterdam is so touristy nowadays, but... (Silence). The first thing that comes to my mind is Leidseplein, where there is Amstel Café and also Heineken Café. As everything is related to money, and tourists bring money, there is not... Maybe parks! Because if the weather is nice for us it is amazing, while maybe for people from places where it is normally warmer, maybe it is not a big deal. Now it is not that bad, but if it is really sunny, it doesn't matter when you go to Vondelpark, it will be packed with Dutch people.

R – And in the other hand, are there some places where you cannot see a Dutch person at all?

X – I don't know. I guess the bars I go are more popular for non-Dutch than Dutch people. Maybe it is because of Amsterdam's fame of open and cosmopolitan that every time I did myself a piercing, people working there were not Dutch but Italian, French or... But I don't know... I wouldn't say there are much public spaces where there is majority of immigrants, because they try to assimilate and do what Dutch people does...

R – Okay...

X – But the more alternative places are mostly... I met some Latin American people as well, but I don't go normally where a lot of people go, so...

R – Okay, I understand... Maybe it is easier for you to tell me which people goes to the places you go.

X – There are so many kind of people! Because I guess this underground places use to attract diverse people because you're cool as long as you don't bother anybody, so people that goes there tend to be a little bit more left wing, politically, because no one supports them but they are supported them. So they are cool with this "Welcome Immigrants", so I guess they can be a lot there...

So I think [it] doesn't matter where you are when you're at those places.

R – What about the acceptance/rejection scenario, not just in politics but in society: How do you see acceptance in...?

X – Always big cities are much tolerant than small places. I was a little weird when I grew up. I'm bisexual, so I get that myself sometimes. That's why I try also to stick up for anybody that feels like that for whatever reasons, so immigrants are one of those that are suffering bad clashes. So for me it has been always really important, so whenever I see that situation, I like to get into conversations with them but some of them had already made their mind on some way and don't want to talk at all but shout.

R – I understand.

X – Yeah, and that never works.



R – Why do you think is that?

X – Because of fear.

R – Fear of what?

X – Changes are always scary for people that is comfortable. And of course The Netherlands is a country where people is comfortable. People does well in here, and with an average work you can be very happy. And that changes when people come for other places where are having a bad time. So others think that people will take their jobs and houses, which is of course easily avoided when you share a little bit better. So for me it wouldn't be a big problem that a person that has 3 villas, could give one for other's housing, but of course that is not what that person wants.

R – Okay...

X – Is hard because for some of this many things there is not an easy solution. It is not easy to say "we will fix it like this". And because in Amsterdam we are stuffed, is really hard but I think we shouldn't make them feel like hostiles, not like saying them "yeah, you're here but we know you're a problem". This is how people goes on not the right direction, and then people will say "See? I told you!" But of course, we're feeding them with this, like already saying there are bad people, as happens with a lot of Moroccan kids. So I think it could really help to really welcome them, seeing them more as opportunities than as problems, asking what they want, because usually is not that much. And try to find a place for meeting in the middle. And money is always a problem, of course.

R – In between this huge group of immigrant, there is the sub-group of Latin Americans.

X – Yes.

R – I would like to ask your opinion about how they are seen among the other immigrants.

X – I don't know... I guess there is different because Latin Americans are not seen like running away from a war or so, so it's different. I don't know much about it but for the people I know, I think Latin Americans in here are more for studying or maybe for a better opportunity, but is not really a need to get out of their countries.

R – Okay...

X – So I have never felt they were an issue, but I have not done any research on it, but I... I don't know. There is less of stigma about Latin American culture than Eastern-Europeans. We can see some far cultures as problematic, but with Latin Americans, we actually see them as exotic and fun. And is nice there, and there is... That kind of stuffs. But that's just my experience.

R – Not at all as you might see people for other places like Africa or Middle-East...

X – No, that's what I mean.

R – Okay. Now I'd like to get back to Amsterdam's public spaces, considering again the whole group of places you move around. I'd like to ask you about your opinion about the offer of public spaces in the city: Are they good? Are they bad? Good enough?

X – Yes, there are many public spaces. If there can be changes, I think there should be more spaces for kids, which are not enough. But I think if you're over 16 years old, the city has everything you might need.

R – Okay. So, for you...

X – Yeah. There is everything even considering the multiple subcultures, so as long as there is money, you can do everything you want.

R – As long as is money?

X – Yeah, because if the kids want to skate, the city can build a skate park, pay entry fees, and they get parks. And there are also concert halls, bars, really good restaurants, libraries... There is everything you could need, at least on western societies. I don't know that does immigrants need, but maybe is not what there is in here.

R – Okay, true. You mentioned the “money” element.

X – Yes. I think a city is not willing to do something if people has no money, if there are not potential customers.

R – More like business model?

X – Exactly. I think that is how cities work. But is always been like that. Vondelpark I guess is been here for years and years, but... Now they built three bars at a square that is crowded every time there is some sun, and that is great because that is money! And I don't think like that, but I think cities think like this.

R – In that scenario, what do you think with people that doesn't have too much money?

X – Is always been that way. Amsterdam is not a city for people without money. We students might not have much money but we can get a loan and stuffs like that. And I say I'm not rich but I'm still super privileged in lot of ways. Foreign students cannot get that. You have to be very lucky to find a place in here if you're “less rich”. If you have to pay a rent of 500 grants and you're short of money, you cannot go to the cinema anymore. And of course there are the parks and happiness to be found in many things, but... But is still a city where money is a really big deal for people.

R – Yeah, the thing is: winter time, people without much money... Which are the options?

X – That's tough. I don't know. In the city, not much. Just in your house I guess. But I think about every situation, and if you cannot sit in the park, everything costs money. Even the cinema nowadays is at least 15 bucks if you want a drink. So for big families is not an option.

*(Silence)*

I don't know. I guess everything indoors has to cost money because has to be build.

R – Yeah, that is true.

X – If you're gonna make something like “this is gonna be fun and pro-bono”, I think you need investors that won't look much for getting their money back. Nowadays can be slightly easier because the internet and fundraisers. But could be hard to get money for stuffs that people which is giving the money won't take anything back from it. But it's probably possible. I would be happy to give some money for something like that, but the students are not the rich ones.

R – That's a problem then.

*(Laughs)*

R – I understand. My last question has a bit of everything of what we were talking about before. The fact that many of these places we talked about are related to consumption and... Do you think it might be a challenge for the people's integration because...?

X – Because they might not be able to afford that?

R – Yeah.

X – Yeah, fair enough. I guess that might be different for young generations that are already studying in The Netherlands, because they have this common ground with natives, and there are with a lot of people with the same interests as you.

Yeah, think that's a good issue. It's hard to find an answer to that, but... it's a fair point, true.

I guess also is also because most of the immigrants I know they just work the whole day and they don't have time for anything else.

R – And that won't give them any free time for meeting people with same interests as you mentioned the case of the students?

X – Maybe, but also they are not getting much opportunities for good jobs.

R – Is it?

X – Yeah. I heard about many cases of people with different backgrounds not getting a job because of their last names, foreign ones. And that's the case at supermarkets already, so they end up working at restaurants and that kind of stuffs. And shifts are super long and they are tired so they don't have much time for having a social life, let's say.

R – I understand. Okay, so those were my questions, so thank you very much for your time.

X – No problem.

*Kelly*

R – So, can you introduce yourself?

X – Sure. I'm 28 years old. I used to live in Alkmaar, but since 4 and a half years ago I live in Amsterdam. Nowadays I live nearby Westpoort, in the East.

R – Great. Since you came to Amsterdam you live in the same place?

X – No. I used to live with my sister in the West, and then I moved to the South for 1 year and after another year I moved to the East.

R – Can you tell me a bit about the differences between the areas?

X – The West part is really nice. Feels a bit more local, let's say. There are different cultures and restaurants. And lot of young people and different options of places to go. Not super fancy places but diverse atmosphere.

And the south is what I like for the less. Lot of wealthy people and a lot of families. It's also a quiet area and not too much to do. And now in the East there are many places to go, because it's quite close to the center. I love it!

R – Perfect. So now I will ask you to use Google Maps to find the places you go in the city.

X – Yeah!

R – Where do you live?

X – I live in here.

*(Points on the map)*

R – And where do you work?

X – I work always near the Zuid station.

R – Perfect. And where do you mostly move around? Where are the places you mostly go?

X – Mostly is in... Lot of friends live in the West, so I go there for restaurants or whatever. Also around where I live there are nice places. Utrechtstraat is also a nice place for shopping. And I really like the Jourdan. But in the South I'm just because of my work. As I told you before, is not really my area.

R – Okay. So is not that you stay around this area?

X – Mmm just sometimes when we do after office.

R – Okay, perfect. Let's say you have some free time: what would you do?

X – If the weather is nice, I'd like to go to the park. I go to the Oosterpark quite often. Also there is a beach place called *Pilek* in Amsterdam north which is really nice. I also like to go to restaurants. I like the Food Holland pretty much, which is in the West.

R – What is that?

X – It was an old parking place for trams, and now there are many places for getting some food and some common tables in the middle of the place.

R – Ah, nice. Is like a food court then?

X – Yes, like that.

R – That is not close to your place, right?

X – No. But I go there also because there are some movies that I really like. There have some alternative films, so is a cool place.

R – Ah, great. But you were also mentioning the summer times.

X – Yes. That is important. In summer time you have to look for places where you can enjoy the weather. But in winter times I prefer restaurants and bars.

R – Okay. How would you say is the people you might find at the places you go?

X – I think there are open-minded people, but mostly socially busy. They are quite sporty, but... Yeah, quite a busy life.

R – Okay. You go mostly with friends?

X – Yes.

R – Where do you knew them?

X – Some are from the office but most of them are former colleagues from studies.

R – Ah, I see. And I guess with some of them you do this and others that?

X – Yes, sure! With some friends, they always want to hang out just where they live, but I'm a bit more flexible, so I can go all over the town, while some people concentrate in their own neighborhood.

R – Great. So, for you location is not a problem.

X – No.

R – But weather would be an issue for when choosing where to go.

X – Definitely.

R – Which other reasons you take into consideration for deciding the places you would like to go?

X – It has to be *gezellig*, good atmosphere.

R – Okay...

X – It needs to be kind of informal but nice looking at the same time. I don't mean fancy but nice. And if is a Restaurant, you don't need to eat and drink at same place. I like to eat here and have some drinks later at that bar, like in the same area.

R – Ah, I follow you.

X – But I don't like the city center that much, because there are so many tourists! Those places are the ones I like to avoid.

R – Great. I'd like to ask you the people that also go to the places you go, both to restaurants and beach or the park. Are there different people that attend to all those places or more like the same?

X – At the park more students, so younger. In the restaurants, maybe from 25 to 45ish, or something. I'm not sure, but I think is also according to the neighborhood where you find different people. But also the activities: theater attract let's say hippie or alternative people, much more than restaurants.

R – And related to ethnic groups?

X – Mmm... No, but the places I go, there are mostly Western people. Is not that I mind or something, but there is... Especially in the South, you find mostly Dutch rich people. That's why I also like the West, because of the social diversity.

R – Ah, okay. As I know you travelled a bit, I'd like to ask you how you see the places where people hang around and go out in The Netherlands in comparison to where you have been travelled to.

X – First of all, I think people in here is socially busy, so is not too much place for the unplanned. It's not like "oh, we have anything to do, so come join us". Sometimes you plan for over a week or even over a month for doing something on Friday night. So, that's different. People may have a full agenda.

And something else is different in Amsterdam is the unlikeliness of people to bring somebody else with you to a meeting you have already planned with some other people. That's not what we do in here, normally.

And something else is the cost of going out in here. As many people don't have a garden or a place for chill outside, you are all the time going to a terrace or so, and it ends up being really expensive if is a frequent plan. I used to live in Canada before and many plans were going to the mountain or maybe meeting at the park, but in here we always go for dinner or drink, so is much more expensive.

R – How do you see the difference between hanging around at the mountain in Canada or at the restaurants in Amsterdam?

X – I think for us is more our way of living, while maybe Canadian people could see going out at the restaurant as a special occasion. I think for us is much normal.

R – I understand.

X – I prefer the Amsterdam way, but I'm not much materialistic, so sometimes I think moneywise, or I think could be a great time if we stay with friends at home. But I only do that with friends I know for a long period of time. I wouldn't invite my brand new friend for coming over for the whole evening. Maybe I do, but just for having a drink and after that we go somewhere else.

R – That's interesting.

X – Yes. Another difference: In the US, lot of friends used to meet at somebody's for watching a movie. I never met with friends at home for watching a movie if is not at the cinema. That's different.

R – I understand. So, there is a step-by-step friendship where you become more open?

X – Yes, is like that. You open your houses to old friends. Is not that easy to invite a friend to stay for sleeping over because the night became too long. We don't easily do that.

R – I got it, yes. As my research is related to public spaces but also to immigrants, I'd like to ask you how do you think Latin American people are seen within the whole group of immigrants in the city.

X – Being honest, I don't really know what Dutch people think about Latin Americans. We have a lot of Suriname, which used to be a colony of The Netherlands, and I think in general there is a good idea of them: there are gezellig, they bring good food and dancing and fun music. That's the idea Dutch people have about them.

Yeah, and there are social and they don't do too weird things as criminal activities or so.

R – And if you compare Latin Americans with other groups of immigrants?

X – Turkish and Moroccans are tend to have a negative vibe. Indonesian people are more positive, but not...

R – Are those the groups you think people perceive as the most problematic ones?

X – Yes. That has to do with the Islamic culture. They have very different way of living, such as the way they treat men and women, so there is more tension between their cultures and Dutch, much more as with Latin American or Indonesian.

R – Okay.

X – Is not my personal opinion, by the way.

R – It's cool. Would you find Latin places in Amsterdam?

X – Restaurant or something?

R – Could be...

X – We have some Latin American bars, or at least they try to be. There is "Escobar" nearby. They have some Colombian influence, I think. And in front of that, there is a Mexican restaurant or so. But there are food bars, nothing special.

R – Why are Latin places?

X – Because of the names and what they offer, I'd say. Maybe some drinks or special cocktails they sell. Maybe there are not Latin American places but they try.

(Laughs)

R – But are there lot of Latin Americans?

X – No, no.

R – Ah, so may be more like a thematic bar?

X – Yeah, yeah. That's true. And there are some other places that are more for take-away food that seem to be more real. But I'm not much into that, I'm sorry.

R – No problem at all. And what about Dutch places? Are there really Dutch places in Amsterdam?

X – Uh, hard. Is difficult, because we have a lot of influence from abroad, but I'd say the Jordan area has really Dutch places. They have really Dutch places.

R – What does a place needs to have for being really Dutch?

X – I'm thinking of really old bars, kind of cozy and brown cafés. There have all kind of drinks, but there are also normal. There's nothing too crazy. The place is nice, but... We use to say "Be normal, and you're already crazy enough". Do you know what I mean?

R – I think so. That you don't need to overact or so?

X – Yes, because without it is already crazy enough.

R – I understand. And are foreign people accepted in there?

X – Yes, absolutely. I think Dutch people are quite down to earth, we're not much expressive as some others could be, so that might lead a person to think they are not welcomed, but actually they are. It is just we don't express it on such an enthusiastic way as an American person would do by shouting a lot.

(Laughs)

R – I understand your point. So, the last part of this interview is a sort of summary, so I'd like to ask you about your opinion of public spaces in Amsterdam. How would you say is the offer of public spaces in the city?

X – I think is really good: is clean, safe and approachable for every people. There are parks with some homeless people but there are also police officers everywhere, so there are not many places where you actually cannot go.

R – You mean you're not afraid of moving around?

X – Yes, exactly. And there is also a good diversity of places to go in the city, plus a lot of events or festivals. Yeah, we make a lot out of the city. I'd say nature is a bit undertaken, that could be... But I don't know, we don't have beaches and that's a boundary. We simply don't have it! Haha.

R – True that. You were talking before about the places and how summer increased the options, let's say. But what about in winter? Which are the choices for going out? What happens with the people that would like to go out but cannot afford the terrace with the heater?

X – That’s much more difficult. There is always a problem when money is involved. That’s true. I think in winter time you can always walk in the streets, which I super like, but besides that there’s not much to do if you don’t have money.

R – Do you think that could be a problem for people’s encounter?

X – A lot. Because as I said before, I think social life is mostly about bars and restaurants, because that’s Amsterdam’s lifestyle. That’s actually something that frustrates me a bit, because my friends always want to go for special beers or so, which is something I like but not always, not every time. So, for getting into Amsterdam’s life is expensive. And true, if you have some problems with language that will lead you to less work or study opportunities, that would be a problem later for having that money is needed for this city, let’s say.

R – And do you think most of the times native Dutch people has better jobs than others or not?

X – Yes, I think so. And I think companies don’t discriminate for giving a job. I think moving to a different country put the things more difficult because of the language and other barriers. Start your life at a new place is not impossible but is more difficult, for sure.

It takes time to get your new life running. There are many things to figure out. You need to build a social network in order to get better job opportunities. You probably won’t have networks before coming here. So I think indirectly is much difficult for immigrants to get a good job and a good income.

R – Well, those were all my questions. Thank you very much for your time.

*Kim*

X – I just recently moved here. Sharing an apartment in the south of Amsterdam, close to the Zuid station that takes me to Utrecht, where I study. But I live in Amsterdam because I love the city. [I have] been living in here for 5 years. So all my friends live here and everything I do besides study and working is in Amsterdam.

R - So you were living at another place, but also in Amsterdam Zuid or another area?

X – No, I have been living all around the town. I lived in the West, then after I moved to the East for a year, and then I moved to the Center where I lived for over a year and now I live in the South.

R – Okay. And if I ask you to explain me the differences between those districts, what would you say?

X – Oh, there are completely different. In the West there is a lot more people with different ethnic background.

R – Ah, okay.

X – Yes. And... But also very close to everything. Only 10 minutes cycling to whatever I want to reach. And in the East is a bit more... For me was like heaven because everything was close-by. Because I do ice-skating, which was in the East, then also went to University and was in the East... There were a lot of families, I guess. And in the Center, where I used to live a couple of weeks ago, of course there were many, many tourist. But as it was a student complex, it was a lot of loud music and stuff like that.



R – Ah, okay... And the South?

X – Oh, yeah. That is a little bit more difficult because I just have been living here for two weeks.

R – Ah, understand.

X – But is... The vibe that I experience is that is wealthier than other parts. But I really enjoy [living here] because there is a lot of friendly people, I guess.

R – Okay, okay. But does West includes New-West or is it something really different?

X – I didn't live in new west but is really close-by. I used to live next to a mosque, but I really liked the many different shops with different cuisine. I really liked to go to the vegetables guy, which was Turkish... How you say that?

(Silence)

R – *Groente winkel!*

(Laughs)

X – Yeah, exactly!

(Laughs)

X – ...yeah, for getting my ordinary shopping. Also I went to another Moroccan guy for the... I don't know, I really liked it.

R – Ah, cool. And related to public spaces, does those areas differ somehow because the offer or...? Are more or less the same kind of places for spending your free time on those districts?

X – Pfff! I don't really...

R – I don't know. I guess the Center is the most crowded one, and I don't know if there are parks or squares there, but...

X – Yeah, I officially lived in the Center but was in the edge of it, so I had a big garden next to the complex, and lived next to a kind of park thing.

R- Which one?

X – Is the *Marina Terrain*, where was the harbor before. So we can swim in there, also BBQ or picnic.

R – Ah, nice. Is it open to everybody?

X – Yes, but is sort of hidden, so is not that everybody knows it. But when it was like 30° C, all the students from the area used to go to the *Marina Terrain*. But maybe there are just 60 people when at Vondelpark there can be thousands. Is really a hidden spot.

R - Ah, okay. Vondelpark is in the West, right?

X – Yes, and a bit South. In between both them.

R – Ah, okay. I'm just getting to know the city.

X – Yes, no problem... Vondelpark is the most famous park in the city. But it deserves it: it's the most beautiful park. But a bit crowded sometimes.

R – Ah, yes. I have been a couple of years ago and I have seen the change between now and some months ago!

X – Haha, yes!

R – There were a lot of people! But related to my interview, which is about public spaces and places for leisure activities, I'd like to ask you where do you move around the city normally? Is it now that you live in the South you get around nearby places or...?

X – Oh, no. I move around by bike. I don't almost walk, haha. But within the city... Yeah, let me think. I do a lot of sports in the eastern part, so that's 20 minutes cycling; and I go out in the Center, 10 minutes cycling. And I have a job, which needs me to be outside and count bicycles, and that is all over the city, so I...

R – Where does your friends live?

X – Mm... My friends live mostly in the eastern part, but there are of course around the city some others as well...

R – Yeah, okay. How far is that by bike?

X – 10 to 20 minutes.

R – Ah, okay. So I'd like to ask you about your free time: What do you do when you have some free time?

X – Mm...

R – Maybe you can think about consumption, but also non-consumption activities, which means going to the bar but also laying down at the park or... Whatever you do when you have time.

X – Mm I actually spend some time at my balcony, but I don't know if that's a public space.

R – No, actually not.

(Laughs)

X – Yeah, sometimes I go to parks and chill with friends: picnic and laying down in the sun. We used to do that at the Oosterpark, when I used to live closely.

R – Maybe we can use Google Maps with my phone and you can show me where is that place and the others as well...

X – Yes.

(Takes the map and starts looking for the places).

X – This is the Oosterpark.

R – Ah, is the one behind the Troopsmuseum.

X – Yeah! And I also sometimes go to the Vondelpark, because is really central, and everybody living in the East, South or West can reach it easily.

R – Okay. And why did you choose to go to the Oosterpark?

X – Because is it... First, most important reason, it's because it was super close by, almost in my backyard, 5 minutes cycling. And second reasons is because was smaller and less crowded than Vondelpark. But also was really nice, a lot of sun. You can also BBQ in there...

R – Okay, yeah...

X – And that is not allowed anymore at Vondelpark. Because it was too much people and rubbish and smoke.

And in my other free time I was... Is doing sport consuming?

R – Well, depends. Where was that?

X – That is also in the eastern part, but a little bit less (points it in the map): Triburg.

R – Ah, great. And is it a skating park or...?

X – No, this is a football field where I play soccer within a team. Yeah, and here... And in winter I do not play football but I do ice-skating.

R – Ah, okay. And in this places, do you need to pay for playing football or is just an open park that you just get in and play?

X – No, I did have to pay. At the starting of the season I have to pay like 200 euros.

R – Per year?

X – Yeah.

R – Ah, okay.

X – And for the ice-skating, of course you have to pay as well.

R – Ah, okay...

X – Yeah, expensive.

R – And what else? Let's say on a random day you plan to meet with a friend, is it another part of the city that you like to go?

X – Yeah, bars or cafés, but not... That's also consuming.

R – Yeah, but that's also included as well. I mean, there are both of my interest. Which bars? Which areas?

X – Mm is not that I always go to the same ones. I like to find new places. Recently I met with a friend in a café which is close by here because I wanted to know the area, but I also... I can show you the student complex where I used to live here.

I also went to the Newmarkt, which is over here. But there are a lot of bars and cafés that we used to go for eating pies or so, because in the evenings we were both busy. So around 4, usually the time I'm not that busy, it's like "let's meet, but what do we do at 4 o'clock?" Eating pie and drinking coffee.

R – Yeah, sure! And the reasons for you to choose those places, you were mostly mentioning proximity. Could be?

X – Yeah, true. Proximity between me and the friends I'm meeting with. Let's say in the middle.

R – Do you remember how you ended up at those places?

X – Sometimes recommendation of friends but sometimes just passing by with the bike and discovering a cool spot. Later we talk with a friend and I can suggest to go there.

R – Do you also check at websites for bars or cafés to go or...?

X – No, not really.

R – Ah, cool. And before living in Amsterdam, where did you live?

In Utrecht. I lived there until my 18s, when I finished school. Then I lived in Norway for a year and when I came back I almost immediately moved to Amsterdam.

R – Okay. And what about back then? Where did you normally spend your time in Utrecht?

X – Puff, that's a long time ago. I used to live next to De Uitoff, and we used to go around the Janskerkhoff, and to the Noude. And for shopping and stuff like that we strolled around the Oude Gracht or the Hoog Catherine, the mall. And I also used to play soccer at that time.... But I think it was also a proximity issue: everything was around 10-15 minutes by bike.

R – Okay. But you were mentioning in Amsterdam a little bit more parks and in Utrecht a bit more of consumption spaces, right?

X – Yeah, is true. Maybe is because back then I used to have a big garden at my own place...

R- Mhmmm.

X – So, if you want to enjoy the sun you have your own garden. But also I think is because your world is a bit smaller when you're in high school. So your friends live close to your place and you visit them more often. In Amsterdam that's often more difficult, because people have sometimes roommates or flat mates. Or maybe houses are a bit too small, and...

R – Ah, that's interesting. So let's say you are a bit more forced to meet outside because of lack of space at your own house?

X – Yeah, maybe yes. And also you have more money to spend on consuming.

R – Was it that before when you were younger you were meeting at some closed spaces as the Hoog Catherine because your parents thought it was safer to you?

X – No, I don't think it was the case. I was just going there because is where most of the shops are.

R – Ah, okay. Just because there were most of the shops.

But when we met back then with friends were mostly at our own places, not on public spaces.

R – Ah, great. Okay, my research is about public spaces but also related with the encounter between immigrants and Dutch in those spaces. That is why I'm interviewing not just Dutch but Latin American immigrants living in Amsterdam, for seeing their choices and also people's willingness to meet with others. So my next question is about Dutch places. Are in Amsterdam some really Dutch places to go?

X – Let me think... Where only Dutch people go...

R – Yeah, or maybe because for some reasons you can describe them as quite Dutch.

X – The Albert Heijn, I guess.

(Laugh)

R – Okay...

X – There are some foreign of course that would go there, but the only place where every Dutch people go at least once in his life is to Albert Heijn.

R – And related to public spaces?

X – Yeah, of course... Let me think... Is a difficult question.

R – Is it easier maybe to think about bars, cafés or squares where...?

X – Yeah, maybe there are some places where there are not many tourist visiting, but I don't think is because they cannot go but because they don't know those places.

R – Okay.

X – But of course there are places where there are no foreign at all. Because are kind of hidden. You need to know about them. And if you're not from here it takes a while to get the place known.

R – Yeah, but when you were describing me the different districts you talked about the western and you said there were more ethnic groups in there, while in the South you said it was wealthier. Is that also related with Dutch population?

X – Yes, true. Here is very white. That is really a pattern here: you clearly see less people with an ethnic background. But I don't know if that is something that comes across differences on public spaces. You could say maybe there are more playgrounds and stuff like that?

R – Where in?

X – In the South.

R – You think here are more playgrounds than in other places?

X – Yes, like small playgrounds.

R – Okay. And how is the people that you normally see there? Mostly Dutch or...?

X – Yes, Dutch.

R – And what about in the places you go? What can you tell me about the people goes there?

X – The places I visit I guess are also visited by people like me, I guess.

(Laugh)

R – What does it means?

X – Ah... Students, young urban professionals, without kids, white, I guess, and maybe privileged.

R – But for instance, this place you go for ice-skating...

Yeah.

R – Do you see some diversity in terms of ethnic groups or not too much?

X – In terms of ethnic groups, ice-skating is quite Dutch. Yeah, maybe that's the place where only Dutch people go. Yeah, that's the public spaces where just Dutch people go... Ah, maybe is not a public space because is also an opening time, but... Everybody can enter...

R – If they can pay.

X – If they can pay 5 euros or so.

R – And do you think those 5 euros could work as a barrier for different ethnicities for getting there?

X – I think 5 euros is not a problem for them if they want to go a couple of times per year. But if you want to go there more often you need an *abonnement* and that's expensive. I can imagine some people cannot afford that. I also could not afford it, but there is a student discount, so that is why I do go there and enjoy ice-skating during the winter.

R – And what about those bars/cafés you normally go?

X – But maybe they don't feel like going there.

R – How so?

Eh... Yeah, maybe because there is only people whom are Dutch students and they don't feel that interested to be there.

R – And do you think that lack of interest is because of...? Maybe not feeling welcomed?

I hope is not for that. I don't think anybody has a problem with it. I hope. Otherwise I wouldn't like it.

R – You wouldn't go if foreign are not really accepted?

X – No, no.

R – Ah, okay. And have you ever experienced (maybe not personally) an experience like this or that where maybe at a super Dutch place people from somewhere else came into place and there is some silence, or sights...?

X – No. There are clubs where bouncers don't accept people but I don't think that is related to ethnicity but when they are super drunk or so. But if has to do with ethnicity, I wouldn't go there anymore. That makes me angry.

R – I was asking you before about ethnic groups' willingness to meet with Dutch or not...

X – Yes...

R – On the other side, do you think Dutch people are willing to meet with...?

X – If is "people" in general, I don't think so.

R – No?

X – No. The greatest part of Dutch population are happy with not interacting with people with different ethnic background. And I don't mind at all, but I'm not actively...

R – Seeking?

X – Yeah, seeking for it.

R – Okay.

X – Some of my friends are like “I would like to do this mixing”, and they go to this book clubs and things like that.

R – What is that?

X – They teach Dutch immigrants for making a difference, let’s say.

R – Ah, okay.

X – I’d love to be such a person, but I’m not. I’m lazy or busy, I don’t know.

R – That’s okay as well. And this Dutch people you said they are not much up for meeting with others, why would you say that is for? Fear, or...?

X – I don’t know. My own network is just lack of time and lack of... How do you say?

(Silence)

Is not that they avoid contact but they don’t actively look for it. So “lack of willingness” is a strong term, but “busy with minding their own business in life”.

R – Ah, okay. Maybe we can say is not a problem but either a priority?

X – Yes, exactly.

R – That’s cool. Well, also my focus is on Latin American immigration, so I was wondering how do you see Latin American groups within immigrants, if you can find some differences or not really...

X – I have to say you’re the only guy from Latin America I know...

R – Mhmm...

X – And I don’t know if I think about them differently than other groups, but in general, I’d say Latin American people are happy and quite good dancers or so...

(Laughs)

But nobody thinks they are scary as some people could think about people from Egypt or so.

R – Okay.

X – Yeah, people have completely different idea about people from that side of the world [Egypt region] than people from Latin America. In general, I guess.

R – That is interesting as well. So, the last part of my interview is explicitly related to consumption spaces. Do you think it could be a way for improving those encounters by providing different or improving public spaces in the city?

(Silence. Thinks)

X – Ah... Difficult. I could think about... providing training or like lessons in parks. Yeah, and... Wait! I’m researching fitness facilities, and the location is often used is in New West, where lot of people with ethnic background lives. And is mostly used by those people but also by very Dutch people. And I see them interacting, so I think sport is a really good measure to implement. I think they should be free and open to everyone.

And those playgrounds... Do you know the *Cruyff Courts*?

R – No. What are those?

X – So Johan Cruyff has a foundation and he installs small soccer fields all over the town, in different cities in Holland. There are good quality and free for everyone. So when you see a Cruyff Court in the city, I always see a lot of people with different backgrounds playing together. So that is a good thing, I guess.

R – So in this case, this football courts, there are high quality.

X – Yes, that is important because kids can play there always, the whole year. And if is real grass and is demolished and dirt, people won't like to play there anymore. And in this ones, rich people would also like to play there because is good quality.

R – That is really interesting as well. And my last question is related to the encounter in public spaces. There is the contact hypothesis that says people might be more tolerant and respectful for diversity when they meet with others on any spaces: public, private or whatever. But there is a lot of other people that says there is no need for that to be, because even when sharing a place, people won't mix between each other, no interacting with different ones. What is your opinion about that encounter in Amsterdam public spaces?

X – Well, I'm a bit negative on that. I agree a bit more with the second part, people will not just interact because of sharing the same square. Maybe I think kids are much better on this: they don't really mind that part when playing with others.

R – Okay, okay.

X – And they could be the key for a better society, I guess.

R – That's cool. But yes. Let's say in Vondelpark, do you see people interacting or more...?

X – No, no. Everybody is inside their own group.

R – And in Dutch bars? Do you see Dutch people interacting more between each other or not that much?

X – I have in mind this Dutch bar where lot of Dutch students go. And sometimes one boy or girl with an ethnic background is belonging to a group, there is no problem at all. They are just included like everybody?

R – And what if it was a group where all were from other place?

X – I think that could be different. Everybody could stand next to each other.

R – What's that?

X – Like separated groups.

R – Okay. So those were my questions. Thank you for your time.

X – No problem.

*Lisa*

Researcher (R) – Can we start with a little introduction of yourself?

Interviewed (X) – Sure. I'm Laurien, and 27 years old. I'm not that good in English, so sorry on advance.



R – No problem.

X – I'm from Alkmaar, but living in Amsterdam since 8 years ago. I moved here when I was 19.

R – Why did you choose to come to Amsterdam?

X – For study. I wanted to study Human resources, which was possible in Alkmaar, but the school didn't have a good name. So, as I also wanted to see another city, I moved to Amsterdam. I lived in the South, nearby here. It was a really small room with another lady and another room mate. I lived there for 5 years.

But I had a boyfriend who was living in the East. He had a bigger place, so I was a lot of times in there.

Now I'm living in the East, but I lived also in the West for one year, so I moved around a bit.

R – Great! Lot of places! Can you tell me about the different areas in Amsterdam?

X – Yes. The center is the most touristic and busy area, so I never go there.

R – Okay.

X – So I only go for a nice shop, De Bijenkof. Otherwise, I avoid the center because is too busy.

Then, beneath the Center is De Pijp, which is also getting touristic but is nice: good restaurants, nice bars, and nice shops. I used to go a lot when I was student. Is also nearby the South, where most wealthy people lives, so it's a bit chic.

The South is a place full of big houses. Is boring but is also safe, so I was happy to live there when I moved to this city.

And the West is quite big. So, it's difficult to say one thing about it. But is getting very popular for people like me: 27, no kids, working. There's a really nice bar next to the Vondelpark, with a lot of bars and restaurants. A bit like De Pijp. And when you go a bit northern, there is a big park and is wider. Is a nice place, and also some more differences when you look at people's background. That's why I also like it. There's a big combination and mix of people. Not everybody is happy about that. There are a lot of big blocks of buildings, and is not cozy. But I think is quite okay, but if you're traveling by bike is quite far!

R – Does people not like it for the blocks or maybe because too many immigrants live there?

X – I'm not sure, but could be a bit of both. When I moved here, people warned me not to go there by my own by bike in the evenings.

R – Ah, okay.

X – I didn't really listen, but is what people says.

R – How was it on your own opinion?

X – Not bad. Was okay.

R – Let's talk about the places you go. Maybe we can use Google Maps so we can see the places we are talking about.

X – Yeah, no problem. So, this is the East (*points*). I live here, at this place.

R – Great. And you work...?

X – In here, next to the Zuid Station.

R – Great. Do you have any other regular activities like studying or any hobby?

X – I play badminton, at a walking distance from home.

R – Great. How often do you play?

X – I play twice per week, but once there and once at another place, which is a bit further. Is more next to the Science Park. There's a big sport hall.

R – Okay. How are those places? Are they open? Can you simply get in and play?

X – The first one is open, yes. You will just get there and they might ask you if you're member and...

R – Ah, so you have to be a member. Does that includes a fee?

X – Yes, it does. Because we need to rent the court plus the shuttles and stuff like that. So you have to have a membership.

R – Okay. And is it expensive?

X – Actually I have no idea. But is not that much expensive compared to other sports such as yoga or boot camp.

R – Maybe 200 per year?

X – Maybe 300 or 400 euros per year, I think.

R – Okay, great. So, what else do you do in the city?

X – I'm not doing other sports, but I can tell you places I go for a drink. Those are nearby my place. I always go around Beukeplain, and I walk around this area, because when is nice and warm I go to the Oosterpark for a BBQ or go to other places for having a drink. This is easy to go because I can go by foot, so is easy.

I also walk around quite often, but I go actually everywhere, so...

R – But is it around your house or...?

X – Mmm last time I walked like around my place, but next time I guess I'll head to the Center, I guess. So is like a circle of 6-7km.

R – Ah, okay. And let's say you will meet with a colleague...

X – I'll probably go the Beukeplain, but there are so many nice places that I don't know.

R – Does most of your friends live in your area as well?

X – No, mostly they live outside of Amsterdam, so when they come to the city, we start at my place and then we go somewhere else. A friend of mine is living in the West, so sometimes we go out around there as well.

Is a bit hard to say where we go because there's always another place, a new spot.

R – Okay, I understand. But let's you have to choose a place. Which are the things you look at when deciding? Maybe the location?

X – Yeah, sure.

R – What else?

X – I always look for new restaurants. So I mostly look at the East because there are so many and so nice. And if I don't find anything attractive I look for other parts.

R – Do you Google or ask friends?

X – I ask colleagues and other friends. That's a good way to find spots. But also there are this sort of hipster blogs where they tell you about nice places to eat. So I look into some sources.

R – Ah, a lot of research. Great. You also mentioned Oosterpark.

X – Yes, I go there a lot. When I was living on the West I was going to Vondelpark, which is a bit touristic but I still like it a lot, because is big, so you always have space, plus there's always a lot of people to see, which is nice.

R – Which kind of people?

X – Lot of people, which is also funny. But also locals hanging around, but also playing with a ball or running.

R – So you mostly go to the parks when is nice weather.

X – Yeah. But when is not that nice and I'm walking I also get into parks for having some green. That's why I like the Flevopark. Is really big, not busy, green and nice to walk.

R – Can I ask you about the people that you find at the parks compared to the ones you can see at the restaurants? Are there differences?

X – Well, there's a difference. At the restaurants there are not so many tourists, but there's also a difference: in restaurants there are really hipster people. You know what I mean?

R – Yes, I think so.

X – There are no so many at the park. In there, you can find mostly students and athletes, but the true is that I won't know if people that I see at the restaurants practice sports or not because they won't go on sporty clothes anyway.

R – That's a good point.

X – But there's much more diversity at the park. There're different kind of people at the park.

R – How do you find that?

X – I really like the combination. I think is quite important, because is always so easy to just hang around with people that's exactly as you. And in the park there's more difference, so that's good for me.

R – How do you think that mixing is not happening at the bar or restaurant?

X – Because is more expensive. When you don't have a high income, there's no reason to go to the restaurant. But the park is for free. And is the same with students. They don't go to restaurants much often because of the money, but they go to the park because is free.

But I think is also about how I choose the restaurants. When I check blogs, there are mostly written by young white girls. And I think most of the people that follow those advises are also young white girls, so that's why I think there's not much diversity between the people that chooses those places.

R – I understand. Are there blogs from non-white girls then?

X – Maybe, but when I search on Google, I don't find them. So I don't know if is because of the search engine or what, but... There are other places where you can eat cheaper, such as Surinamese food, but I don't go there because I don't like the atmosphere. There is mostly like ordering, eating in half an hour and then you're gone. And I like to sit there for the whole evening.

But at those places there is more mix and diversity on people's background that at the places I go.

R – Which you like as you said about the park, but you like to take your time for eating.

X – Yes, exactly. But still, I'd like the social mix, but I choose not to go there because I'd like to spend a longer time with a nicer atmosphere.

R – More gezellig?

X – Yes!

R – Okay, perfect. I'd like to know also about this other environments with people from different countries and backgrounds. Could you mention non-Dutch places?

X – There are a lot. In the West there are many coffee houses where lot of Moroccan and Turkish people meet and play games. They don't serve alcohol but coffee or tea. But there is not one white person, Dutch I mean.

R – Have you ever been in one of those?

X – No. I got the feeling I won't belong to the place, let's say.

R – Not welcomed?

X – I don't know. Maybe yes, but I don't know.

R – And are there really Dutch places?

X – I think the places I go are typically Dutch. But actually what is typically Dutch in the city, is made for tourists. Let's say, *stampot* is really Dutch, but none Dutch person would go out for eating it. You eat that at home.

R – Okay, I follow you.

X – There are also some brown bars that... Actually I don't know if I'd go there. I wouldn't dare, I guess.

R – Like with the Turkish café?

X – Yes, exactly.

R – What does a place has to have for being really Dutch?

X – Probably a woman with a super Amsterdamer accent; on the menu there are *brodje krokettes*; and old men at the bar drinking a beer. Not that special, not that fancy.

R – Do you think they welcome non-Dutch people in there?

X – Mm I'm not sure. You really have to be self-confident for getting into there.

R – How open do you think Dutch are with including others?

X – Is difficult. I think we're not that great. Because I have a really good example, two weeks ago. At the badminton place there are a lot of Asian students, which only speak English. And there was a guy, Chinese, that normally when I go to the court, people join me, within one minute. But he was alone, and nobody was joining him. So I felt awkward, because I would have not join him, but as he was alone, I joined him. And I told a friend of mine: "Should we join him? I feel uncomfortable that he's still alone". And she said "No, no. Yes, I understand your feelings, but I don't want to play with him". And she's a good friend. And I was like... Is such a big difference, because he has different ways of interacting with people. So he wasn't ever going to ask us to play with him. And he sees that when someone goes to the field, somebody is joining him. So he expects that is happening to him too, and if we don't do that, we're not including him at all. So I went there, but before that I also asked more people, and everybody said no. They all had excuses for saying no. So then I went by myself for playing with him because it was super awkward.

In this story I might be the good one, but I think there are many other cases where I can even not realize of what is happening. Because we have so many different cultures... Including means accepting different cultures. People think another way, act another way, because they are used to do that.

So, I think we're not as cool as we say we are. I think people in Amsterdam would say are open to others. We're left voters, so...I think that's something we will say we're proud of our diversity and multiculturalism. But everyone is living apart from each other: parties are split.

I think younger people are better on this.

R – Great. Now I'd like to ask you about Latin Americans. What do you think about Latin Americans within the whole group of immigrants in Amsterdam? What comes to your mind?

X – First thing is a friend of mine that's living in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He has a lot of Brazilian friends, whom where extremely friendly and open. And that's the first thing it comes to my mind when talking about Latin Americans, because is the only thing I know.

I think Latin Americans, because of them, are super friendly and fun. And drink a lot of alcohol?

R – More than Dutch?

(Laughs)

X – Yes! Haha. And we're always busy in here. Latin Americans live the easy life. When you make an appointment, you always have to wait! Haha.

R – And what about in Amsterdam?

X – I don't really know, because I'm not that close to that group, and I think I won't recognize them if I cross Latin Americans on the street. But I think the group is growing.

R – But you think Dutch people see Latin Americans on the same way they see other immigrants or on a different way?

X – I think there's a more positive image of them. I think people think positive about Latin Americans. And I think that's because of their fame of fun, happy country. They're positive and party countries, so people will assume they are bringing that party and happiness to The Netherlands. I have never

heard something negative about Latin Americans in here as I did about others such as Moroccan people or *whatever* group. Is so easy to judge!

Maybe there's also the way they fit into our society. You could be a Dutch guy by the way you look.

R – Me? I'm 1.60.

X – Yes, true. You're short, but still, you're not extremely different. I think that's working too.

R – Not just cultural but physical characteristics?

X – Exactly.

R – Okay. So for finishing, I'd like to ask you ask about the offer of public spaces in the city for people to hang around: parks, squares, terraces, etc. Do you think there are enough places in Amsterdam where you can hang around?

X – Yes, especially in the parks. But if you want to sit on a chair, then is more difficult. If you're okay with sitting on the ground, then is not a big problem. Just bring a blanket or whatever, something to drink and that's it.

R – Isn't it that a problem with the law? I mean, to drink at the park.

X – Yes. Officially you're not allowed to get drunk on public spaces, but that's just a problem if you're super wasted. If we go to the park now and just drink and laugh, that's not a problem at all.

R – Okay, cool. But then I guess the offer changes a lot during the year, right? I mean, in winter...

X – Yes, that's true. When indoor, there are not much free choices. I don't know where you can go without paying and staying warm.

R – Do you think that fee would be a barrier for some people to get there?

X – Yes, sure. Because some people wouldn't like to spend their money on going out. For example, my parents. They have money but they don't want to spend money at the bar for playing a board game. We will meet at their place and drink something there.

R – Would you think this could be a problem in ethnic terms? I mean, not just an immigrant issue but...

X – No, I don't think so. Or maybe yes, I don't know. Is a difficult question. Could be, for sure.

R – Okay, so those where my questions. Thank you very much for your time.

X – You are welcome.

*Lucas*

R – Where do you live?

X – I live pretty close to the end of the Vondelpark, a bit on the west side, let's say. Is in West District. I'm living there for almost 2 years.

R – And before?

X – I used to live in Groningen. I'm from the east of The Netherlands, from a little city, a bit southern than Enschede.

R – Ah, great. What can you tell me about the West District?

X – In this part is quite well educated. Lot of well educated, young people, Dutch as well, live in here. That's what I see. Is not as busy as in the Center, but still lot of things to do.

R – Why did you choose to live in the West?

X – It was more what I could get, not a very big choice. Actually I got an offer from far west, but was not handy at all. Was further the A10 highway.

But I'm really happy about the place I live. There are cool bars and place to eat.

R – Great. What do you do for living?

X – I work at a place close the Arena, and the job I do is in automation. I'm basically a software engineer.

R – And do you have a fixed place where you work or you move around the city?

X – Actually I move around The Netherlands a lot.

R – How do you get to your job?

X – I have a car, but as I cannot park where I live, I leave my car close by here and then bike a bit.

R – Great. What else do you do?

X – I play football.

R – Ah great. Where in?

X – I play with friends. The club is also in the west, but a little bit further to the place I live.

R – Okay. When do you do that?

X – Every Wednesday and Saturday. And the rest of the day, depends a lot on the weather. On the last days I spent a lot at the Vondelpark. My favorite spot inside the park is where the sun stays until later.

R – Nice. And let's say is weekend and you want to do something with your friends. What do you guys do?

X – I think Vondelpark is the place we go. We grab some beers and chill in there. That's the place we go. Otherwise we go to a bar, which is... Well, that really depends. We go wherever we feel like. It's Café Ans, is super cool.

R – And in winter times, where there is colder, what do you do?

X – Then we go home. We go a lot home in winter. We have a quite large living room, plus the location, which is pretty much on the way for everybody. We have a nice spot for people to come and chill, you know?

But yes, in winter we spend a lot of time at home.

R – How do you end up at the bars you go? How do you choose them?

X – Well, it depends. I got a friend that has this goal of getting to know every old bar in the city, so we're moving a lot around. It's about brown bars.

R – Ah, that's cool!

X – So, he has a list, so every time we go drinking we go to a different bar.

R – Haha, sounds cool! But I got a problem. I think I always confuse Irish Bars with Brown Dutch bars. What's the difference? Or are there basically the same?

X – Well, Dutch bars are attended by Dutch people, with a really local accent. And there are this round tall tables, with red table clothes.

R – Ah, okay. I follow you. And is it a choice for you to meet also at the square nearby here or others?

X – Mm no, I don't think so. I never met at a square, I think. I guess I cannot find a reason to meet at a square.

R – Wouldn't it work as a park?

X – No, I don't think so. It feels different.

R – Not that gezellig?

X – No, actually not gezellig!

R – Haha great. Which is the people that goes to the places you normally go?

X – Considering we always want to go to this old bars, there are plenty of old Amsterdamer in there.

R – And would you see some differences between that people and the ones that go to the Vondelpark?

X – Yes. There are a lot of people that doesn't speak Dutch at the park.

R – You mean tourists or immigrants?

X – Well, I don't know, but not immigrants. They could be also exchange students or expats, don't now. But there are not speaking Dutch.

R – Ah, okay. Why did you explicitly said "not immigrants"?

X – Because... Because "immigrant" has a negative load.

R – You mean the word itself or...?

X – Yes, the term.

R – How would you call them?

X – I don't know, maybe foreign.

R – Ah, okay. Perfect. So where do you think they go when they have some free time? Where do you see them?

X – Vondelpark for sure. But besides that, I have no clue. But at the park, everybody is chilling there.

R – Tell me then about Dutch places. Which places you would say are Dutch spots?

X – I already mentioned the brown bars, which are super Dutch places. There are also this pool bars what I see them pretty Dutch.



The thing is I live since 2 years in Amsterdam and I listen mostly always other languages. I don't really think anymore whether if people speaks Dutch or other language. Because everywhere you go there is somebody speaking English or another language. Even at the football club I go there is people speaking English.

R – Where are they from?

X – I forgot, sorry. Maybe Turkey or... Yeah. But I'm not sure if we... There are probably Dutch places but I don't know about the spaces themselves.

R – Do you think you guys are losing your spaces?

X – No, not at all. I think there are a lot of cool people sharing spaces now.

R – And on the other side, are other let's say "Non-Dutch" places in the sense of the amount of foreign in relation with the amount of locals?

X – I was playing nearby Bijlmer Arena, and there were mostly black people.

R – Ah, okay. Was that your first time between people mostly from minorities?

X – No, there's always like that in there.

R – Ah, cool. And how is the interaction between Dutch and others?

X – I think is cool.

R – You guys play together or against each other?

X – No, together.

R – Do you have a 3<sup>rd</sup> time as well?

X – Not last time, but could have been.

R – And within foreign, what do you think about Latin Americans?

X – Well, I like Latin American people. But I don't really see them at all. I haven't talked much to a Latin American. I don't think a lot of Latin American people are living here, but I'm not sure. Maybe I didn't notice.

R – Okay. And related to the previous, what do you think Dutch people think about Latin American?

X – Mmm I don't really know. Maybe is just my personal opinion, but Dutch people think they have a quite strong temperament: they are easily mad, I think. But they are also fun and energetic.

R – And compared with other groups of foreign?

X – I think Turkish people are more like shy a bit, or they mostly hide what they think. And I think that is a difference with Latin Americans, which always say what they think. And Arabs or Middle-East people, I don't really know them. And American people, which are my least favorite ones. I think they are fake. I think they never mean what they say, which really irritates me. Why do you say something that you don't think?

R – I understand what you mean. But in general, how do you think Amsterdamer are related to immigrants?

X – Mmmm... There is a bit of everything. I think is a really open city for immigrants if your lifestyle goes with the city.

R – How is that?

X – If you try to blend with Dutch people, you're fine. I think everybody will like you. If you try to create a gap between Dutch people and your own community, I guess you will irritate Dutch people.

R – How does that blending would go with keeping their own identities? Would that be a conflict?

X – No, not at all. Mmm... Okay, that's a hard question. No, I don't think blending in has something to do with rules. Is more about how you act with other people. I think if you respect other people at all, that's enough.

Anyway, it would be a problem if let's say Saudi Arabian people want to suppress women as they do it back home that would be a conflict. And therefore I think they cannot belong to this society.

Anyway, what is also a problem is people that, right after an argue with a foreign person, they say this stupid "go back to your country!"

R – Do you think that's a regular behavior or response to foreign people in the city?

X – No, I don't think so. Or at least, I hope not. I'm proud of Amsterdam's open mind. But there are lot of areas where lot of foreigners are living. It seems there are living there in their own community.

R – Have you ever been there?

X – Yes.

R – But for chilling or so?

X – No, I went there just for picking up a colleague. I felt unsafe, but actually there was not a clear reason for that. I talked about it with my friends and actually we couldn't find a reason for feeling scared in there.

R – Which where those elements you saw in there that might have had make you feel in danger?

X – There were a lot of old cars with broken windows, and... It was dark, really dark. But still... There where this flats, massive blocks...

R – Okay, I see. Do you think there is an integration between Moroccan, Turkish and other immigrants with natives?

X – Yes, I think there is. But maybe is more in well educated people groups. For instance, there are some Spanish guys on my football team. And they join quite often for having a beer or playing football. They integrate, but they look for it. If you invite them to come over, they always join. So, there is integration.

R – Okay, cool. And not just about integration but interaction: let's say you're at a bar by yourself and next to you there's a table with some people. How do you think interaction would be between those tables?

X – No, won't happen. Dutch people don't do that.

R – Not even among them.

X – No. If we're Dutch and next table as well, we won't speak.

R – So it has anything to do with ethnic background.

X – No, absolutely no.

R – So, finishing with the interview, I'd like to ask you if you're satisfied with the offer of public spaces in Amsterdam.

X – I cannot think of anything I could change at the moment. But that could be also because it's summer and the city is amazing as is now. But maybe in winter would be different. But I'm not sure what.

R – Understand. That's interesting. And now related to money, do you think Amsterdam is a hard place to go out if you don't have much money?

X – Yes, absolutely. But I don't think that is related with your ethnic background but with your economic possibilities. Let's say you belong a group where everybody has money but you, you might get into troubles because they would go to places... Let's say you could get into troubles.

Because they will do something like this or that, and in Amsterdam everything costs money.

R – So, you don't think there's no link between being immigrant and having less money?

X – No, I don't think so. If that is proven, then integration will be harder, but never impossible.

R – Great. Those were my questions. Thanks a lot!

X – Cheers!

*Nico*

Researcher (R) – Can we start with a little introduction?

Respondent (X) – Okay. My name is Neik, I'm 20 and living in Amsterdam since a bit more than three months. Before, I lived abroad in Slovenia for 6 months, and the rest of my life I lived in Alkmaar. I'm studying Human Geography in Utrecht.

R – And are you working?

X – I do an internship in Den Haag, which is also since 4 months ago right now.

R – Was Amsterdam before Alkmaar?

X – Yes, with my parents.

R – Perfect. And now we are meeting at the UvA.

X – Yes. Because I live nearby and I think is a great place for studying, and also thought was a good place for this interview.

R – Sure. So, where do you live? Maybe you can show me that on Google Maps.

X – Sure.

*(Opens Google Maps).*

X – I live here, next to the *Spaklerweg* Station.

R – Ah, okay. Perfect.

X – It's *Over Amstel* the name of the neighborhood.

R – Great. So, I'd like to ask you: where do you move around in the city?

X – Usually a lot of places, because I like to bike. There's a little park close to my house. You can swim in there, is super nice.

R – What's the name of that park?

X – Amsterdam Amstel Park.

R – Perfect. What else?

X – We also go to Vondelpark. I usually go to the beginning of the park, closer to the center.

R – Okay. Why on that part of the park?

X – Actually I don't know.

R – Fair enough.

X – I sometimes go to one of this islands because my friends live there and we hang out quite often in that area.

I also have a racing bike, so I go to Amsterdam North once every two weeks.

R – Is it a specific race track?

X – No, is more like a route, which ends up much further.

But sometimes we go for some drinks at Javastraat.

R – You use to go there?

X – Yeah.

R – Okay, cool.

X – What else?

R – Let's say you have a free afternoon and no obligations, what do you do then?

X – Just chilling at my own place probably. I'm not at home very often, because I'm busy with lot of things. So, when there's free time...

R – Okay. Now I'd like to ask you why do you chose those places. Let's start with the last one: Javastraat. What is in there?

X – Nice bars; friends of mine are living nearby. I like also the atmosphere around, and prices are okay.

R – How's the atmosphere?

X – It is a really diverse part of Amsterdam. East is quite diverse, but on Javastraat you have many shops from all over the world. There are also nice bars which are not very common. All of them have something special.

R – Cool. And you go there with friends from Uni?

X – Yes, which I know from Amsterdam. Also with friends from Alkmaar we go there. In the East there are a lot of nice bars.

R – Great. And you also selected that little park where you can swim.

X – Yes. Because is nearby the place I live. It is a cool place to chill there.

R – Is that a popular place or more like a hidden spot?

X – When the weather is nice is a popular place. When is not, is just a field of grass that you walk through. But there's water at the back so you can swim if is warm.

R – And Vondelpark?

X – It is the most popular place for hanging out with friends. You go there for having a drink, mostly in the afternoon. I have never been there when is dark. Is a nice place, the biggest park in Amsterdam.

R – Why wouldn't you go later?

X – Because when is dark, I think the atmosphere is not that nice *per se*. I think there are streetlights all over the park but... I don't know. I don't hang out there when is dark.

R – Okay. You were also mentioning the diversity and prices as a positive thing of Javastraat.

X – Yes.

R – Also the swimming possibility at the park.

X – Yes.

R – What about prices?

X – I think there is a wide range of beer prices in Amsterdam.

R – Yes?

X – Yeah. When is 3 euros or less, I'm willing to pay. When is more, for a normal beer, I think it doesn't worth it. Of course there are some fancy places where you pay 3 or more, but I don't go there. Those are not my places.

R – Are your friends cool with the same price standards, let's say?

X – Yes, sure. We're all students, so is important to not spend lot of your money on beer and those stuffs.

R – Understand. Besides money, you mentioned something about the weather.

X – Yes.

R – What is going on during winter?

X – We're more inside. I think you drink at your friends more often, and you barely go to a park.

R – Understand. And which people can you find every time you go to this places you mentioned?

X – All depends on the location, I think. Vondelpark is really diverse. You can find any kind of people. There are multiple entrances: north, south, east, west. You can enter this park from any places. Other parks are also accessible but I think are mostly used by people that lives around the park.

At the park near my home there's usually people that lives there. They have a higher socio-economic position. Where I live is cheap, but that's not majority. The rest live in super expensive apartments and they hang around there. That makes a quite exclusive audience, let's say.

In the bars is quite diverse, but... There are also internationals over there, but... I don't know actually. There are internationals but not in every bar.

R – You mean tourists?

X – No, I'd say more international students which live in the East area.

R – Ah, okay. As you lived in Slovenia, I'd like to ask you how were those public spaces in there where you spent your free times. Also you can tell me how was in Alkmaar.

X – In Alkmaar let's say it was quite similar to Amsterdam, but of course smaller. We also have some canals... But is cheaper. Everything is cheaper in Amsterdam. That's the big difference.

And in Slovenia is much, much, much cheaper. You pay a euro for a beer, liter one. But my exchange it was in Maribor, and we used to hang out always at the same park. Because it was only a big park, which was really near the place we lived. We were 250 international students in total, so we were hanging out with groups of 50 people sometimes.

R – How was the weather there?

X – Better than in The Netherlands. I was wearing shorts since March until July. The weather was really good, so that makes you... That increases the chances of being outdoors.

R – Was the city little or big?

X – Was really little. The center was quite small. But having so many Erasmus students, was really nice because it was a lot of people to meet.

R – I understand. Now I want to get back to Amsterdam. Which are the really Dutch places in the city?

X – Mm... According to my point of view, some people from Amsterdam feel superior to everything is not from Amsterdam. That also includes me. There are some cafés and bars, but usually this people are around 50-60 years old.

There are some places over here, but I don't go. It's strange, but I think is the same reason for why you don't come into a bar when you're young and there are just old people inside. I think something prevent you to enter in those places.

R – Because of what?

X – Because they are old and not interested on you to be there, I think. Is different to approach this people than people from your age.

A totally different thing is that in the UvA, there's too much homogeneity in terms of ethnic groups. There's always this critique. Now they are working on making it more diverse, but... There's always this critique on the UvA.

R – And what about Amsterdam as a whole?

X – That's different. The city is much more diverse. And there are a lot of internationals accessing to good jobs, earning good money. There's this Medicine Agency that will set in Amsterdam, which will

bring more than thousand people plus families. And that's more internationals with good money and then the wheel keeps rolling.

R – I understand. You said most of the internationals have good jobs. Is that also for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants from all around the world?

X – No, true. That's different. We have mass immigration from, for example, Turkey and Morocco. And this people are not that good in terms of economic positions. And actually, for this people Amsterdam is not the best city because there is very much segregation. Segregation is a hard topic because I'm not an expert on how to measure it, but I can tell you there are suburban areas that, as a white person, I don't go there that often.

R – You don't go because you're not attracted by the area? Or because you might feel threatened?

X – I'm not threatened. Actually I went to, for example, the Bijlmer, which is not that far. You can get easily there from the Center. But I don't go there usually, only when you have to.

I think I have been at every neighborhood in Amsterdam because I'm a geographer and I want to know how's the whole city, but I think there are many people from this city that have never been in a quarter of whole neighborhoods of the city. I think the Center is quite important, but there's segregation. I think you should really include this on your thesis.

R – Okay, I probably will. I want to also ask you about the Latin American population in Amsterdam.

X – I have no idea, actually. I have a Peruvian friend, born in here but now living in Argentina. And actually that's the only Latin American I know.

R – What do you think Dutch people think when they hear the words "Latin America"?

X – I think nobody has a problem with Latin Americans. But I got the feeling there are not so many. Maybe a 0.5% of the whole population? How many are they?

R – Actually is almost 2% considering 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation?

X – Really?

R – Yes.

X – That's quite a lot, actually.

R – Yeah, there are quite a few. But the first thing you said about Latin America it was "nobody has a problem with Latin Americans". Why not?

X – First of all, because you don't see them that often.

R – I understand. How is that compared with other minorities?

X – I can tell you, but I don't want to generalize. Anyway, lot of people has problems with Moroccan people, because the stereotype of Moroccan people is a problematic, robber person. Is a stereotype that, I think is decreasing. Luckily. But I have no problem with anybody.

I think is also because of physical characteristics. You might not notice a person with American or Latin American background when walking on the streets as you could do with Asian or African people maybe. Of course there are exceptions.

R – I understand. How do you think Dutch people is in terms of integration with foreign people?

X – Is hard to talk about Dutch people as a whole, but I think, as I started saying, there is a slight feeling of superiority. But besides that, I think is changing a bit. For instance, there are lot of people taking language courses, but that's volunteering. For instance, my mother is teaching Dutch to a woman from Iran. But not much people are wheeling to teach. I went with her two or three times, and most of the volunteers are woman older than 40 and with a background in education or something like that. That's the thing.

R – Why do you think that's the case?

X – Because... No clue. I guess is because Dutch people are quite entrepreneurial, always busy. My mom asked me to go there every week, but I did not because I'm super busy with other things.

Is not that those volunteers don't do anything. Actually they are also busy with other things. Maybe is some... Maybe they work a little less than other people?

R – Maybe could be also another priorities ranking?

X – Yes, that's true. Maybe they prioritize that over other things. It could be. You did not put those words in my mouth because actually that's the case. My mother does a lot about immigration, also refugees. They teach a lot of Dutch and other stuffs. They are really improving.

This are the activities that I would say "if I have time, I would do it". I can say that, but... Many people would say this, but they won't do it.

R – I understand. Going back to the question about the issue of public spaces...

X – Bring it on.

R – I want to know about Amsterdam public spaces, but considering consumption and non-consumption spaces in the city. By that, I mean the places you need to pay for staying (bars, terraces, etc.) and the ones you don't (parks, squares, etc.). How do you think the offer of public spaces is in Amsterdam?

X – You mean numbers?

R – No, just your opinion, your view.

X – Ah. I think is good, but could be more green, more parks. But that's how always has been. There are not many parks in the inner center. You need to walk 2-3 kilometers from the Central Station to find the first one. But for me is enough.

R – Why do you specifically mention parks?

X – Because parks are places where everybody can meet everybody. They are accessible for everybody, they are free and always open, or almost.

R – Is that an added value for you?

X – Yes, definitely!

R – My next question is quite related to that: Do you think money could be a significant barrier for going to certain places in the city? Was that a problem for you?

X – Not really. But I think I'm a middle-class guy. I have enough money to live, pay rent, eat well and practice sports, and my friends are about the same.



R – Considering what you said before about lack of integration between some groups and...

X – It's not lack of integration; is about segregation in neighborhoods where some groups are disproportionately big.

R – True that.

X – But true. Maybe some of this groups might face some problems in terms of money for going out as well. And there are also some clubs where bouncers do not allow people from certain ethnic backgrounds to get in.

R – Is it?

X – Yes, it is.

R – Oh, okay... My last question is related to spaces of integration. Are there spots where you can...?

X – Actually, where I live nowadays there's a restaurant called "A beautiful mess", which is run by refugees that live there and nearby. There are also spaces where you can learn Dutch. Yeah, those are spaces of integration, but maybe there are mostly for refugees coming over. I think in 2015 there was a big flow of refugees coming to The Netherlands. I think we did quite a good job by giving them a job, a place to live, food and opportunities to integrate. I think.

R – Okay, I see. But related to spots in the city, are places for interaction between minorities and Dutch people?

X – Yes, there is interaction but I think is limited. For example, this restaurant I told you has 15 employees and 6 or 7 Dutch volunteers. And there are a lot of people supporting the place by going there for eating.

R – That's good. Still, isn't that more charity or social service than integration?

X – Yes, is about charity. Some people are going there just to show they help because they have a good heart.

R – I understand.

X – Not all, but some.

R – Sure. Those were all my questions, so thank you very much for your time.

X – No problem.

*Carol*

*(Conversation was originally in Spanish, but directly transcript in English by the author)*

R – So, here we go. Can I ask you to introduce yourself?

X – I'm Chantal, 20 years old, and I'm in The Netherlands since 7 years. I'm studying and here at Casa Migrante I'm doing my internship.

R – What are you studying?

X – I'm studying Social Work in Amsterdam, about to finish.

R – Where are you from?

X – I'm from Colombia but when I was 1 I moved to Spain, so I was raised there.

R – Okay. And you were saying that at the moment you're living in...?

X - Purmerend, which is a little town located 20 minutes from Amsterdam Central.

R – Do you live by your own or...?

X – No, with my mother and my brother.

R – Great. But you're studying here so that's why you spend in this city most of your time?

X – Yes. I study and work here, but also when I meet with friends is always here, because where I live is just too little, and people goes just for sleeping. When you're a kid you are going to school there but when you grow up a bit then you already come to Amsterdam.

R – Okay, so is been a while since you spend your time in here.

X – Yes.

R – Good. And in Amsterdam, which are the areas you usually move around?

X – Center, mostly Leidseplein, the commercial streets, and... Yeah, but also Rembrandtplain, because is open until later.

R – How did you know those places?

X – Because of friends, when we agreed to go out. Some of them used to check for some places, and also because we like to know different places. And in the afternoon we like to walk around, also for knowing new places.

R – Are those friends mostly from...?

X – University, but also old colleagues from school, from Purmerend.

R – Okay. Also they come here to Amsterdam.

X – Yes, most of them.

R – Are there mostly Dutch or...?

X – We are three Latin girls, two Dutch guys and a Dutch girl.

R – Ah, a mix of everything. Okay, and what do you do when you have free time?

X – Pff, free time is not too much nowadays.

*(Laugh)*

X – Well, depends on what do I want to do. Maybe when I feel like staying at home or if is about meeting with friends we can have a look around, go for some drinks or to do something fun. If we have time we plan something, and if is nice weather we go to the beach or so. And during the evening we go for some drinks.

R – So mostly you do the same activities during the year but the beach I guess.

X – Yes. In The Netherlands is not a good weather most of the time, so we go outside when there is nice weather. And if is not, we stay inside, or we meet at some friend, or go to a bar...

R – How often do you meet at home?

X – I think most of the times we meet at some friend's is when we do something of a sudden, without planning.

R – More spontaneous?

X – Exactly. When we go to the bar we plan it: "Let's meet *this* day at *this* time". During working days we mostly stay at our places.

R – Great. Do you see any differences between the ways you spent your free time when living in Spain than the way you do it here?

X – I think the biggest change was... When in Spain, we were mostly meeting in the streets. You were going to the street, hanging around there and that was it. In here is not that easy because the weather doesn't help too much for it. You cannot just go out and meet at the square and that's it, as we used to do in Spain, where everybody from the neighborhood got out and we sat and chatted there for long and that was it. Here you cannot do that. [You cannot go to...] The square, the park or whatever.

R – Here you cannot do it because of...

X – The weather. You cannot sit on the street because here most of the time is raining, or is cold or even snowing. So is not that easy. Then you need to go to a certain place. You must arrange to meet at a certain place.

R – And that...

X – And that's a big difference. In Spain you just got out to the street and you were doing something. Here you must arrange... Arrange to meet at somebody else's place or at another place; it was without talking, without arranging anything, you were just going outside.

R – And in here is more...

X – In here is more about the plan, where are you going, what are you doing...

R – And did you got a bit Dutch on that sense?

X – Yes, I had to.

*(Laughs)*

R – And what you told me about just going out and meeting in the streets, how do you think that affects the people you meet with?

X – You meet more people in the street, people that you didn't know yet. Because in the square there are different kind of people and in here you meet with a specific group, and in here might be just if a friend that you're meeting with brings another person. So is not that easy in here that you meet random people in the street and you start a conversation. I think in Spain there is much more communication between people and not just groups of friends, you can talk to everybody [in Spain].

R – And what do you think about it?

X – I liked much more in Spain because it was much easier to start a conversation with anybody in the street. They are much more open than in here.

R – Okay... And from the economic side, do you think that could be a problem to meet in terraces and not in the square?

X – Sure. If you want to meet you must pay. If you meet at a friend's you still buy something but less, but in here meeting with friends is equal to spend money.

R – Was that a problem for you at some occasions that you...?

X – Not to me because I don't have economic problems, I always have had a job. Well, that's another difference: here you work since you're young. When you're 14 or 15 you already have a job, so then you can pay for your things. That's not in Spain. There you don't work since young, so if you want money, you must ask to your parents for it.

R – And there may come the "no".

X – Exactly!

(Laughs)

X – In here I have more freedom, that's true. As is my money, I don't need to ask for permission. When you need to ask for it, then you need a permission. As I have money, if I want to do something, I just do it.

R – Understand. Now the exercise I'd like to do with you is to show you a map where you can pin the places you normally go, yes?

*(Opens Google Maps)*

X – Let me see... Here is Hart Amsterdam, where we normally spend some time. Here at this place is the shopping street, where we use to spend some time; I like to go shopping.

R – Okay...

X – And I don't know where Leidseplein is, but... Here it is.

R – Which other places?

X – Mmm... Yeah, the shopping street, where there are all the shops. Yes, and Rembrandtplein because is open until later, as I told you.

R – Yeah, true.

X – And then we can go to other places if we play cards, or videogames or so...

R – So making a little summary about the places you like to go: shopping places, Leidseplein...

X – Yeah, there are bars and restaurants. And as normally we come over to spend the whole day, we go there for eating. And there is open until midnight or so, and Rembrandtplein until 5, so you stay at Leidseplein for eating and having some drinks, and when is closing then you go to Rembrandtplein.

R – And if you have a free afternoon?

X – Normally the shopping streets, where there are some restaurants or so. So you can have a look on the shops and then eating something.

R – And for example... squares or parks on more a Spanish style as you were saying...?

X – No, no.

R – Okay. In this places, how you think is the people that normally go?

X – I'd say in Leidseplein goes people from 20 to 35.

R – Okay. And ethnic groups or...?

X – No, that's for everybody, not a special groups.

R – And socioeconomic groups?

X – I'd say mid-high or mid. Well, Amsterdam is expensive for going out. If you're from low-class is not that easy to go to a bar like those ones. So you need some money for going out a bit often.

R – Would that be a problem for integration then?

X – Not between different ethnic groups. I don't think that is a problem.

R – Good. Do you think are Latin places in Amsterdam?

X – Yes, there are several.

R – Do you go often?

X – Not really, because there are mostly for older people. Let's say for my Mom's age. You have *Punto Latino*, you have *La viejoteca*. People from 30 to 50-60 use to go there. People that came here long time ago, that already have their families and so. And there you see mostly old people, not young like 20 years old or so.

R – So you haven't been there at all?

X – Well, I went some times, but accompanying, not because it was my choice.

R – Okay. How would you describe this places? What does a places need to have for been Latin American?

X – Latin American music and place to dance, which is what Latin people like. Dancing and music is what they like for the most.

R – And in the other side, are there Dutch places?

X – A *cruff*. It's a place with music that you sit for drinking and talking. Maybe later in the evening there can be some people dancing a bit, but... Is a *cruff*, so dancing is not included in the offer.

R – Haha, I understand. And in the afternoons, for example? Are there other places as you identified in the evenings?

X – Mmm, no. In the afternoons you just go for eating or to the terraces if there's good weather. Because people here eats in the afternoon, at 7 or 8 as late. 6 is normal in here for having dinner.

R – Which is your opinion about Dutch's attitude for meeting with other ethnic groups?

X – I think they don't have a problem, mostly in Amsterdam where there are so many cultures together. That's normality. Is normal to find not just Latin but people from other nationalities. At every bar or *cruff*, doesn't matter where you go. Lot of people like Latin, the Latin places and their vibes.

R – Is there a difference on the way they might see places from other immigrant groups?

X – Yes, I think so.

R – Good. Why then?

X – Because Latin are open. There are also more open than Dutch.

R – Do you think they mix?

X – Yes, without problem.

R – Maybe is easier for younger?

X – Mostly. Probably for Dutch people at their seventies is more difficult. There are some places where people is not used to foreign people at all.

R – So those were my questions. Thank you for your time.

X – No problem.

### *Francisco*

*(Conversation was originally in Spanish, but directly transcript in English by the author)*

R – Thanks Fernando for your time. Since when are you in here?

X – No problem. It has been already 18 years old in here. I came for love when I met a girl back then in Peru.

R – Is she Dutch?

X – Yes, she was Dutch. And nowadays I'm in another relationship, but also with a Dutch woman.

Different than other people that may come to the Netherlands for economic proposes or looking for better life opportunities, I was good in there. I was working well in the touristic industry. When I was 19 I was already a hiking and rafting instructor. And I met her because she was a tour guide for a Dutch Company.

We met each other and started a relationship in Peru, but due to some familiar issues, she needed to come back to The Netherlands and I came with her. Later on we broke up, but I decided to stay here anyway, because at that moment I already had kids, and everything was different then, because I knew the only way to enjoy them it was staying in The Netherlands.

First it was just 3 years!

(Laughs)

R – What do you do in here?

X – I work on tourism. I bring groups from Latin America to Amsterdam, but also I take groups of Dutch people to Peru. Since a couple of years I came back to this industry after doing other things.

R – Ah, okay. And where do you live?

X – I live half my time nearby Zwolle, and my couple lives in Amsterdam.

R – Ah, great. Well, my work is related to public spaces in the city, and how people could meet in them. So, that is why I'm interviewing Dutch and Latin American inhabitants of Amsterdam for knowing how they spend their free time and how.

X – Great.

R – So, where does she lives?

X – Is nearby Sloterdijk Station. Is in the Western District. She bought it long time ago when it was a poor neighborhood, but now, as the city grew a lot, what was a suburb is now a spot in the center of the city.

R – Ah, great then! And where do you work? Where is your office?

X – It depends, but is mostly a remote work, so I can do that from home. Because is sending e-mails and arranging everything for the groups will go to Peru or come from there.

But when I meet with people, I do it near by the Dam or also at the Rijksmuseum.

R – Nice spots! And what do you do besides working?

X – I play football.

R – How often?

X – Now I don't play anymore because every Sunday were games and that was not fair for my kids, plus training sessions.

R – Okay.

X – But now I'm the coach of a team that is competing at the VK, an international tournament at De Bijlmer, nearby the Amsterdam Arena.

And sometimes when I feel like walking I go to the Amsterdamse Bos as well. I take the car and I get out of the city, even though is nearby.

R – Great. And let's say you have a free time when in the city, what do you do? Would you also consider to go to a park or a terrace?

X – Sometimes, if I need to study something related to the tours or reading, I might go to the terrace. Or can be also at a Restaurant, bar or café.

But also I got used to picnic as Dutch people does. That is nice as well!

R – Do you have favorite spots?

X – Yes, plenty!

R – For instance?

X – When I like to have a quiet moment, I go to the café at the garden of Rijksmuseum.

R – Nice! Which others?

X – There is also a tea room in the middle of the Vondelpark I also like!

R – Ah, cool.

X – I also dance Salsa, at a place called Volta.

R – Ah, how often?

X – Is once per month.

R – Nice. And terraces?

X – I like one in the South/West part of the city. Terraces are super Dutch places, by the way.

(Laughs)

R – Why so?

X – I think is because of the lack of sun they have during the whole year. When the sun is out, they have to be there. Once I was at my former couple house. I was inside the house watching TV and suddenly they started calling me and shouting from the backyard. I run out, thinking something had happened, so I asked them what was the problem. And they said: "Nothing. We were just calling you because the sun was shining!".

(Laughs)

But yes, in here they will get crazy when the sun is there because it doesn't happen that often as in our countries.

For instance, today is not that cold or warm, but there is no sun. So Dutch people won't be at the terraces too much when is cloudy. But anyway, that's the place where they can enjoy to meet with friends, the *gezelligheid*.

R – Ah, understand.

X – On the other side, we don't have to go to a terrace for meeting with friends. You can be at your place, and meet with them in there. Maybe if is warm but not that much, you can take out some chairs, put some music and spend your time at the street. And that's a difference with them. For us, every place is good for spending time with friends.

R – And why do you think that is for?

X – I don't know. I would guess is related with the weather and how we learn to enjoy it and live with it. For them is more like a special event, and for us is the everyday situation.

We live outside our houses, and from the street is where we learn for the most.

R – Is it?

X – I think so.

R – Why? What do you learn there?

X – I think the street is where real life happens. At home they teach you the theoretical part, but on the street is where you practice that all.

R – And do you think they lack of that "street knowledge"?



X – Not all of them, but I do think there are a lot of Dutch people, born and raised here, that might be a bit naïve if compared with Latin Americans. And that's not a critique, because it's simply what they needed or not for surviving.

But again, not because they are stupid, it's because they are raised on another way and other needs.

R – I understand. Now I'd like to ask you the same question that I asked you about your free time in Amsterdam, but now in Peru.

X – I was maybe a weird guy because I loved to go hiking and rafting at the river and mountains. Every time it was a break, I was leaving the city.

R – Ah, perfect.

X – And when it was not that, we played a lot of football on the street or just hung around the whole day.

But of course, now every time I'm going there I'm BBQing or meeting with family and friends a lot. Family is really important in there, of course.

But I think the biggest difference is that in Peru, social activities are mostly at the street or in your place. In here, it is at home, has to be at the garden when the weather is nice, and when you meet with friends, it's at the bar, of course with a terrace.

R – Understand. Considering you're in here since a while, maybe you can compare how it is to spend free time in this country but when you meet with Dutch or Latin people.

X – In here it is quieter. Meetings like birthdays are with not so loud music (if there is music), and everybody is with their coffees. In Latin America, music has to be loud, and you dance.

Once it was this birthday that I turned the volume up and invited people to dance a bit, and remember my former couple came to me and ask me to put it down again!

(Laughs)

But the joking part is a big difference. We are much more joking than them. At our place we all had our nicknames, and of course there were all related with defects. We do a lot of this thing of putting somebody on the spot and make fun of him for ages! And in here my girlfriend ask me "Why do you do that? He's annoyed!" And I told her "Exactly because of that!"

(Laughs).

R – And how is the interaction in here at public spaces, let's say with people sitting at the next table?

X – I'd say, if we speak the same language and we are by coincidence at the same bar or so, we will probably hug or so and start a conversation as if we were best friends. In here, if I'm sitting here and there is a Dutch person for 3 hours and nobody else at the bar, he might not talk to me at all. There are open people but not that impulsive. Dutch people need much more time for breaking the distance between people. They are nice and friendly, but there is a lot of people that says Dutch are boring. And I don't think so. We are on this way, friendly and warm, and we might think they are boring. But they are not. They are just different.

When I go dancing salsa is a good example. Sometimes when I get there, I can take a Cuban girl to dance and we hold each other tight, close, and we dance, have fun but that's it. Every time I take a Dutch girl, she stops me every time I want to get close because she prefers distance, even with dancing

salsa. It happened at least 10 times that also when we dance they say “just in case, I’m not interested in anything else”, and I’m not either. But they link physical proximity and contact with other intimate intentions rather than just a friendly dance. I think it is because, as they say, Dutch guys want something else than dancing if they make physical contact as when dancing.

But it is hard to make friends in here. I have tried a lot, and they are honest and good people. But most of the times you try to meet, the answer is the same: “I cannot, I’m busy”. And it is hard, but...

R – What would the Peruvian guy say in that case?

X – I think we all have to work, we have stuffs to do, that’s normal. But sometimes you can be a bit more spontaneous, or even flexible to change your schedule, which is almost impossible for majority of Dutch people. “Let me see my agenda: week 32 at 7pm”, and that’s hard!

(Laughs)

Actually it is not a bad thing at all, but it is more difficult to meet them. I think anyway most of them may have free time, but maybe it is a time they want to spend by themselves.

R – Okay, I understand. I’d like to ask you about Dutch people openness to immigrants. How do you see them?

X – I have a clear opinion about that: depends a lot on where you are from. If you’re from Morocco, they might look at you a bit weird sometimes. But every time they ask me and I say I’m Peruvian, they just “Oh! Peru, that’s great!” That means there’s a huge difference between how they see us and how they see an African or some Asians. Because they associate Latin with fun and happy people.

R – So they have a positive opinion about Latin Americans, would you say?

X – Yes, for sure. There’s plenty of people that loves Latin culture. They like also Mediterranean culture, and as we have Italian or Spanish roots, they also like us on that way. If you make a Salsa Party, it is probably going to be packed with people. They find some of our situations and events as *gezellig*.

Comparing to Arabs, Africans or Asians, we are seen differently. But I think it is because they forget we have a western culture. For example, about music, we have grown up listening to the same international artists, such as The Carpenters, The Beatles or The Rolling Stones. Of course, we have some *valse*s while they listen *Andrea Haas*, but we have a lot of common points!

Of course we have differences on some traditions or behaviors, but it is not as different as might be when comparing with Turkish or Africans.

R – I understand. I follow you. And going back to Amsterdam, which places do you consider to be Latin?

X – There are not.

R – What about this salsa place you go to?

X – There are Latin events, but not Latin places. We are all spread along the city. There are celebrations of Latin culture, such as salsa or *bachata* clubs or Mexican restaurants, but I couldn’t say they are Latin places.

There is this place called “*El Duende*”, where every month they organize *flamenco* evenings, but there are the same amount of Dutch as Latin, if not more. So, there are no predominantly Latin places in

the city. We don't need spots or places just for Latin people for us to have our places because I think we are more integrated.

It's also about conflicts. I tell my Dutch kids I'm not Dutch even though I have the passport, that I have to ask for it because otherwise I was obligated to leave and therefore not seeing my kids again. But I don't feel Dutch at all.

R – But you don't have Peruvian citizen anymore?

X – Yes, they obligated me to do so. But besides that, I think I'm integrated anyway. And I'm thankful to the country for giving my kids a safe place to live.

R – I understand. Now I'd like to go to the last block of the interview, a sort of summary of what we were talking before. What do you think about the offer of public spaces in Amsterdam?

X – First of all, and opposite than what happens at our places, is the plan. In here, there's nothing going to be done without planning.

R – Mhm...

X – In here, urban planning is basic for whatever they do. And that helps a lot! In Lima, there are also spaces, but mostly arranged by neighborhoods according to the place there is available. In here, they will think about those spaces before they start building anything in the area, I think. But also cities try to make places nice for inviting people to go.

R – And related to consumption spaces, which are public spaces where you need to consume for staying, as this café where we are now...

X – Ah, this city is absolutely consumerist. Absolutely! You have to pay for everything! Anyway, is well organized, and that makes everything easier anyway. Everything is money related in here: Red light district, coffee shops and whatever you can imagine. "I let you do it, because is convenient for me", that's what they do.

R – Would you think that consumption required for everything might be a problem for people to meet at those places?

X – No, because on the other hand, the government works hard for giving opportunities for everybody. And might be an expensive bar over here, but they will try to supply a nice park without paying, even if is further. So, there is place for everything.

R – Wouldn't that lead to a segregation between those who can pay for that bar and those who cannot?

X – That is true, that is probably the case. But here, since kids, Dutch people learn how to manage their money. They learn to spend but also to save and plan for achieving whatever you want. And that is different to our places, where sometimes you cannot even save monthly.

But even if people have same money, they will go to different places because is also matter of tastes. I have many Latin friends whom have money, but they will prefer to go to the park for some beers rather than going to the bar where they need to wear a tie.

R – I understand. That is a good point. That was my last question, so thank you very much for your time.

X – You're welcome.

*Irene y Laura*

*(Collective interview with both the respondents. Conversation was originally in Spanish, but directly transcript in English by the author).*

R – What brings you girls here?

X – We're doing a Master degree on education for development policies. It's an Erasmus Mundus program.

R – Great. And did you girls know each other in Colombia or here?

X – We met at the master.

R – Great. Where do you live?

Y – We both live in the East side.

R – Perfect. I'd like to know, with Google map's help, where do you move around.

*(Shows Google maps and start pinning places).*

X – We live here and here is where we take classes, at UvA Roeterseiland.

R – Do you always have classes here? How far is it from your places?

X – 15 minutes.

Y – From my house is 20 because I live in an island, here *(Pins at the map)*.

R – Great. What else do you do in the city?

Y – I also swim.

R – How often?

Y – Normally twice a week, but depends on how much busy I'm at the University.

R – Sure. And you?

X – When I meet with friends we mostly go to the Center, for eating or so. But I mostly move around the East. That's something cool about Amsterdam: every area has its places for having a drink, eating or for a coffee. Which is much better than going to the center. We have some friends living in the Jourdan, and there's less crowd, but mostly in the crowd.

Y – I love living in the East and moving here. Because there we don't have tourists but is not that long to get to this crowded area where the Uni is.

R – Are there many tourists here?

Y – Yes, when you get to the Center.

R – Not in this area?

X – No.

Y – No, here is quiet. I love studying here because is close by. And also here is quiet but there are restaurants or bars.

R – Cool. Let's say you have a free afternoon after going to classes or so, where would you go?

X – Parks. Yes, I love this city because there are parks at every neighborhoods. And now that weather is nicer, I love going there for laying down in the sun, or sitting/picnicking, or whatever.

R – Do you girls have a favorite park?

Y – The Oosterpark is right next to where we live.

X – Flevopark is also super cool!

Y – Of course, and Vondelpark.

X – Yeah, but that one I like it more for cycling rather than spending time sitting there. Is always too full! Park is massive, but it doesn't invite to stay.

Y – Yeah, also is super far from where we live.

R – Okay, so for you is important the parks to be close by (home or school) but also not being too full.

Y – Yes.

R – Which other places you go?

X – I personally love a café near here. Is called Coffee Company. I super like the atmosphere, and there's a nice tree in front of the place.

I also super like to have a look around the route from here to my house. There are paths to go through. After the zoo, there are a mix like neighborhoods and blocks. It seems they are gated communities but actually you can pass by there with your bike. I don't know if I would dare to go there in the night, but during the day is great!

Y – If I would live where some colleagues live, closer to the Center, I'd go more often to the canals. Because is not that full as Dam Square, but there's still people. And you can go to a café around there or just sitting on the canal itself. Is nice to see people and boats passing by.

R – And do you take your own drinks or...?

Y – Yes, sometimes. But not that often because people here drink much often at the bars than in the street itself. I used to live in Paris and the most popular plan was to take a bottle of wine and sit right in the river.

X – Sometimes I sit here but not too many people does it.

Y – I think is because of the boat houses. It seems you're invading a private property.

X – Yes, you're like getting into their houses.

Y – Yes, and there are plenty of bars next to the canals anyway.

R – But would you like to feel more comfortable by sitting next to the canals or you got already used to the terraces?

X – For me is a bit far from home, but if I was living closer, I would definitely do it more often.

Y – Yes, but I guess is also because of the great parks you can find in the city. In Paris, parks are not for picnics but there are super strict, let's say. There are paths you can walk through and you cannot go to the grass and so.

X – Here parks invite you to lay down.

R – Is like a substitution? Like, parks in here serve as leisure spaces, and maybe in Paris is the river?

Y – Yes, I think so.

R – And is the same the places you go with the people you meet?

X – Mmm...

Y – The problem is that we mostly meet with colleagues from University.

R – Ah, okay. Not too much people from outside the Master?

Y – Not really.

R – Okay. And how is that group?

X – We're mostly each from a different country.

Y – We're four Latin Americans: a Peruvian, a Chilean and us, Colombians. Then the rest are from Africa, Australia or some European places.

X – We have no Dutch.

R – Have you seen some differences within your colleagues about the way you spend your free time? Where to go? What to do?

X – I think some people prefer to stay at home, maybe meet there. And some others like to go out and discover cool places.

Y – And there are super cool places!

X – But I think lately with better weather people changed a lot the way they spend free time. Because it didn't make any sense to go out that much when in winter, because it was super cold! And yes, Amsterdam is an expensive city, so you cannot go to a Restaurant every weekend.

Y – Yes, that's true.

R – How is Amsterdam for your pocket?

X – Super expensive.

Y – For eating is super expensive. I don't know too many places because once I find an acceptable one for a normal price I keep on going there. Because wherever else you go, prices will probably be over 17 euros, easily. Just the food, of course.

X – Yes. And when you go out, if you go to the terrace and you get some beers, is super expensive when compared with the cost of buying a six pack at the Albert Heijn, for instance. And going to parks or somebody's house ends up being much cheaper.

Y – Yeah, or you can also BBQ. But we didn't do it because so far we have no BBQ.

R – Yeah, that's a must.

*(Laugh).*

Y – But that’s lately with summer. Before I have heard how popular parks were and yeah, nobody was there because it was too cold or the ground was always wet, so you cannot sit or lay down.

R – Sure. And now I’d like to take you back to Colombia. How did you girls spend your free time there? Same city?

X – Yes!

X – Bogotá.

For me, that question is interesting because since I’m moving around in Europe, I think I have changed a lot my perception of leisure time and free time. Not just here, but also in Barcelona, people are constantly looking for things to do: go to the terrace, go to the park, and go there for visiting somebody... Not just weekend but also working days. There is always a plan. And in Colombia it wasn’t like that. I was meeting at some friend mostly at his place or mine. We used to go out but just sometimes.

In Bogotá, my free time was less, and mostly used for visiting friends or family, when I didn’t need to study, of course. So, my free time was not that much, and you couldn’t have a plan for every day of the week. But true, I don’t have my family now in here.

Y – Yeah, people is always looking for something to do when they are free. In there I used to spend a lot of time outside home, but that was because of the long distances from home to the center, so I couldn’t get back in the middle of the day.

X – Yes, but what about on weekend?

Y – Saturdays I was volunteering, so Sundays were my free day and I was normally having a big lunch with my family.

R – Yeah, I see. But still, I think as you were busy with other stuffs, that also could be studying or volunteering, maybe it was a bit of lack of free time. Could be that?

Y – Yeah, that could be.

R – Because you were busy in the center or volunteering, but is not the feeling like “So nice, I don’t have anything to do”!

Y – Yeah, but maybe is because when I was home I didn’t have that much free time. If I wanted to go to a place, I was doing it in between working, or working and studying. I was always putting activities in between my schedule.

X – Yes, that was true.

Y – I don’t know what to do when I’m home. Lot of people in here could stay at home for reading. I cannot. I’d go somewhere else to do it.

R – Okay, I understand. Maybe back then you were meeting with friends. What was the plan?

Y – Going for a beer, or also festivals, as there are in here.

X – Mine was mostly going to a friend’s place.

R – So you have some differences on what did you do, but what if I ask you for comparing how is in here?

X – Here is super dynamic. There's always something going on. And there are terraces and cafés everywhere! In Bogotá there are just in certain areas. But here there are million places to go all around the city.

R – What about the people you meet when going to the park, to the terrace, to the canals...?

X – I think here is really particular, super European, because you're here with your friends and you feel anybody is watching you. Everybody is on their own business, and nobody looks on what you do or not. Everybody is minding their own business.

R – Do you see that as a good or a bad thing?

X – Well... Depends. I find it different, but is not negative.

Y – For a foreign is comfortable. Because nobody will complain or make a scene for what you do. And as you're not from here, of course there are many things you did differently than as how you should have done. But nobody is failing you because nobody cares about you. That is different to some other places where people does that, and might shout at you. Maximum in here is ringing you with the bike bell.

X – But it's also that sometimes you might feel the pressure when walking or biking because they want to go faster. Because they don't care about your problems but they don't mind helping you with that.

Y – Not too many people are as in Latin America where a person will be willing to help you in a second. In here is more like "Come on, hurry up!" Somebody goes fast and you need to move to the side because they start ringing you and "Get away!" People is more "I don't mind your life, so adapt yourself", so I feel it a bit more aggressive.

R – How does that affect the encounter with others?

Y – Since I'm in here, I just have talked with one person, besides mandatory encounters as the cashier or a doctor, let's say. There has been just one person that came to me for a chat. At the park where I spend some time, I used to say hello to people but nobody was answering. So I don't do it anymore. And is a normal dynamic: nobody says a random "hi" in here. In Colombia, if you're at the park, tons of people will say "good morning" or "hello" to you. In here, it's more as if you weren't there. For me, so far I haven't got any encounter. But I think being an international, is hard to mix with locals. International people meet with other foreign.

We used to attend to a class with other Dutch people, and once they raised their hands to say they were from South Holland and they don't interact with Amsterdammers either. "They don't talk to us either", they said.

R – How would you say this would be if instead of Amsterdam, this was happening in Bogotá, your hometown, with Dutch people trying to integrate?

Y – Ah, they super love foreign people. But, language might be a problem if they don't speak Spanish.

R – But what about local's attitude?

Y – No, in Colombia people will be willing to help always, but especially if you're from abroad. They will say "Oh, poor man, I'll help you with this".



Once I was at the supermarket trying to weight some fruits but I didn't know how to take the price sticker out of the scale. And I looked behind and was a long line behind me, but nobody came to help me with it, as I would do for helping them, even before they ask for assistance, just with seeing the person in troubles with the machine.

R – Do you think that is for a rejection against the expat or something more like “I don't give a crap”?

X – Ah, the second! They don't care at all.

Y – Yes, no racism but an “I don't give a fuck” attitude. Is like they don't even look at you.

X – Yes, is lack of empathy, I think.

R – You think that was also the case at class when you didn't mix too much with Dutch colleagues?

Y – Could be also the fact that people stays at their comfort zones also related to relationships. They have already a group, as we have as well, and we stay with our groups until the professor explicitly ask to mix the groups, so then we will do that.

X – I think the same. It was more because we all already had friends.

R – Okay, I understand. Girls, how do you think Dutch people normally sees us (Latin Americans) within the whole group of immigrants?

X – That's interesting. I think they show some interest on us because of we're something else than the majorities. Is more like “Ah, great! I have been in Colombia”, or “I really want to go there!” There are no so many Latin Americans in comparison to people with other origins.

Y – What surprised me is how much Dutch people have travelled around the world, and they normally know where's Colombia but also Bogotá. There are other countries that don't even know about the existence of Colombia, or they might know just because of Narcos.

X – They are well informed, that's true.

R – How do you take this constant association of your country with the story of Pablo Escobar?

X – I think is stupid, but I don't get offended either.

Y – Yes, is mostly a shame that once again we get known around the world for that person that have done so much harsh to the country. But yes, I don't go either to Germany and come up with talking about the... You know.

X – Is not something to play with, is part of the sad story of a country.

Y – Even though I don't feel there's this stereotype of drug dealers over every Colombian person. I don't think so.

R – Okay, great. I want to know if it never happen to you to get into a bar full of Dutch people.

X – Yes.

Y – Yes.

R – And how was the experience?

Y – You feel little, because we're quite short and Dutch man are really tall, but also women. Is hard to see whatever is on stage, but also to move around.

R – And did it happen that some locals came over you for a talk or so?

Y – No, didn't happen. And I don't think it will ever happen.

R – And why do you think that happened?

Y – Well, because they don't care about you.

R – But not a rejection?

Y – No, not for that. But once in Den Haag we got explicitly rejected for being Latin Americans.

R – Ah, okay...

Y – Yes, the bouncer told us we couldn't get in because we were Latin people.

R – And what did you do?

Y – Nothing. I didn't want to get into a discussion or fight for that. I simply left the place.

R – Ah, okay. Fair enough. Have you been to a really Dutch place in Amsterdam?

X – What do you mean with that?

R – I don't know. A place that you could feel or see that, because of any reason, you may think is super Dutch. Could be for the people, the building, the music, the vibe, I don't know.

Y – Once I got into a super old bar nearby the Dam with just old people. It was dark and just Dutch or maybe northern European people. And I remember I thought "Oh, this is a really Dutch place". Very Dutch.

X – I think as further you get away from the center, the most Dutch people there is.

Y – Yes, true. You can listen a bit more of Dutch language there.

R – And did you find Latin places?

Y – Yes, I have seen places with the flags outside, but I haven't been at any of them. I never been at any Latin club or so.

R – What does a place need to have for being Latin?

X – Latin music.

Y – Yes, the music.

X – I think actually if you're at any terrace and there's some Latin music, there's enough for feeling like at home. And of course, who runs the place. Is different if is a Dutch or a German guy than if is a Latin that welcomes you with a "Hola, ¿qué tal?", in Spanish.

R – Understand. And related to the costs of going out, I'd like to know your opinion about some people's incapacity to go out and therefore not meet with those they can.

Y – I think capacity influences a lot the places you go and then the people you can meet, of course. Because Dutch people always have more money than us, so they can go to many other places and more often.

X – When we were in Spain we went out much more often.

Y – Yes, true! Because it was much cheaper to grab a beer and drink it anywhere.

X – Everything was cheaper than here.

R – Was then another encounter with the city?

Y – Yes, it was much closer. Also because of the weather and the language, that make everything easier to connect with others in the street.

X – But still, I think the cost of a drink affects the frequency you go out. I think if it was a place where you could get a glass of beer for 2 euros, was full all the time, but also with more diverse people.

Y – I think so too. Like that place we went... What was it?

(X thinks)

Y – Anyway, it was a super cool place next to the Nemo Museum, but beer was super expensive.

X – Yes! And there were mostly Dutch people there as well!

(Laughs)

Y – Yes, the beer jar was like 20 euros!

X – Yes, a lot!

Y – I think if it was cheaper, much more foreign people could go. Not tourist, because they will probably pay whatever it is necessary for a beer, but I mean more expats living in the city with low incomes.

X – More heterogeneous.

R – Would you think Dutch people would also go to this cheap places?

Y – Yes, I think so!

X – Yes, and that's why it could become a more diverse and heterogeneous place.

R – I understand. Those were my questions. Thanks for your time.

X – You're welcome.

Y – No problem.

### *Jimena*

*(Conversation was originally in Spanish, but directly transcript in English by the author).*

R – So, here we go. Can I ask you to introduce yourself?

X – I'm Jessika, and I was born in Aruba, in the Dutch Antilles, but my parents are from Venezuela, and a year before I was born they left to Aruba. So I was born and raised there but with the Venezuelan culture. At 17 I came to The Netherlands, mostly for studying. I was about to turn 18 but a few months before. I came to living with my older sister, who was living here since before. She's now 28, and now I'm 23. So yes, since my 17 she took care of me, so she was my responsible until I turned 18. And so far I live with her.

R – What are you doing here?

X – Here at *Casa Migrante* I'm doing my internship for the University. I'm studying social work at a University called Hogeschool in Holland, and I'm already on my 2<sup>nd</sup> year. So I'm coming every Tuesday here, and I receive people for questions, problems, advices for living in The Netherlands... Every case is different.

R – So the University you study at is in Amsterdam?

X – Yes, in the South District.

R – Where do you live?

X – I live in the Oude West, close by a place called *Kinkerstrat*.

R – The shopping street?

X – Yes! There! Is really close to the Center. I live there since 6 years ago, when I came to The Netherlands.

R – Okay, great. In which areas do you normally move around in the city?

X – I'd say I mostly stay in the Center, because my school is in the south. I only go there when I have to study, then is the only time I'm there. And I came here to De Pijp only on Tuesday, and the other times I'm in the Center. That's a really alive area, and I like to be there. If I need to go shopping I just go down the street at the Albert Heijn or so.

R – Ah, great. I got a question: You say "Center" but you don't mean "Center District", right?

X – No, no. But for me it feels like the center. I think is because is super close and I walked there many times.

R – So for you that area of Oude West would be the center as well?

X – Yes.

R – Ah, perfect. So you move around the place you live mostly?

X – Yes.

R – And what do you do on your free time?

X – I love watching Netflix. I watch a lot of series. I also go out with my friends time by time. Lately we don't go out too much because after a time the feelings of going out are a bit gone.

R – You mean going out at night?

X – Yes, like this spontaneous plan of saying "Let's go out for drinking!"

R – Ah, okay.

X – Yes, things are always the same with the same music. Lately I go mostly at festivals or so, like the *Rollende Kouken*, or so.

R – But let's say weekends: Do you work during weekends?

X – I do. I work making juices and sandwiches in the center.

R – But let's say you have some free time which is not for partying or so, what do you do?

X – Eating. I love going out for eating, because you get kind of annoyed by cooking all the time, right?

R – Yeah, that's true.

X – And... Yes, there at Kinkerstraat itself I like to go out for eating. Depends on what I feel like eating.

R – How do you choose this or that place for going out?

X – Mmm I like to try a lot of different cuisines. At the Kinkerstraat there is a place called *De Hallen*. It's like a... like a mall but a bit hipster. They have also a cinema, exhibits and also a food court with different kind of food. I like going there because there are many choices.

R – Cool. And with your group of friends do you also go to the park or a square or...?

X – Lately yes because there is better weather, because of the sun.

R – Yes, that's true!

X – Weather is super relevant! Because during winter, I ask my friends to come over, or I get to their places. We stay inside.

R – Ah, that also happens. Is not weird at all to meet at somebodies' place?

X – No, not at all. I have had many parties. Well, I call them "parties" but they are meetings at my friends' where we listen music, we drink wine or whatever, and could be the case that some of my friends come together with other of their friends from other groups or so.

R – Ah, okay.

X – We eat something or so. But in winter people do not feel like going out.

R – Not even at a friend's?

X – Yes, that's not a problem. As long as you stay inside!

R – True! And now that's a bit warmer, where do you meet outside?

X – Sometimes we go to a terrace, super typical Dutch. The sun is out and every terrace is packed. But sometimes I don't like too much going to the terraces; I prefer to go to the *Vondelpark*, a park where I can relax.

R – Why don't you like terraces?

X – Sometimes there is too much people. And at the park you normally have a bit more freedom for moving around.

R – Can you take your own drinks to the park as well?

X – Yes, you can do that at every park of the city, as far as I know. I think there are some constraints with BBQing.

R – Ah, okay. But in the street you cannot drink, right?

X – Mmm... You can. I mean, I did it.

R – Is it like not allowed but not punished?

X – Yes! There're also some signs. If you are on the street there are some signs sometimes with a bottle. That means you can drink in there, but lot of people doesn't pay too much attention to them.

R – Okay. And as you go to both places, terraces but also parks and other places, can you tell me which kind of people normally goes to those places?

X – I think De Hallen is... Mostly Dutch people with high incomes, because food and drinks are a bit more expensive. Terraces depends where you are. In Leidseplein is gonna be a bit more expensive than a terrace in the eastern side, you know? Sometimes terraces are cheaper (if they are not in the center).

R – And in Vondelpark?

X – There's a big mix. There's lot of Dutch, tourists, and... I have a lot of Dutch friends that goes there as well.

R – Do you feel more comfortable with people from any of those places or is more or less the same?

X – Hmm... The truth is if I arrive a place where there's only Dutch people I feel a bit intimidated. I don't like it, and I don't feel like home. I don't know if you have seen those little Dutch cafes, where there's mostly white Dutch people. If I'm the only one non-Dutch, I don't feel cool with that.

R – How's that?

X – Don't know. I guess is just because I'm the only non-white in there.

R – Do you think that's only your opinion or also from their side?

X – No, I think everybody is conscious of that. I have heard that a lot. But maybe is more about me.

R – Did they tell you something?

X – I think is more the way they look at you. They stare at you and you're like "Why is he staring on me?"

R – Okay. And did you ask them about that way of looking at you?

X – No. Because when I feel like this I don't like it and I leave.

R – And did that happen to you at Vondelpark as well?

X – No. I think is because is more open, so you don't even see what people is doing. And the vibe is different. Everybody is just minding their own business. At a café is closed: everybody at the same place, listening the same music.

R – How was it in Aruba?

X – In Aruba was mostly going to the beach. It was about going to the beach or so.

R – How can you compare going out in there and in here?

X – I think Aruba will always have that feeling of being at home. You know a lot of people and people is warmer as well. I think the culture there is more like... People is more united, warmer than in here.

R – Can you see that in the encounter with others at a shared space or so like meeting with random people at the park or so?

X – Yes, it's exactly like that in there. People is friendlier there. And in here I think twice before asking anything so somebody.

R – Do you see any difference on the interactions between people at the park than at the terrace?

X – I think I would ask something to a person easier if I'm at the park rather than at the terrace. I think at the terrace I would just ask something functional to an employee there than to another person.

R – Why?

X – I don't really know. I think it is... It could be because you're paying for something, so there you're more on your own space. And at the park is freer, let's say.

R – Do you think you can find differences between people assisting to those places in terms of socioeconomics or ethnicity?

X – Mmm... yes. There are super Dutch places nearby the Jordan, one of the first places in Amsterdam. That's the origin of the city and it will be always like that. If you get there you will find a *kroeg*, which is a bar, a small one, with a lot of Dutch.

R – Are those the places that might make you feel like...?

X – Yes, that I wouldn't get in. And there are also some Latin places, but actually there you can find a lot of Dutch people as well. Because I think that's something attractive for Dutch people, to be around different cultures, different vibes, and not only in the Dutch one.

But I couldn't say there is a Latin place. Even though I could say there are places well known by their Latin music or environment, but not just with Latin people.

R – Ah, okay. And there are not sights or so from Latin people to Dutch ones in there?

X – Mmm I don't think those way of staring at you I was telling you before. More like looking at you but without any other meaning.

R – And related to that, do you think Dutch people see Latin Americans different as how they could see another kind of immigrant like from Africa or... maybe Middle-East?

X – I think nowadays stereotypes are quite strong in The Netherlands. For example, there are Moroccans here, and lot of people... Even among people related to social work I heard "This guy there must be Moroccan". You cannot say that just by looking at other people. I heard some of my Dutch friend saying "That black people" or "this black people music". And that's strong.

You know? Lot of Dutch people think it's good to say it just like that, but they don't know how it feels. It's discriminating.

R – And do you think they don't see it like that?

X – No, because when you say something to them about that they say "But that's the truth". I have heard that many times from Dutch people.

R – And did you heard those comments about Latin people?

X – Yes, yes. Mmm... Same stereotypes as always. By coincidence, today we were eating and I was sit in there and a colleague asked if I was from Venezuela, and I said yes. I was talking about a lost phone and this and that, while she interrupted me by saying "ah, you're coming from Colombia, for sure you sell drugs"; so I said "I actually came from Venezuela". "Yeah, but that's the same", she replied. And I

think that behind every joke there is a bit of true on what people think. So I didn't say it, but no, you're stereotyping me. Sometimes I feel like saying that person that I don't find any fun on that comment, but then I keep on silence because I know it doesn't worth.

But yes, can happen to everybody.

R – Okay, I understand. And related to integration-segregation, do you think Dutch people are likely to encounter with diverse groups?

X – Yes. You can see that... If you go to a Dutch family house for eating, you will see they eat plenty of different food, from all around the world. The Netherlands and Dutch culture is not maybe to diverse, so that's why I think Dutch people looks for other groups and traditions or culture.

R – But do you think that happens with food and music, let's say, or just with people?

X – Also with people. Because let's say I'm Dutch and I'm going out with my Latin American friends, we can go to the *Fiesta Macumba*, which is a Latin Party. At that moment, that person will get closer to the way of living of Latin Americans. She will try to understand other's culture. I think everybody is like that, right?

R – And in the other side, do you think Latin Americans are willing to integrate?

X – I think so. And a good example are Dutch language courses in here. There's a lot of people coming over lately. They come here because they know they cannot integrate without speaking Dutch.

But something else is to integrate and forget your culture. I don't think you need to assimilate. You can speak and respect Dutch values while you keep your own culture. I think that's important because that's you, your identity.

R – Got it. Between your friends group, are Latin American, are Dutch or a mix?

X – Big part of my friends group is from Aruba, and we're like a community. We're more like a family, because we always help each other. We're more like close to each other. But on the other side I also have my friends from class, which is people from Morocco, Turkey, Surinam, The Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao... Is very diverse. I also have two Dutch friends.

R – And within all that different people around you, would you say there are differences on the places you like to go with them, where you spend your free time with each group?

X – With my Dutch friends we go more often to parties, to clubs, or something like that. But with my Aruban friends is more relaxed. We go to the park, or we stay at home for cooking, eating together...

R – Okay. And did you try to invite the Dutch friends to the park or to any of these houses you meet?

X – Yes, they also come to my place sometimes.

R – Do they feel good with it or...?

X – Yes, yes.

R – Okay. And the last topic I'd like to ask you is about consumption as a barrier, if you think terraces or food courts... The fact that in this sites is necessary to consume for staying, could be a problem for some people to go? How are Amsterdam's public spaces related to that?

X – Well, on parks you just sit there and you don't have to pay anything. On the other places... I don't know. I think it depends on the plans.



R – Yeah, true. But let's say is winter and there's not much money on your pocket, where do you go?

X – Mmm... I think I still go out but I will spend less. Or sometimes what we do is to meet at somebody's house and there we drink a cheap bottle from the supermarket, so we drink cheaper before going out, and then when you are out you might have just one or two drinks, so you save some money.

But is quite open: I tell my friends when I don't have much money. And they understand that.

R – Do you think that could be a problem that other people might face?

X – Could be.

R – Do you think those ones could be migrants?

X – Yes, could be. That's true. Now that I think about that, I think it could be of a big relevance. Because I know my Dutch friends normally go to more events and parties and that stuffs. They have more financial stability than I, but that might be also because they have their parents living here and I have to pay for more things. But they absolutely understand that actually there are two different worlds. I don't have that much money for going out, so I may choose to go to the Albert Heijn and get a bottle of wine.

R – It's clear. So those were my questions. Thank you very much for your time.

X – You're welcome.

*Martina*

*(Conversation was originally in Spanish, but directly transcript in English by the author).*

R – Thank you for giving me your time for this interview.

X – No problem.

R – Tell me about you.

X – I study in Amsterdam my bachelor about Architecture, and I used to work for a project at *Kolenkit*, a neighborhood with a pretty bad reputation due to its high amount of immigrants, mostly from Turkey and other Arab countries. And that was related with high criminality levels. Anyway, those levels weren't that high in that neighborhood, so it was more about prejudgments than facts.

So we went working there, trying to link with the community for finding a way to generate any spatial element that might help on coexistence among public spaces. But also as a link between that community and other spaces in the city. And one of the few things we found it was the lack of connection between the design of public spaces and those neighbors, especially Turkish and Middle-Eastern, more used to live on public spaces. Their families are big, and they often have big dinners with friends, relatives, neighbors. And spaces inside their houses were rather limited, so they needed to extend their living spaces to the public sphere. So then public spaces were not designed for them. There were lonely seats in the middle of the squares, but that didn't facilitate the encounter within the community at all. So specially women, they used to meet at public squares and used to talk standing, because they had no space for seating. It was really common to see people walking with shopping trolleys while chatting, only for keeping in contact. And if they suddenly found another member of the community, they invited her to join the conversation while having that walk.

Then we discovered the Municipality had realized about that, and it was not a coincidence not to find nice places for sitting and meeting. Amsterdam Government, or Dutch, discourage more than three people meetings, because they think that leads to the creation of criminal groups or gangs. Even though, they never took into consideration the rest of the community.

R – That’s really interesting. Do you live nearby that community as well?

X – No, I live nearby here, in the West district.

R – Perfect.

X – Westerpark is like 5 minutes by bike from here.

R – Ah, okay. Super close. Where is your University?

X – In Amsterdam Zuid. It’s like 25 minutes by bike from here.

R – Great. And how often do you go there?

X – I have classes once a week but three times per week I get there for working.

R – By which areas do you move in the city?

X – Zuid only for studying, but my social activities are spread in the Center, West and De Pijp.

R – Thinking about leisure activities, where do you go when you have free time?

X – My recreation activities are focused on cafés or food. Food is hard in Amsterdam because there are not many attractive places for me. And during winter is a big problem because I almost not get out of indoors. Or I stay at home, or we meet at friend’s places or at the bar. But the weather doesn’t help at all to meet outside, of course. And during summer, normally I go to parks. I grab a blanket and I go there for reading or working, for the fresh air.

R – How is your friend’s group?

X – Is quite mixed. Most of my friends are related with my University, but I also have friends I have made through my boyfriend, who is Dutch but lived before in Mexico. Actually, in this café we made two new friends, whom are also expats. Out of that, is hard to make connections with people that’s not related with your study or job, especially with Dutch.

R – Is it?

X – Yes.

R – Was that different in Mexico?

X – Yes, there was much easier to set a conversation with somebody you don’t know yet. I think the weather and people’s warmth help a bit.

R – Taking the chance of having a Dutch boyfriend who lived in Mexico, how did you see his links with locals back then?

X – For him was quite easy to get in contact with locals, because culture was of help for him. He also sought for that. Because actually we met at a café, making a spontaneous contact. But lot of my Mexican friends are from random and casual contacts.

R – But in here, your group is mostly Dutch or also expats?

X – At my Uni, most of them are foreign. There are a lot of French people, a little group of Latin Americans, and mostly non Dutch. I'd say is the same amount of Latin Americans than Dutch.

R – Are you close to this Latin group?

X – Not specially. I don't make friends just because they are Latin Americans?

R – And what about Mexican groups in Amsterdam?

X – No. I'm not close to any other Mexican in Amsterdam rather than a friend I know from when living there, but he's also half Dutch. When I just arrived here I made some contact with the Mexican Embassy. I have seen that was super important for my boyfriend to keep in touch with the embassy because of social events and so on, but here my case was quite different, because I think that was not a priority for them. And Mexican communities I got access to, I have found out we didn't have much in common, so I never made a strong connection with them either. They were quite different people to me, living other situations. Although every year we go to a Mexican place for Independence celebration, but that's not that often. And I also go with friends that are not Mexican either.

R – Okay. But going back to Mexico, I want to know how you spent those times there when you had a free time.

X – Museums, libraries but also restaurants or cafés. Also parks or friend's house. I think is more or less the same I do in here.

But in Latin American societies I think there is a bigger importance of public spaces as places for encounters; it works as an opportunity for socialization. And that's also seen on the way people walks or use spaces. For example, here if somebody walks his dog, there is a function on it; is not recreation for having a little walk and then walk the dog. It's more like go there for walking the dog because it has to do it because of this and that reasons. And then they get back home. In Mexico, that is an excuse for walking and meeting people, and also talking about other dogs or whatever. But is also just about walking without any other utility, let's say.

In here I think a young person walking by just walking is seen as ridiculous, because it has no function and you're losing your time. There's this mentality of efficient use of time, and that recreation activity of walking is useful once you're getting old, because then is important to exercise. So I think this use of public space without any other reason, also facilitates random encounters with other people, because you're more relaxed and open for other's approach. Otherwise, if you walk and you're at public spaces with a function, you will be always busy, and even your body language won't invite anybody to talk at you.

For instance, here at Vondelpark in summer, I think groups are quite closed instead of up for somebody else approach.

R – Was that different in Mexico?

X – Yes, in Mexico but also in other Latin countries, the idea of being open for an encounter with an unknown person is quite normal. But is not what happens here in The Netherlands.

R – Now getting back to the places in Amsterdam, I'd like you to show me, with the help of Google Maps, the spots you told me before you normally go. You can also tell me when or with whom you go to those places.

X – This is Westerpark. I go there, mostly at this spot in here. There is also this café called Toki. That's an interesting place because is the only place in the city I have made connections with strangers. There are also lot of expats but also Dutch people, mostly related with art or design activities.

Also here, Razzmatazz, a bar-restaurant.

R – Great. Any other site?

X – Mmmm... Vondelpark also. Also this place next to the Oosterpark: Scandinavian Embassy. Is a great coffee place.

R – Great. And why do you choose those places? Which reasons?

X – Westerpark because I like the park. Is a big place, with lot of green areas. I also go there for running. Also is a great place for having a beer or a wine, if I feel like. Is a great place for chilling. The other places, I'd say is because they have great food or coffee.

R – What about some little street or meeting on a corner/sidewalk, is it something that you might do here or not really?

X – Nope.

R – And in Mexico?

X – Mmm... In Mexico could be more probable to meet somebody I know in the street.

R – Yeah, that's true. And in this places you go, how can you tell me assistants are?

X – The same at the café I told you when Toki café. People related with design activities, or art-architecture. That's a quite highly educated/socioeconomic group, most of the times. There is also a good balance between expats and locals.

R – Is that something you look for?

X – No, I don't look for that, but as I'm on those spheres, quite often is this kind of people and that mix.

R – But you're cool with it?

X – Yeah, sure.

R – Great. And at the park, who goes there?

X – Every kind of people, but depends which days. On sunny days there is mostly non Turkish or Arabic people that in general you might see. I guess is because BBQ are not allowed on certain areas, so they look for other places where they could.

R – You think that prohibition kick them out of the park?

X – Yes, they are non-intentionally discriminated, but happens.

R – Maybe that's related with what you were mentioning before, about those families expanding their homes to public places?

X – Yes, absolutely.

R – According to your knowledge, do you think there are Latin places in Amsterdam?

X – Besides this Mexican bar nearby Leidseplain, I don't know any other place where Latin Americans actively meet. But I didn't really look for them. Probably there are many other places, but I don't know them.

R – Okay. And on the other side, have you seen super Dutch places?

X – Yes, sure. Actually I think the city as a whole is really Dutch.

R – And some specific spots or sites?

X – There is this café I don't remember its name... I'd say that's a really Dutch place, but I feel super welcomed there. I like to go time by time. Is a place where they only sell beers and have a great selection of abbey beers, so there's something really specific. And I'm not always on the mood for that. I'd say that's a really Dutch place, but depends of course on the kind of Dutch person we're talking about. I think Dutch people can vary a lot, so there's this kind that just like to drink beer and talk, and they look like the same. There are this *mooi boys*, Dutch guys around 19-25 years old, maybe 30, that study in University, most of the times related to Law, Medicine or Economics. And they always wear jean, white snickers and white t-shirts.

R – Ah, okay. I'll keep an eye on them. But I'd like to ask why you find that bar you mentioned before as typical Dutch.

X – Because is a brown café. The place is historically a symbol of being Dutch; they pour you this kind of beers and staff is basically Dutch born.

R – Great. You told me you didn't feel rejected at this place.

X – True.

R – Have you had bad experiences at other places?

X – Not really, always welcomed.

R – Cool. How you think Dutch people welcomes immigrants?

X – I think in my case, due to my physical appearance, people cannot easily say I'm an expat. I could be also Dutch with Moroccan or Turkish background. Or also Spanish. So there's not an immediate rejection. But with some other friends, I have seen some rejections. I think this welcome on a Dutch society has to do a lot with your physical look, but also with your attitude. If you look insecure, not sure to be welcomed, you probably won't be.

R – Good. And how do you think is their opinion about Latin Americans within the whole immigrant group?

X - I don't really know. I guess they think we're noisy, we use a lot of space and a bit nuts.

R – Use a lot of space?

X – Yeah, because they tend to meet on big groups and they start taking space for it. I guess is just a general idea, even a stereotype.

R – Do you think Latin Americans you know are likely to integrate with Dutch or they mostly stay on parallel?

X – I think Latin use to create and meet in quite closed groups, where Latin Americans just meet with Latin Americans. I think I can understand it: Dutch culture is quite cold if you're not close or if you cannot speak their language. They're not used to physical contact, even less if it is a stranger.

R – It's curious because you mentioned something like that before about Dutch groups and how much closed they could be as well. And now you say something similar about the others as well.

X – Yes, but I think it is different because with the Dutch I was also talking about the body language. They don't welcome the physical contact a Latin might want, so everybody takes its own way.

R – I understand. My last question is related with the consumption element, the commercial part that some places might have when it is required to pay something for staying (fee, coffee, drink, etc.). Do you see differences between consumption and non-consumption spaces in Amsterdam?

X – Yes. Of course the consumption ones discriminate a lot of people that cannot afford what is required. But also in aesthetic and expectation terms, I think some people wouldn't feel welcomed in those spaces, simply because of the way they dress or look.

R – Which people could be that?

X – I have a lot of friends that might not feel welcomed at a Dutch brown café. I have a dark skinned friend with Haitian roots. Once we went to this place and she felt super watched by others, stood out on a negative way. It was not the case of an active and explicit discrimination but she did not feel comfortable at all because of so many sights.

R – And related to the discrimination you mention before on those consumption spaces might be a barrier for the encounter between natives and newcomers?

X – Could be, but not necessary. But again, I think it could be related to some other reasons. There is a lot of people from Turkish or Moroccan communities with a lot of money but they won't go there either because they are not going to feel welcomed. I think it is mostly a cultural reason behind that segregation between the Dutch culture and this other idea of elitist consumption that does not give space for other communities.

R – Maybe the case we're giving too much importance on integration while people might be up for staying with their peers because they share things just with them?

X – That's true. Maybe at the end they don't want to integrate, but space for that should be offered.

R – And you think that is not the case?

X – No. I think the way society is distributed, lively spaces, tends to a segregation among different communities. If there is no space where your identity is accepted, why would you like to integrate to that community?

R – Do you think it could be a harmony between different identities?

X – I think yes. In this neighborhood that happens. There is a good balance between locals and foreign, and that's also why I chose to live in this place.

R – Great. Those were my questions, so thanks a lot for your time.

X – Great!