

# Skyline Sightings: Architourism and city branding

*by Mirjam Dolstra*

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## Abstract

Architecture tourism (shortly, 'architourism') is a relatively new niche within the world of tourism. As a more specific form of urban tourism, the main focus of architourist lies on visiting sites of modern architecture. The novelty of architourism causes it to be an unknown sector in the tourism world, among both the public and professionals. This exploratory research aims to clarify architourism and its different aspects. Relying on qualitative data, the research provides the reader an insight into architourism, its relation to city branding and the specific backgrounds and motives of architourists. The results show that there is a certain relationship between architourism and tourists with specific motives and backgrounds.

*Keywords: architecture, tourism, Rotterdam, urban tourism, city branding, motives*

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# 1. Introduction

Architecture tourism (or architourism) as a part of urban tourism is a relatively new and upcoming concept in the tourism industry (Gospodini, 2001). A consequence of this is that very little is known yet about this topic. Because architourism is growing in popularity, it is important to gain more knowledge about the motives of tourists that are interested in these activities, about what drives them to participate in architecture tourism-related activities.

There are many cities in the Netherlands that can be viewed as attractive for tourists in terms of architecture. One of the best examples of Dutch architectural tourism destinations is Rotterdam. With its relatively new city centre with many modern buildings that have been subject to various special forms of architecture, it has become a big attraction for tourists. In fact, Rotterdam has been ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the New York Times' "Top 52 Cities to go in 2014". The city's "First class architecture" was given as the most important reason (New York Times, 2014).

My project examines the presence and development of architourism in the city of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and how city branding agencies develop their strategies based on the city's reputation of architecture destination. By basing my research on several theories and concepts that have been used in tourism studies before I aim to expand what is currently known about architourism and the motives of tourists that are interested in it.

The main problem at hand is the fact that architourism is a relatively new and unexplored tourism niche, which leaves this kind of tourism with all its aspects relatively unknown to both the public and professionals working in the sector. Therefore, the objective of the research is to explore the topic of architourism, the architourists' motivations and the relation of architourism to city branding.

With this research, a number of research questions can be answered. First and foremost, the aim is to provide an answer to the question *What is architourism?* Subsequently, questions arise about city branding (*How is architourism related to city branding?; How is city branding practised in Rotterdam and to what extent does it involve architecture? Which strategies are deemed successful and are they applied in the case of Rotterdam?*), how the sector works (*How is architourism organized?*) and tourists' backgrounds and motives (*What type(s) of tourists are attracted to architourism?; What are the motives of an architourist?*)

Subsequently, I aim to provide the reader with an outcome that not only answers my research questions. The outcomes of this research can be a foundation for and help contribute to further research about architourism and the corresponding. It can also serve as a helpful source for the industry to develop new ideas that can help the expansion of architourism businesses.

This research report consists of a number of chapters that explore architourism and many related topics. Firstly, an overview of the existing literature will be given, after which a number of methods are presented that have been used to collect further data. This chapter is followed by two chapters in which the results of this data collection are presented. The next part of the report consists of a discussion of the results, as well as the relevance and limitations of the research and an overall conclusion.

## 2. Exploring urban tourism, architourism and city branding

There is little existing literature on the topic of architourism as a modern form of tourism, separated from the concept of heritage tourism. However, there have been several authors in the past that have conducted research on different aspects of architourism. As the main focus of this research lies on architourism, a review of literature that addresses this specific type of tourism will be given, as well as on the broader perspective of urban tourism (of which architourism is a smaller part) and architecture related to tourism in general. The ultimate goal is to gather information about the tourists' motives and background, which will therefore be addressed extensively, too.

The following chapters contain overviews of the existing literature on the different topics that are relevant for this research. As this research also consists of an investigation of a destinations' image and city branding, as well as an investigation of how serious leisure plays a role, these two very important and related topics will be addressed throughout the review. Despite the fact that barely any publications exist where these topics are linked to architourism, an overview of the existing literature about the topics in themselves will be given.

After looking at the broader perspective of urban tourism, a more specific overview of the distinction between architecture as a function and architecture as an attraction will be given. Furthermore, the existing literature on the specific concept of architecture tourism will be discussed, as well as what is known about city branding and serious leisure.

## 2.1 Urban Tourism

Urban tourism consists of many different elements and a city serves the urban tourist in different ways (Specht, 2014). As a field of study, urban tourism did not emerge significantly until the 1990s (Pearce, 2001).

In an article about urban tourism research, Pearce identified four general qualities cities have. These qualities are “high physical densities of structures, people and functions; social and cultural heterogeneity; economic multifunctionalism; and a physical centrality within regional and interurban networks” (Pearce, 2001). Whereas most authors view cities as potentially functional *for* tourism, Pearce identifies tourism as a function of a city. According to his article, tourism causes two groups of people, inhabitants and tourists, to compete with one another for services, spaces and amenities (Pearce, 1981).

According to Karski (1990), the “rich variety of things to see and do in a reasonably compact (...) environment” is the main reason for urban destinations to be so popular among tourists. This notion is supported by Ehrlich and Dreier, who claim that the completeness of a city is the major tourist attractor, especially when more recent buildings merge with the historical and cultural attractions of a city, as well as facilities that offer entertainment and e.g. restaurants (Ehrlich & Dreier, 1990).

To create a clear overview of the tourism products a city has to offer, Jansen-Verbeke has developed a framework in which tourism products are classified into primary, secondary and additional products. The primary products that Jansen-Verbeke describes are the general leisure setting and the possibilities for activities in a city. These activities include every type of leisure that is possible, ranging from entertainment in terms of music or theatre to gastronomical- or sports activities.

Secondary tourism products comprise other elements that are essential for a tourist to be able to stay in a city, such as tourist accommodation and the possibility to buy provisions in terms of food and other needed products. Additional tourism products are linked to a city’s infrastructure and comprise the city’s accessibility and the extent to which tourists’ can consider the environment ‘safe’ (Jansen-Verbeke, 1986).

As a rule, perspectives on urban tourism tend to be strongly based on, or biased by, the current success of cultural tourism (Law 1994). However, there is no proof for what their actual motives are; There is still very little empirical knowledge on the tourists’ behaviour patterns, how they appreciate the destinations’ many aspects and what are important pull factors.

## 2.2 Architecture and tourism: Function & Attraction

Gospodini (2001) argued that architecture has a significant influence on how tourists experience their stay at a destination. An important notion in this topic is that a clear distinction should be made between the built environment as a functional aspect of tourism and the built environment as an attraction in itself, or as Klingmann (2007) stated: “Buildings fulfil needs; architecture fulfils desires” (Klingmann, 2007). As this research mainly focuses on architecture as an attraction, the main focus of this chapter will lie on this topic. However, the topic of architecture as a function in tourism will also be addressed shortly.

### 2.2.1 Built environment

According to the UNWTO, the built environment can be defined as “the buildings, structures and ancillaries comprising an interrelated man-made area, often architectural in character” (World Tourism Organisation, 2005). The built environment plays a crucial role in the general life of both residents and tourists within a city. It is critical for human mobility and furthermore provides various functions that are meant to satisfy human needs – which are similar for both residents and tourists (Specht, 2014).

To conceptualize the built environment in a tourism perspective, Fainstein and Judd have developed a framework that differentiates between three types of cities that tourists visit.



In their framework they have adopted three distinct descriptions of the types of tourist cities that exist. Firstly, they describe so-called ‘resort cities’, which are created purely for touristic purposes, e.g. Las Vegas. The second type of city is the tourist-historical city, that have a very rich history and strong cultural identity as a main attraction, e.g. Rome. The third type is the so-called “converted city”, that has an infrastructure that has been purposely created for tourism and is insulated from the larger urban milieu. The authors described this last type as “a type of tourist city in which specialized tourist bubbles are carved out of areas that otherwise would be hostile or inconvenient for tourists” (Fainstein & Judd, 1999).

Despite the clear and distinct description of the city typology, the model has received some criticism by other scholars. Law (2002) for example, stated that the model failed to include the influence the size of the city has on a city's tourism industry, which can be a very significant factor when it comes to large cities.

### *2.2.2 Architecture as a function*

A very important function of tourism architecture and its landscape setting is to have the ability to satisfy the tourists that come to visit a destination (Kierchhoff, 1997). A city serves a tourists' needs in countless ways. Not only can different functions be distinguished in a sense of providing accommodation, providing food, providing entertainment/activities, but this entertainment/activity motive can be broken down into smaller pieces: Joining a sightseeing tour, discovering a destinations' gastronomy, going shopping, exploring nightlife etc. Sightseeing, focused on architecture, can be considered part of this motive (Specht, 2014). Specht also stated that plays a critical role in almost every area of tourism, but emphasizes that, despite the fact that it creates the basic conditions for tourism, architecture is probably one of the major motivators for a tourists' destination choice (Specht 2014).

The development of architectural sites, especially in combination with tourism, may sometimes function as a catalyst for economic growth and urban (tourism) development in general. Many authors mention the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao as the perfect example of modern architecture as a touristic attraction in itself. In this case, it even initiated a drastic increase in touristic and, as a direct consequence, economic flows and activities (Specht, 2014; Lippard, 2005).

### *2.2.3 Architecture as an attraction*

The term 'attraction' can be conceptualized as "a named site with a specific human or natural feature, which is the focus of visitor and management attention" (Pearce, 1991). As mentioned before, architecture as an attraction can be viewed as part of the functionality of the built environment, but is also very important on its own. However, authors have been expressing divided views on the tourists' motives for wanting to visit architectural sites. Whereas Gospodini argues that architecture as an attraction exists because of a tourists' need for authenticity and for them to see what has been in the past (Gospodini, 2001), Specht (2014) emphasizes that contemporary architecture is becoming more and more relevant in tourism.

It is also important to realize that, despite the fact that contemporary architecture has become a touristic attraction over the years, there is no clarity about how a city can achieve an increase of incoming tourists directly related to the development of contemporary architecture (Plaza, 2000).

A reason for architecture to be seen as an attraction in itself may be the emergence of the so-called *spectaculture*, which acknowledges the interdependencies of architecture and tourism (Ockmann, 2001). As Pretes (1995) mentioned, spectacle has been a major part of the modern tourism industry, where every site is described as 'spectacular'.

Judging from existing literature, we can conclude that a lot has been said about how architecture and the built environment is important for tourism as a functional aspect. Despite the fact that architecture as an attraction itself has been mentioned, there is relatively little known about how architecture functions as an attraction within the tourists' experience of a destination.

Despite the clear distinction between functionality and attractiveness that has been made by many authors, it is important to realize that the two purposes may very well be combined in some cases. "As a matter of fact, even buildings developed for the demands of locals without any direct function dedicated to tourism might still be tourism attractions" (Specht, 2014). This phenomenon can go as far as the point where tourists are actually not allowed to enter the buildings, which leaves them only as an attraction in the sense of its appearance.

Specht emphasizes that many non-accessible architectural landmarks exist, which have either been built for that specific purpose (only to be viewed from the outside) or may have lost their function over time. In extreme cases, a buildings' architecture may have such an attractive effect on visitors that it overtakes the initial function of the building, which has been the case for the previously mentioned Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, which was designed by Gehry. It appears however, that more and more contemporary architectural sites have intentionally been designed in order to attract people, even if the building itself is to have a different purpose (Shaw, 2007).

It is however important to realize that, despite the distinction between purposeful attractions and non-purposeful attractions (Swarbrooke, 2002), there is no evidence that this status of being a (non-)attraction has any influence on whether it is a popular landmark in (architecture) tourism (Specht, 2014).

The majority of the literature that addresses the concept of architecture in tourism recognizes the fact that architecture attracts. However, it appears that many authors struggle to find the specific characteristics or features that are directly responsible for the attractiveness of a destination or specific site, hesitantly stating e.g. that a buildings' function *might* be to 'amaze', which is a very vague notion. Existing literature claims that it is spectacle and uniqueness that tourists are looking for. It is therefore important that the tendency of copying buildings and landmarks and establishing them in other destinations is retained as it causes a massive loss of uniqueness and therefore attraction (Specht, 2014; Klingmann, 2006). However, it is very hard to conceptualize these features into quantitative variables that can be measured and it also raises some discussion among authors.

The way tourists are attracted to architecture is described by Craggs et al. (2013) as 'architectural enthusiasm'. However, as the author failed to conceptualize the actual meaning of this phenomenon, it is hard to determine what drives this attraction that tourists feel.

What can be agreed upon however, is the notion that "the meaning of architecture is reliant on many factors, but most notably depends on the perspective of its stakeholders" (Specht, 2014). This argument is substantiated by offering the example of locals vs. tourists. Whereas a building can be solely functional objects, such as an office building, that same building might be a big attraction when it comes to tourists.

As mentioned, architecture influences the urban environment in multiple ways. As a function and also as an attraction. However, there is another way in which architecture has a direct effect on daily life. A concept called psychogeography was introduced by Debord in 1955 as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals" (Debord, 1955). However, this study mainly addresses the (unconscious) effect architecture and the built environment have on the behaviour of the crowds. Despite the fact that this is a very interesting and relevant concept, it will not be used in this research.

## 2.3 Architourism

Architourism as a part of urban tourism is a relatively new and upcoming concept in the tourism industry (Gospodini, 2001). It has been defined as a type of mass tourism in which tourists visit famous architectural sites (Lasansky, McLaren, 2004), a type of tourism that boasts specific aspects similar to those found in ecotourism, art tourism and heritage tourism (Frausto and Ockman, 2005). Architourism is considered a sub-type of urban tourism as it has similar aspects. However, it has a specific focus on (modern) architecture, whereas urban tourism entails a broader range of aspects that cities or urban environments have to offer.

According to some authors, architourism refers to any activity of a touristic nature that involves architecture, ranging from historical buildings to contemporary structures. However, as touristic activities involving historical architecture is often labelled as heritage tourism, most authors adopted the term “architourism” when referring to contemporary buildings (Specht, 2014; Peterson, 1995; Frausto & Ockman, 2005). Specht argues that, despite the relative newness of this tourism niche, contemporary architecture has already formed a major factor of attraction for tourists for a long time (Specht, 2014).

Many authors have emphasized the role that symbolism plays in the emergence of architourism over the years. Specht argues that many famous architectural landmarks can be considered “brand-name-architectures” – these buildings are benefiting from their creators’ fame and simultaneously contributing to it (Specht, 2014). This process of mutual benefit can be described as a “virtuous circle” (Frey, 1998).

Urban exploration, or ‘urbex’ is an important concept within the world of architourism. It involves the exploration of parts of the built environment that are not obvious places to visit in general life (Craggs et al., 2013). Despite the fact that Craggs emphasizes that these activities are often executed in groups, or even in guided tours, it is important to consider the fact that architectural tourism is practised in several different ways, ranging from different kinds of tours (academic, non-academic) to tourists that undertake individual activities in which they explore architectural sites of their own choice (Craggs et al., 2013).

## 2.4 Tourists: Motives and backgrounds

Specht (2014) argues that, up until now, despite the obvious impact that media representation and being photogenic have, the specific factors that cause objects to gain touristic significance remain unknown to researchers. It is however important to keep in mind that this notion does not consider the fact that a distinction can be made between different kinds of tourists.

From reviewing existing literature, it becomes clear that several different approaches have been applied to the study of tourist motivations for visiting destinations. The different views focus on various different variables, such as personality, the desire to fulfil certain needs, but also views that consider the fact that different stages in life may support different kinds of motivations (Kozak, 2002). The World Tourism Organization did try to issue a more practical view and stated that “for large cities and metropolises the concept of the creative city, linking the traditional cultural products, services and heritage with the creative industries such as media and entertainment, design, architecture and fashion, can offer great advantages in attracting visitors” (WTO, 2005).

However, it is remarkable that most authors focus on explaining their approach, rather than stating the actual outcomes and mentioning whether there are existing patterns explaining a tourists’ motivations for their travels, rather than stating that tourists’ motivations are ‘multiple’ (Kozak, 2002).

Very little literature exists that exclusively addresses the motives of tourists to undertake activities that are directly related to architourism. However, Ockman and Frausto (2005) claim to have designed a framework that addresses their exploration of different forms of motivation for architourism. In their book, they divide their framework of tourist motivations in four categories: Authenticity, Exoticness, Escapism and Spectacle. Despite the fact that this framework may very well be applied on many other types of tourism, it clearly describes four different perspectives in tourists’ motivations for architourism-related activities.

Motivation through authenticity is, according to the authors, emerging from the tourists’ need to, indeed, experience the authentic atmosphere and in the case of architecture, physique of a certain culture or historical era. The authors however also look beyond this notion of authenticity and approach it as a social and cultural construction and, by doing so, remain sceptic.

Exotic motivation emerges from a tourists’ need to discover something unknown, something that appears to be very far away from reality. According to Ockman and Frausto, architecture that attracts tourists looking for the ‘exotic’ often functions as a symbol.

Escape as a motivation is described by the authors as a perspective from which tourists view their travels as a temporary removal of themselves from their daily routine. They feel a need to break away from the standardized patterns of their life to go some place where they can recreate.

Finally, the last perspective is one of spectacle, which has been mentioned previously in this review. It entails the need of tourists to feel amazement and even overwhelmed when visiting a particular architectural site. Despite the fact that it is hard to capture 'spectacle' as a tangible, measurable variable, its significance in tourism attraction has been proven many times.

Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) have stated multiple motives for architourists to visit certain sites, varying from the sake of visiting a famous landmark or witnessing something made by a famous architect ("brand-name-architectures") as well as the previously mentioned spectacular nature of buildings. According to Gruen (2006), since the emergence of significant architecture sites, many sites have had a kind of pilgrimage function, where the purpose and goal for tourists is to ultimately visit these sites. However, since this was stated from a very historical perspective, one might question the extent to which this statement is still applicable in modern architecture tourism.

#### *2.4.1 Serious Leisure*

Within the studies of leisure and tourism, various different types of leisure can be identified. A theoretical framework (The Serious Leisure Perspective) has been created in the past in which three forms of leisure are explained (casual leisure, serious leisure and project-based leisure), as well as their interrelationships (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014). This framework enables the researcher to differentiate between the many types of activities people like to do in their leisure time and to create a better understanding of them (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014). This perspective provides a basis for understanding how tourists view architourism-related activities and to what kind of leisure they can be attributed.

The concept of leisure is a very broad term. In his book on the conceptualization of leisure, Stebbins (2012) defined it as "un-coerced, contextually framed activity engaged in during free time, which people want to do and, using their abilities and resources, actually do in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both)."

As mentioned before, the serious leisure perspective assumes that three different types of leisure can be identified. More specifically, one could say that these are three various types of motives that people may have to undertake certain tourism or leisure activities.

The first concept, serious leisure, can be described as an interest in leisure that emerges from the desire to expand one's knowledge and/or experience on a certain topic/in a certain field, or as Elkington & Stebbins (2014) describe it: "Serious leisure is the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist or volunteer activity (...) to find a (leisure) career there acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge and experience" . Examples of serious leisure can be for instance film tourism or visiting (music) festivals.

The second concept, casual leisure, is the concept out of the three that is most common and practised by the most people. According to Elkington and Stebbins (2014), casual leisure entails relatively short leisure activities that are purely done for pleasure and to enjoy oneself. In their book, they identify eight different types of casual leisure: play, relaxation, passive entertainment, active entertainment, sociable conversation, sensory stimulation, casual volunteering and pleasurable aerobic activity.

The last type of leisure in this framework is project-based leisure. This is a type of leisure described by Elkington and Stebbins as "a short-term, reasonably complicated, one-off or occasional, though infrequent, innovative undertaking carried out in free time, or time free of disagreeable obligation. Such leisure requires considerable planning, effort, and sometimes skill or knowledge, but is for all that neither serious leisure nor intended to develop into such."

They state that practitioners of project-based leisure often feel obligated to undertake such activities. Also, when it comes to the general feeling of being rewarded one gets by practising this type of leisure, the outcome can be compared to that of serious leisure. In both cases, this reward is often the main motivator for people to undertake the activities in the first place.

Despite a clear explanation of the existence of three different types of leisure, there does not seem to be a lot of consensus of when leisure is considered serious leisure and when it is viewed as project-based leisure.

Cultural tourism has been linked to the concept of serious leisure before, by Stebbins. In the context of serious leisure, cultural tourism "can be said to spring from the tourist's desire to use a particular geographic area to express or realize an amateur or hobbyist interest. This interest is profound and requires a certain level of skill, knowledge, conditioning, or experience. The hobbies pursued there differ from the liberal arts hobby of cultural tourism" (Stebbins, 1996).

As a framework, the serious leisure perspective can be applied to many forms of social studies involving tourism and leisure. In the current research, the serious leisure perspective will thus be used, both as a guideline and as a tool to structure the results and put them into perspective.

## 2.5 Destination Image & City Branding

City branding is a concept used in tourism marketing. Despite the fact that scholars are yet to agree on a fixed definition of the concept, it is agreed upon that city branding is more than giving a name to a product (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Generally, it can be viewed as the commodification of the resources of a place into a product (Ashworth, 1994).

De Chernatony & Dall'Omo Riley (1998) argue that a brand is a form of communication and therefore exists of several components such as the product (Which would be the city itself, in city branding), the consumer and the producer. It is however important to keep in mind that a city is more than a product and is in fact a multitude of products and services that combined offer visitors a certain experience from which the city's identity emerges (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005).

City branding in its current form is a relatively new concept. Over the years, a significant shift has taken place in which city marketing has become city branding (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Bramwell supports this notion, stating that, in recent years, the need for places to create an image that is unique and desirable enough to ensure an ongoing flow of incoming tourists, residents and investments. The quality of products offered in a place has significantly increased in importance.

In terms of uniqueness, city branding has also significantly changed their attitude. As Fainstein and Judd (1999) mentioned, tourists are nowadays looking for the unusual, for surprise. However, it is hard to explain why someone should travel to a different place or even country to experience these emotions. The task of marketers and tourism developers is to create an image that will convince potential visitors that they will find these exact features in a certain destination. "When it comes to tourism, it is not so much about "old" and "new", but rather about "outstanding" or not" (Specht, 2014).

Another feature that seems to be of growing importance in the tourism sector is diversity, offering a diverse range of products and sites. Tourists are often looking for more than one type of attraction, which is why it is important that destination use a branding approach in which the destination is promoted as diverse: Historical and innovative, urban and natural (Specht, 2014).

As stated before, the role of architecture within city branding is barely ever mentioned in existing publications. Some authors do acknowledge the fact that architecture has been actively embedded in cities' strategies to enhance their image and to create a unique competitive position in regard to other cities (Specht, 2014; Ockman & Frausto, 2005).

Also, it can be argued that architecture is always a reflection of a specific destination and always influences its culture and appearance, whether the architecture has been developed according to the destinations' culture or vice versa (Culham, 2001). Lasansky (2004) supported this notion, stating that tourism both produces and is a product of culture. Some authors contradict this statement on the other hand, e.g. by claiming that architecture is a reflection of technological development and cultural values (Goss, 1988).

However, as it is extremely difficult to determine what the specific factors are that make contemporary architecture attractive or significant, there is an extreme difficulty for tourism developers to develop a strategy that can artificially create this attraction, making it a huge challenge for tourism developers (Specht, 2014). A general assumption made in city branding research is the fact that tourists encounter places through perceptions and images (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). They emphasize that, even when tourists encounter a place in real life, it is the mental maps that they create in their head that shapes their image and perception of a place. It is therefore important that the image that tourists gain prior to their travel, through media and other sources of information, hands them some kind of familiarization (Ockman & Frausto, 2005). Without a certain degree of familiarity in a destination, i.e. something the tourist can identify with or recognize, the destination might lose its attractiveness.

It is these mental images that Kavaratzis and Ashworth claim to be the key elements to be dealt with in branding. The images of people are taken into account when planning new marketing campaigns and other activities to enforce a city's brand. They claim that "Managing the place brand becomes an attempt to influence and treat those mental maps in a way that is deemed favourable to the present circumstances and future needs of the place."

As has been mentioned previously, some of the biggest factors of attraction in destinations are spectacle and uniqueness, when it comes to architecture. In regard to this notion, Morgan and Pritchard (2004) have stated that "good destination branding is (...) original and different, but its originality and differences needs to be sustainable, believable and relevant".

In regard to these distinctive destination features or hotspots, Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) have stated that they are powerful attractors for destinations that "possess" such an icon. "The challenge for all destinations is to find 'the stroke of genius' that will uniquely associate the icon with the destination – and that will, for any number of reasons, become internationally popular" (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). Several cases, such as the famous Guggenheim museum of Bilbao, have proven that it is very well possible for destinations to create a contemporary 'icon' that will contribute so immensely to a destinations' image.

Most of the authors that have been reviewed agree that architecture as an attraction plays a very prominent role in a destinations' tourism strategy and image. However, as mentioned before, most scholars struggle to identify concrete ways to successfully make a destination or architectural site more attractive for tourists.

## 2.6 Conclusion

From the discussed sources, I have been able to find an answer to the main research question, *What is architourism?*, to a certain extent. Based on several articles I have been able to draw a definition of the concept itself. However, deeper knowledge about the different aspects of architourism are yet to be described.

It is evident that a sufficient amount of literature addressing the different topics that are central to this research exists. However, it is hard to identify a direct relation to architourism in its current form as the major part of the reviewed literature has only been written about that specific topic. During the phase of data collection, this research aims to fill up these gaps.

What stands out when looking at the reviewed literature, is that barely anywhere anything is mentioned about specific, concrete motives that tourists may have for visiting architectural sites, let alone possible different perspectives that can be operationalised into a qualitative framework, such as the serious leisure perspective. This research aims to create a better insight into these specific tourist motive and the backgrounds from which they emerge. From this analysis, we can conclude that a lot has been written about what architourism actually is. However, there is a lack of data on how the industry itself is organized.

In this literature review, multiple concepts have been discussed that will serve as a basis for my research. To answer my research questions about city branding (*How is architourism related to city branding?; How is city branding practised in Rotterdam and to what extent does it involve architecture? Which strategies are deemed successful and are they applied in the case of Rotterdam?*), I will use the concepts and assumptions about city branding discussed in the review. From the review, several strategies and concepts can be derived that authors claim are needed for success. I will use these concepts as a guideline to assess the extent to which the city of Rotterdam applies these concepts. Also, I will pay some special attention to find out to what extent architecture is incorporated in the city's brand strategy.

Subsequently, I aim to answer the questions about tourists' backgrounds and what the exact motives for tourists are to participate in architecture tours (*What type(s) of tourists are attracted to architourism?; What are the motives of an architourist?*). Based on the framework developed by Ockman and Frausto (2005) and the serious leisure perspective. The framework by Ockman and Frausto consists of four types of tourist motives, I have identified a number of criteria, based on the concepts mentioned in the literature review. The criteria will be processed into the methodology that will help me give an indication of the extent in which the previously mentioned concepts occur in the actual architourism world.

### 3. Methods

As I have mentioned before, this research is of an explorative nature, the aim is to explore the topic of architourism and its relation to city branding. Naturally, the methods of data collection that have been used are the ones deemed appropriate for an explorative research such as this one. This research relies on data that has been gathered through several different instruments of qualitative data collection, which means there are no standardized hypotheses, surveys or big samples to use in my research.

#### 3.1 Data collection

##### ***City branding: Case study***

The first part of my research focuses on the city branding strategies used by Rotterdam to promote the city as a (architecture) destination. Based on the literature, I have identified different themes that will serve as a tool of comparison, to investigate to what extent important concepts in the literature apply to the case of Rotterdam. For this I have analysed several primary and secondary written sources. To create an image of how city branding is managed in Rotterdam, I have consulted two websites and a document by the agencies that are responsible for Rotterdam's city branding. To assess the possibilities for architourism in Rotterdam and also to see to what extent the city branding is put into practise effectively, I have consulted several sources on tourism information by the city of Rotterdam itself, as well as two independent sources on tourism information. It is important to keep in mind that this is a case study that specifically focuses on one particular city and that the findings may not be applicable to other cases. The websites and documents about city branding are written by agencies of the city itself, which means they are primary sources. The same applies for the sources of tourism information, as they are often written by the same agencies that are in charge of city branding. The independent sources can be viewed as secondary sources.

##### ***Tourist motives & backgrounds: Semi-structured interviews***

To collect information about how architecture tours are structured and about tourists' motivations, backgrounds and specific wishes during tours, I have conducted five semi-structured interviews among tour guides and other people in the tourism business who are specialized in architourism. As it is a quantitative research, there is a certain amount of complexity in finding appropriate respondents. While finding respondents for the interviews, I have therefore made use of snowball sampling. I started out contacting potential respondents through their own businesses, often tour guides, after which they provided me with information about who to contact next.

In the end, two of the interviews have been conducted in a live conversation, the other three took place on Skype or over the phone. All of the interviews have taken in between 20 and 45 minutes time. As the interviews were semi-structured, the set of questions used was slightly different in every interview, depending on where the conversation was going. The list of questions that has been used at the start of the interviews can be found in Appendix 1. It is important to keep in mind that, by limiting the respondents to this target group, the tourists that are being described can be considered a special interest group with a different kind of interest to the average tourist, as they have taken it upon themselves to book a spot in a guided architecture tour, which may indicate that these visitors have a higher interest in architourism compared to tourists that visit architectural sites by themselves.

Based on the research questions that were left unanswered after the literature analysis, I have composed a list of interview questions. In the questions, several criteria have been incorporated that will indicate to what extent tourists motivations can be ascribed to one or more of the concepts mentioned before. These questions were partially based on the Serious Leisure Perspective (*Do visitors want to gain knowledge about what they see?; Do visitors travel especially for certain architectural sites?*) and the framework by Ockman & Frausto (*Are visitors looking for uniqueness, authenticity?; Do visitors express a desire to see something famous?*). Furthermore, the set of questions also contained questions about how the respondents' business and tours are organized. An important limitation of this method is, again, the threat of bias through subjectivity, as the interpretation and discourse used by the interviewer can lead to biased data.

### *Participant observation*

Participant observation has been conducted while visiting prominent architectural sites in Rotterdam but also during a specific architecture tour around the docklands of Amsterdam in which I participated. In total, I have spent four day parts observing, of which one took place in Amsterdam in the area around the central train station, one during said architecture tour and two in Rotterdam in the areas around the central train station and Markthal. Participant observation generally consists of observing the behaviour of people and also to engage in conversations with them. I have done this to find out about what motivated the visitor to go and see specific architectural sites in these cities. The limitation of subjectivity applies here, too. Again, even if the researcher puts maximum effort into remaining objective, it is impossible to fully avoid any interpretation or unintended influence on the respondents.

### *Content analysis*

For the part of my research that focuses on motives and backgrounds, I have consulted an internet forum, Skyscraperpage.com, as my source. On this forum, architecture enthusiasts discuss architecture and architecture destinations. The type of visitors to this forum can be described as people with a specific interest in both modern and historical architecture. Out of the countless discussions on this website, I have analysed five discussions that focus on architecture in Dutch cities. This part of the research is not only focused on Rotterdam, but rather on larger Dutch cities in general. From these discussions, I have been able to draw conclusions about people's motives to visit architectural sites. This analysis only focuses on the information that is there and rules out any possible underlying assumptions. There is no discourse analysis involved. A limitation might be that the source of the content may be subjective, which would cause the analysis to be biased according to the sources' view. The data retrieved from this source is mainly a supplement to the findings from the interviews and the observations, as this is only one source.

### **3.2 Data processing**

Once I gathered all of the data through the previously described methods, I have processed them by transcribing the interviews and the notes from participant observation, after which I performed analysis by coding. Fragments of the text have been categorized according to a number of themes I have identified based on the literature review.

By organizing these fragments according to the themes, I have been able to find mutual relationship between the different statements and observations, from which I will be able to draw conclusions that will answer my research questions. In the results section of this report, the analysis is presented in story form, categorized according to the identified topics of research, supported by quotes from the interviews.

### **3.3 Ethics**

As the data collection of this research mainly involves real-life interaction with other people, who serve as the source of information, it is extremely important to take into account any issues that may occur and respect any ethical considerations at all times. By all means, I have aimed to remain as objective and transparent as possible and to respect the privacy of the respondents.

The most important issues to consider are privacy and transparency. I have ensured to let every respondent know in advance about what will happen to their statements and that they will not be used for other purposes than this research. For the interviews, I have asked and received consent on recording the interview and using the data for this research.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 City branding: The city of Rotterdam

*“The most obvious place to offer architecture tours is Rotterdam, first and foremost. It has a reputation of being an architecture city, which is also advertised broadly.” – Tour guide, specialized in architecture*

This chapter explores how city branding is managed in the Dutch city of Rotterdam. Along with a general overview of the city’s branding strategies, an assessment is given of the extent to which crucial themes (according to existing literature) are present in Rotterdam’s strategies and advertisements.

#### 4.1.1 Branding strategies

As a city destination, Rotterdam invests a lot of time in developing a branding strategy that addresses the assets of the city. In 2008, the city collaborated with several branding agencies to develop a new brand strategy that would carry out the city’s unique status as World Port City. With the slogan “World Port, World City”, the city aims to carry out the cosmopolitan mix of harbour and city that is Rotterdam (De Rotterdam, 2011). “Rotterdam World Brand”, led by Rotterdam Partners, is a platform that manages the city’s branding. They approach the destination branding of Rotterdam in a transparent and structured way. They have developed a “Brand Strategy” that consists of 8 assumptions that are being used for strategic decision-making:

- Corporate identity
- Brand values of the city brand
- A “brand tag”: Rotterdam World Port World City
- The essences per target group
- The many brands in Rotterdam that together make the brand Rotterdam
- Choice: To excel in important topics: Different, relevant, credible.
- Brand strategy as a basis for strategic urban design
- Combining the city’s assets

*(Rotterdam World Brand, n.d.)*

These assumptions together make up a comprehensive framework in which different assets of the branding strategies are addressed. Not only is there a focus on adapting different strategies to different target groups (inhabitants, visitors, enterprises) but the approach by Rotterdam Partners also demonstrates a strong awareness of the city's assets and knowledge on how to promote them.

### *Architecture*

The brand strategy repeatedly stresses that architecture is an important asset of the city. What stands out is the fact that architecture is not only an important existing asset, but Rotterdam Partners also emphasize that further development may enhance the brand: "It is important to choose products, events and themes that suit the city's corporate brand. Themes such as modern world port, sport, (...) architecture and sustainability fit the energetic character of Rotterdam" (CMO, 2008). Multiple sources that have fetched a list of Rotterdam's 'main buying points' have specifically included the presence of modern architecture, but also the general cosmopolitan atmosphere (CMO, 2008; Rotterdam World Brand, n.d.). Despite the city being advertised as a 'world port city', architecture is used as a main attractor on many websites and in leaflets.

Existing literature about city branding agrees that there are two important aspects that make a destination attractive and should therefore receive special attention in the development of branding strategies: Uniqueness and diversity.

### *Uniqueness*

As mentioned before, authors have specified that uniqueness has become a main point of attention in designing branding strategies. As Goeldner & Ritchie (2009) stated, "the challenge for all destinations is to find 'the stroke of genius' that will uniquely associate the icon with the destination – and that will, for any number of reasons, become internationally popular."

It is a topic that is explicitly mentioned in Rotterdam's branding strategies. They claim that it is crucial for the previously mentioned themes that are being incorporated in the strategies to be "relevant, distinctive and credible" (CMO, 2008). The overall strategy claims to have adopted a number of unique selling points which receive extra attention in marketing strategies.



The same shows in advertisements by tourist information sources. On websites and in reviews, Rotterdam is praised for its unique and distinctive atmosphere and offer of activities, with an emphasis on its multicultural atmosphere (Rotterdam.info, n.d.; Lonely Planet, 2015). Not only is this a direct result of the city's branding strategies, with its primary sources pointing out exactly what has been mentioned in the branding strategies. It has also been picked up by other, independent sources that objectively write about destinations, such as travel guidebooks.

### *Diversity*

One of the most important aspects of city branding, according to literature, is diversity. With a diversified offer of activities and sites to visit, it is easier to attract a broader spectrum of tourists. When there is something for everyone, more people will feel like the destination seems attractive for them to visit. Like mentioned in the reviewed literature by Specht (2014), it is important for destinations to promote their city as diverse, as tourists often want to see more than just one type of attraction or activity.

Like the concept of uniqueness, diversity is also adopted by Rotterdam as an important asset of the city and is repeatedly mentioned in both branding strategies and marketing statements. On the website of the writers of the city's branding strategy, they state that: "Rotterdam has a lot to offer, ranging from museums and attractions to food markets and festivals" (Rotterdam partners, n.d.). From the strategies, it also appears that, by organizing and hosting big, international events, the city aims to create an even more diversified offer of activities in Rotterdam (CMO, 2008).

#### 4.1.2 What Rotterdam has to offer as a tourism destination

Once again, the presentation of the supply of tourist attractions demonstrates a broad spectrum of activities to do and places to visit, which is exactly what pushes the media to recommend visiting Rotterdam (NY Times, 2014; Rough Guides, 2014).

Rotterdam is home to several sites of modern architecture that attract an ongoing stream of visitors. The Kubuswoningen and Van Nelle fabriek have been incorporated in the list of Rotterdam's highlights for a long time. In recent years, the central train station and the Markthal (picture) have been added to this list.

What is remarkable, is the fact that general tourism information sources in Rotterdam barely provide any information about how to go around town to visit the architectural sites. The most comprehensive source of information that can be found on the internet, [www.rotterdam.info](http://www.rotterdam.info), offers the visitor an extensive list of the most famous architectural sites around the city, but provides only little information about the possibilities to do a comprehensive tour or to join organized tours. If a visitor is interested in such tours, in most cases they will have to search specifically for agencies that offer a tour, or visit websites that are specifically focused on architecture. The agencies behind the city's "World Port, World City" branding campaigns have launched a website that offers the visitor exactly what they need to know when they want to explore Rotterdam's architectural sites: [www.architectuurinrotterdam.nl](http://www.architectuurinrotterdam.nl).

Despite the fact that there is a lot of information to be found about how an architourist can find their way around the city, guided or not, it is remarkable that the general tourism information source on the internet has not incorporated a clear explanation of the possibilities for guided architecture tours.



*Rotterdam's famous Kubuswoningen and Markthal, which are situated next to each other (Taken by the author in April, 2015).*

## 4.2 Architourism and tourists' motives: An overview

As mentioned before, I have identified several themes before starting the data collection, based on the gathered literature. However, especially during the interviews, respondents were given the opportunity to share their general stories that were not specifically focused on any of the themes. As a result, a few other themes have been identified. This will be explained in the following paragraphs.

### ***Types of tourists***

Every respondent indicated that there is at least a small percentage of visitors that appears to be participating in order to broaden their knowledge about the topic and who are looking to do so repetitively, in different places around the country, or even world. However, the general response to questions about the types of tourists visiting was that, despite the high amount of visitors with a professional background in architecture or engineering, the division between people that intend to broaden their knowledge and people that visit architectural sites more casually is fairly equal.

*“Right now, it’s still 80% of the customers that join the tours because they have a professional background related to architecture or engineering.” – Owner of architecture tours agency*

*“There’s people that want an extensive explanation of all of the architectural sites, they demand a tailored story. But then again there’s also people that just want a short explanation, and everyone in between.” – Rotterdam tour guide*

It appears that, while it is evident that a community of significant size exists of practitioners of serious leisure in the architecture world, there is also a big group of tourists that undertake trips or tours to architectural sites as part of their leisure trip, without the intention to broaden their knowledge, regardless their professional background.

On one particular occasion where I took part in an architecture tour exploring the Docklands of Amsterdam, this notion found some support in the conversations I had with both the tour guide and the participants of the tour. The group consisted of about fifteen people that all worked for a German engineering company, specialized in housing development. However, the tour guide emphasized that their participation in the tour was mainly a way for them to fill in their leisure time, rather than a need to acquire knowledge about the area addressed during the tour.

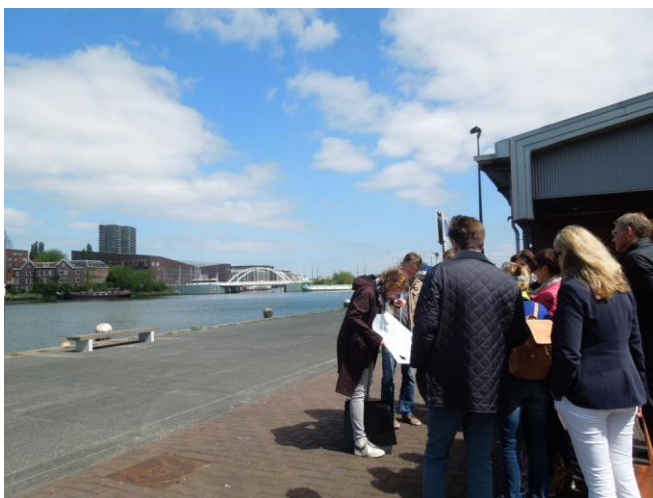
*“For professionals it is very remarkable that many people seem to join our tours in order to get inspiration for their own jobs. Even if the way the buildings here are built is very different from that in their home country, they often still take the ideas back with them.” – Owner of architecture tour agency*

*“Architecture agencies that are on excursion aim to be inspired, but teambuilding and incentive are also deemed important by these groups.” – Owner of architecture tour agency*

*“Most serious are delegations that are on a study field trip, for example from municipalities or project developers. They often intend to see ‘best practise’-examples so they can apply it in their home country.” – Utrecht tour guide*

A significant part of the visitors that attend architecture tours has a professional background related to architecture. One of the interviewees estimated the percentage of professionals among their customers to be at 80%. Like the group in the example, they often travel for team activities, but inspiration is an important motivation for them as well.

What is remarkable is the fact that the vast majority of the visitors of Skyscraperpage.com demonstrated a very big interest in acquiring knowledge about buildings, which is slightly in contrast to what has been said by the interviewees. On the internet forum, visitors not only ask each other or write about certain specifications of buildings, but they also show interest in buildings that are yet to be built. Whether or not these online visitors have a professional background remained unknown, which makes it difficult to assess whether their interest derives from their job or is mainly personal.



*Participating in an architecture tour around the docklands of Amsterdam (Taken by the author in May, 2015).*

### ***Types of motivations***

*“It really is about authenticity, the extraordinary.” – Rotterdam tour guide*

*“The tour is often a cultural-historic walk, visitors want to know how it relates to history and culture.” – Dutch tour guide*

The visitors' need for authenticity was confirmed by all of the respondents. Four of the respondents convincingly stated that they incorporate the buildings' relation to or role in the city's or country's history and culture, because this is what the visitors want to hear. This applies to both visitors with a professional and a non-professional background. However, the extent to which a visitor is looking for authenticity appears to be dependent on the visitors' descent. When asked about the difference between native and foreign visitors, three of the respondents indicated that foreign visitors express an interest in the historical and cultural background of buildings. Despite the fact that native visitors share this interest, it is to a smaller extent as they also show more interest in the history of the building itself and the buildings' utility. One respondent said that this can be attributed to the fact that native people may be more aware of their own country's history and culture.

*“The participants also want the story to be linked to the situation in their own country. So you really need to tell them about how it's different here to there.” – Rotterdam tour guide*

Non-Dutch visitors show a particular interest in having the difference to their home country explained and shown. Some of the tour guides that were interviewed indicated that this is in fact an important part of the story that is being told during tours, as this is often something the visitors specifically ask for. One of the tour guides among the respondents mentioned that this tendency inspired them to incorporate this difference also in tours with native visitors, but then turns the story around: They tell the visitors about how foreign visitors are fascinated by the difference to how it is in their own country.

In contrast to what the interviewees have stated, the visitors of the internet forum show next to no interest in culture. Their main interests are focused on utility and specifications of buildings, as well as other technical aspects of the built environment and even the supporting infrastructures such as public transit.

Another interesting divide between the visitors to the forum and the visitors of guided tours is the fact that the visitors of the internet forum tend to focus on complete skylines and the bigger built environment, while the interviewees talk more about individual buildings or sites as an attractive entity in itself.

*“Yes, I think fame plays a role. A well-known name [of an architect] increases the buildings’ worth or at least the interest by the public in it. People really want to see it then.” – Utrecht tour guide 2*

*“Awards don’t play a role, ‘big names’ do. Everyone wants to see Koolhaas, MVRDV, UN Studio, solely because of their fame around the world.” – Owner of architecture tour agency*

*“They often like to hear about the background of a building, about the architect and if there is anything special about it. (...) I notice that people specifically ask for it, what can be recognized about this building, so that they can pass on this knowledge to others, show others what they have learned.” – Utrecht tour guide*

For a building to have received the status of ‘icon’ at some point in time does positively influence the number of visitors showing their interest in seeing that building. For a big part, this has to do with the people’s desire to see something ‘famous’ and being able to say that they have seen particular sites, according to three of the respondents who were asked about this. However, two of these respondents also emphasized that, in most cases, this interest starts decreasing after several years, as this iconic status is for a large part driven by hype.

As I mentioned before, patterns between statements started to emerge as the data collection took place. Out of these patterns, I have identified two more themes that will contribute to answering my research questions and expanding the knowledge about architourism.

*“Sometimes people.. They think certain buildings are very ugly.” – Utrecht tour guide 2*

*“ They do not like everything they see, though.” – Rotterdam tour guide*

*“Participants are mainly impressed by the atmosphere coming towards them.” – Dutch tour guide*

Aesthetic and atmosphere are also considered important factors of motivation, according to a respondent. They claimed that visitors do not mind hearing about technical specifications and often find this interesting, but in the end it really is about how they experience the built environment.

This was supported by two other respondents who, when asked about the role of aesthetics, also emphasized that aesthetics played an important role in both positive and negative ways. Participants in guided tours are not afraid to express their discontent with what a building looks like.

Visitors of the internet forum at Skyscraperpage.com also demonstrate a particular focus on the aesthetics of buildings, but in a more tangible way. They are often talking about designs, measurements and using terms such as 'eye catcher'.

### ***The industry of architourism***

*"Many architecture guides are educated as architects, but with the economic crisis people had to be creative in order to maintain a good income. For some people, that meant starting up a business in offering architecture tours." – Owner of architecture tour agency*

*"I try to find out their interests, what they want to see or don't want to see. I try to respond to this by structuring a tour as such." – Utrecht tour guide*

Innovativeness plays an important role in the business. The majority of the respondents indicated that they highly value their customers' ideas about the tours they participate in and are always trying to reinvent themselves to add new dimensions or features to their tours. One respondent said that she consciously made efforts during every tour to make it as accessible and pleasant as possible for everyone, ranging from professionals to kids that joined together with their parents.

Despite the relative newness of the industry, the popularity seems to be rising. The main reason that architecture tours are not that known among tourists is because the offer in tours had not started to emerge until only several years ago, according to a respondent.

### ***The role of media***

*"Generally it is a situation of... is it a hype, yes or no? Put it like this, in the case of Rotterdam, 70% of visitors has somehow heard of the Markthal and is therefore interested in seeing it." – Rotterdam tour guide*

*"Especially when something is written about a site. There is this story by the New York Times stating that Rotterdam is a top ten destination, as a consequence demand for this destination increases. So first and foremost, demand is driven by journalists that often have a specific background in a theme. And this will go on for a couple of years." – Rotterdam tour guide*

*“Yes, someone has to have written something about it, or it has to have been awarded a prize. (...) Someone has to have labelled a site as ‘iconic’, that’s when chances of people wanting to visit it are highest, which is very convenient for me.” – Utrecht tour guide*

*“It is very important that journalists use it in their work, that prizes are being awarded, that it is mentioned. It has to appear in the media.” – Utrecht tour guide 2*

Remarkably, a motive that was mentioned by every respondent, which is not explicitly mentioned in the theoretical concepts, is the influence of media on people’s desire to see buildings or other architectural sites. All of the respondents indicated that visitors show a particular interest in buildings when they have read or heard something about it, may it be in newspapers, magazines, on the internet or in television programmes.

*“What’s also remarkable is that visitors are triggered by topicality. When something new appears, or when a site is renovated or receives media attention for whatever reason, it is very noticeable that more people visit it.” – Rotterdam tour guide*

One respondent stated that not only media attention in the form of promotion or review has a positive influence on the number of visitors. The respondent claimed that even a news story that is only indirectly related to the building as an attraction may trigger potential visitors to come and take a look. As an example, the Markthal in Rotterdam was mentioned. In April 2015 a big leakage caused damage to the building, leaving some shops and apartments without water and electricity (NOS, 2015). According to the respondent, in the end this resulted in an increase of visitors after the event.

*“Others have to have said something about it, which is very interesting. It needs to be mentioned in the media, awards are also important. It brings attention to it. This works really well, looking at the example of the Markthal, if something happens people want to see it, there is a lot of curiosity. (...) [However] what used to be an icon in earlier years, may have totally lost any demand, so it shifts.” – Dutch tour guide*

Despite the positive influence media may have, respondents emphasized that the absence of media attention can quickly lead to a big decrease of interest in architectural sites. Even if a building receives an iconic status after a while, the interest in visiting it will gradually decline as the media and other sources of information pay less attention to it.

## 5. Discussion

### *5.1 Contribution to established literature*

Not only has the gathered data partially confirmed what has been said in the established literature, but it has also provided new insights on these concepts as well as possible new topics of research. Established sources of literature have reported that fame and being known has a positive influence on the amount of visitors that are interested in visiting a site, but the strength of the influence that was reported by the respondents did not become clear when analysing the literature.

The three types of tourists that are identified in the Serious Leisure Perspective-framework by Stebbins show, to a certain extent, similarities with the types of tourists that have been described by respondents. The respondents of the interviews indicated that most visitors can be considered practitioners of either casual leisure or serious leisure. What is interesting is that the visitors of the internet forum also appear to be the serious leisure type of tourists, whereas the interviewees indicated that there is a fairly equal divide between serious leisure and casual leisure.

Ockman and Frausto have identified four different types of motives that may encourage tourists to visit architectural sites. This research has shown similarities to this typology, but only to a certain extent. Out of the four typologies (authenticity, exoticness, spectacle and escapism), authenticity, exoticness and spectacle were confirmed to be important for visitors by the respondents of the interviews. Respondents to the interviews stated that visitors are often looking for a sense of authenticity in terms of the buildings relation to history or culture, which can also be related to exoticness. The confirmed desire of visitors to see something unique and different also indicates an interest in exoticness. In terms of spectacle, respondents mentioned that visitors were looking for spectacle in two different ways: in terms of aesthetics (height, shape) but especially in terms of fame and notoriety of the building and the architect that designed it. There was no explicit mentioning of escapism as a motive. Furthermore, there was the motive of publicity and the strong correlation between media attention and the number of visitors. In a sense, this is slightly similar to the motive of spectacle in terms of fame, but the fact that respondents mentioned media as such a specific influence shows that this can be seen as a motive on its own.

The case study shows that it is no surprise that Rotterdam holds such a prominent image of architecture destination within the Netherlands, but also outside of it, when reviewing their city marketing strategies. Rotterdam's branding strategies are similar to the strategies that have been described in the literature as most effective.

The fact that Rotterdam is generally and internationally viewed as an upcoming destination can be viewed as proof that these strategies can indeed be deemed as most effective in attracting visitors. This research provides proof that the themes that are mentioned by existing literature to be relevant for successful city branding, e.g. uniqueness and diversity, do indeed seem to lead to success in practise. It is however important to keep in mind that the strong relationship between architourism and Rotterdam's branding strategies can for a big part be ascribed to the fact that Rotterdam is a city with many famous architectural sites. It is hard to determine whether it is the branding strategies or the presence of the architectural sites themselves that make the architourism business so successful in this town.

### *5.2 Relevance*

As has been stressed before, the exploratory nature of this research has supplied the reader with an extensive overview of architourism. Not only does it offer a general outlook on what architourism actually is, but it also explores several different aspects that are important to the industry, such as tourist motives and backgrounds.

The outcomes of these research will not only be contributing to existing literature but may also be applied in a practical sense. As I have stressed before, architourism is a new field of tourism, it is a trend of only a couple of years that individual tourists have expressed interest in joining these tours. Respondents (guides) have expressed their interest in the outcome of this research as it may help them (re)design the tours they offer based on the motives that are identified.

### *5.3 Limitations*

As with any research project that is being carried out, this research has come across some limitations that have influenced the research process and possibly the outcomes. Some are inevitable, some may be avoided or solved when further research is conducted.

The main problem I came across during this research was the poor accessibility of the data I initially intended to gather. At first, my intention was to conduct a questionnaire and/or interviews among tourists that participated in architecture tours, as well as tourists that individually visited architectural sites. However, due to the relatively privatized nature of architecture tours it was hard to get in touch with these tourists in the short time I was given, or even be able to participate individually in the first place. I ended up having to change my methods to interviewing tour guides and other professionals in the architourism sector. Through participant observation I was still able to get in contact with individual tourists.

Another limitation is the possible bias caused by subjectivity that is inevitable when using qualitative methods. Despite maximum efforts to remain as objective as possible, there is no guarantee that the research remained uninfluenced by my own interpretations.

As this is a research conducted for a bachelor thesis, there was only a limited amount of time available to compose a research plan, gather and analyse the data. My obvious recommendation for future research would be to reserve a longer amount of time to conduct the research.

#### *5.4 Future research*

The outcomes of this research have given a more extended outlook on the world of architourism. However, the outcomes have also shown that there are some topics that may very well be interesting to further explore. Researchers could pay some extra attention to the new patterns that showed from the interviews. Especially the reported high influence of media attention on the popularity of architectural sites, as this is relatively poorly mentioned in existing literature.

Also, the remarkable difference of outcomes between the interviews and the analysis of the internet forum shows that different kinds of architourists can be found in different places. Future research could potentially explore these differing backgrounds more profoundly. It might be especially interesting to further investigate how one might potentially be able to attract the 'regular' tourist that does not initially aim for visiting architectural sites to architourism. Despite the fact that this is a very large group that may be difficult to grasp and sample, it would create a lot of possibilities for researchers but also for the business, as they could incorporate the findings in their marketing strategies.

## 6. Conclusion

This exploratory research has provided insights on a number of aspects of the architourism industry, including city branding, tourist motives and tourist backgrounds. The information gathered about all of these aspects each contribute to the creation of a more clear overview of the world of architourism and has thus helped me to answer the main research question *What is architourism?* Based on literary sources, architourism can be defined as ‘a sub-type of urban tourism with a specific focus on modern architecture, in which tourists visit famous architectural sites.’

Looking at the case study of city branding in Rotterdam, it appears that the concepts needed for successful city branding, according to literature, are indeed applied. It is harder to answer the question about the relation between city branding and architourism. Even though it is obvious that architourism is popular in Rotterdam and architecture plays a big role in the city’s branding strategies, it is hard to say whether these two facts have a direct causal relationship.

When moving on to the assessment of tourist motives and backgrounds, it has become clear that architourists can be classified according to the types of tourists mentioned in the Serious Leisure Perspective by Stebbins, with an emphasis on the fact that architourists are mainly divided between serious leisure and casual leisure. As architourism attracts a significant amount of visitors that have a professional background in architecture or related topics, a division can be made between professional and non-professional visitors.

It can also be concluded that there is a certain pattern to be found in the motives of tourists. The outcomes of this research showed that authenticity, spectacle and knowledge by publicity are the most common motivations among architourists, regardless their background. Finally, based on the interviews it can be concluded that the business behind architourism is relatively young, but is rapidly growing due to an increasing interest in architecture but also because of the constant innovations being made by the people that work in the business. This research has furthermore provided a number of interesting topics that have the potential to be researched more profoundly.

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## 8. Appendix

### Appendix 1: Interview questions

#### Interview questions

- Wat is uw baan? Wat voor soort tours geeft u over het algemeen en waar? Kunt u uitleggen hoe de tours aangeboden worden etc.
- Wat is over het algemeen de achtergrond van de deelnemers aan de tour? Komen zij in groepen of juist particulier? Zijn dat veel Nederlanders of ook buitenlanders?
- Past u uw verhaal ook aan aan de achtergrond van de deelnemer(s)?
- Wat voor vragen worden er over het algemeen gesteld tijdens de tours?
- Wat is voor deelnemers de reden om mee te lopen met een tour?
- Zijn de deelnemers geïnteresseerd in meerdere tours en plaatsen binnen de stad of in Nederland?
- Willen deelnemers duidelijk iets opsteken van de tours? Voor welke redenen? (Professionele achtergrond, hobby, etc.)
- Voor zover u weet, reizen toeristen speciaal voor de architectuur of is het meer een onderdeel van een groter verblijf?
- Zijn de toeristen geïnteresseerd in hoe een gebouw of de bebouwing in de geschiedenis van de stad/het land past?
- Zijn de deelnemers geïnteresseerd in het verschil met hun thuisland? (Als ze buitenlands zijn?)
- Zijn toeristen geïnteresseerd in het zien van iets unieks?
- (Wederom) Is de tour onderdeel van een vakantie? Is dit puur ter ontspanning of...?
- Heeft u het gevoel dat deelnemers snel onder de indruk zijn van bijvoorbeeld de grootte of esthetiek van een gebouw?
- Zijn deelnemers vaak geïnteresseerd in de achtergrond van een gebouw/bouwstijl? De architect, "fame", evt. prijzen gewonnen etc?