The Rising Crowdedness of Amsterdam

Aims
- to examine the challenges of rising crowdedness of Amsterdam
- to understand the negative consequences of rising crowdedness
- to suggest ways for improvements

Challenges
- Locals 1 : 2.6 Tourists
- 13,000,000 tourists visit a year
- 880,000 bicycles in city centre

Impacts of crowdedness
# Public Nuisance
Visible in the amounts of litter, irritation and the queues; 2.24 reports of public nuisance per day

# Decline in Attractiveness of the City

Methods
- Interview
- Observation

Limitations
- small sample size
- only cross-sectional analysis

Solutions
- to address the overflow of bicycles
  - improve bike structure by building bike parking racks;
  - introduce new bike storage facilities

- to address congestions
  - reorganize the public space by specifying the use of land, e.g. for cyclists' or for pedestrians' uses;
  - reduce the number of brothels and coffee-shops

- to address the pressure of tourism
  - set up bus routes heading to attractions outside city centre;
  - relocate the start and end stops of bus tours;
  - develop rural areas for tourism;
  - pave new footpaths (long distance trails)

Tourism congestion in Amsterdam will likely emerge and generate negative externalities to both society and tourism development, thus multiple measures with different sectors should be taken by government for balancing the situation.

Reference
The Crowdedness of Amsterdam and the Way Out

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AIM: 
“Alleviate Contested Public Space by Minor Alteration Carry Out on Roads”

Q: Why there is Contested Public Space?
“Consultancy.UK”(2015): Main reason root on the influx of tourists. Increase by 40%, in total of nearly 14 million tourist as at 2014 into Netherlands was recorded. Within, up to 5.2 million tourists visited Amsterdam.

“Leisure Expert Stephen Hodes” forecast there will be 30 million tourists in 2030 (to Amsterdam).

Residents of Amsterdam have been complaining about over-crowdedness in Amsterdam. Especially in some tourists spots, disturbances, such as noises and road traffic, caused by tourists have interrupt local daily life.

CHALLENGES

1. “Over-parked Bicycles on Roads and Streets”
   - In Amsterdam, there are no specific bicycle parking area. Users always park their bike on the sides of pathway or streets which occupies much spaces of road and cause crowdedness and traffic.

2. “Unclear Road Division between Bicycle and Pedestrian Road”
   - The bicycle and pedestrian roads are divided by one line with similar colours filled in both paths which make people confuse. Without knowledge about road directions, tourists may walk on the bicycle road or cycle on pedestrian road. Thus, enhance risks of accidents on both roads.

3. “Immature Cycling by Visitors cause Disorder on Cycling path and Tourist Spots”
   - Having observed that many tourists rent bikes in Amsterdam. However, they are not familiar with the direction and occasionally stop their bikes within middle of the road to check the map. While this may causes sudden traffic and accidents, it also provide unhappy experience to both tourists and local residents.

SOLUTIONS

Alterations on Roads and Create of Underground Spaces aiming at Restoring Public Space and Road Safety enabling better Road Usage Experiences

1. Underground bicycle parking – Some underground bicycle parking place. By constructing more in several spots in Amsterdam, less bicycles are needed to park on surface roads. Hence, release back public space for road transport purposes.

2. Clear road colour – Significant colour contrast should be used on bicycle tracks to inform tourists which path to walk and cycle. It also allows people to be more aware about other bikers have trespassed other roads. Giving out pressure to all, not just foreigners, to accommodate with safe biking rules.

3. More road signs – By lessening the need of navigation by phones, all bikers save energy on multi-tasking and concentrate on road safety. Signs prevent tourists from stopping on roads and stopping on sidewalks checking map direction. It enhance crowd control by improving flow of people. While road signs merely occupy small circle of space on ground but able to diminish bad awareness to all.

METHODS

Interview:
Awradan (42, construction worker)
Mervyn (16, student)
Potterdam (left, 22, student) & Haartem (right, 23, Work at theatre)

Observation:
Visiting various spots in Amsterdam and observe

CONCLUSIONS

Mentioned are short term solutions aiming at alleviating contested public space through releasing back of spaces by relocating bicycles underground and improving road experiences and safety from our observations.

Long term solutions are yet to be planned in order to accommodate the future forecast of tourists. To observe of the Dutch people reluctant to migrate outside Amsterdam, future public management should aim at tourists from Amsterdam to other parts of Amsterdam, not relocating local residents.

LIMITATIONS/ REMARKS

- Our basic understanding towards Amsterdam enable us to demonstrate a long term policy plan with details and accommodate with theory in the tackle of the Crowdedness problem.

- Although Amsterdam has described as one of the highest population density city in Europe, in comparison of other cities globally, Amsterdam carries rather relax urban experiences.

- The mentioned solutions are many borrowed from experience from Hong Kong. It is viewed as feasible policies, but the suggestions have not made any consensus from local Amsterdam residents. Therefore, supports from people towards these solutions is yet to be known.

REFERENCES


IS AMSTERDAM CROWDED TO YOU?

BACKGROUND

We are PdL students joining Summer School Program in Amsterdam. During our visit, we found that tourists everywhere which caused a crowdedness problem here and we have conducted a research on this issue.

CHALLENGE

Tourism is undoubtedly an important source of revenue to Amsterdam (estimated 46.4 million euro in 2016), e.g., job opportunities (about 606 thousand) and city’s profile. Yet, exceeding number of tourists also puts a burden to the local inhabitants and the livability in the communities.

In 2015, there are over 15 million of visitors to Amsterdam, while the local population is under 800 thousand. The crowdedness problem and balance between tourist development and livability of community are the great challenges for the government to tackle.

AIMS

According to the report conducted by Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research in 2007, the tourism has become a daily problem to the inhabitants—traffic jams and the crowdedness in public transport. The public space is occupied by tourists and the tourism planning is prioritized to the needs of local communities. Hence, the city council is facing a dilemma of maintaining the tourism industry and the livability of the inhabitants.

METHODS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with several local citizens in Amsterdam.

- Questionnaire Design
  A questionnaire with three parts is constructed. To facilitate our quantitative survey research. The survey is designed to examine the feeling of crowdedness of the inhabitants caused by tourists.

First, the background information of the interviewees are collected by their living area and working place.

Secondly, their feeling towards crowdedness in Amsterdam are measured by using a 5-likert point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In the final part, solutions are asked in order to have a more precise understanding of crowdedness in Amsterdam for the inhabitants.

SOLUTIONS

One of a possible solutions to crowdedness problem is local-based tourism.

The purpose of local-based tourism is to educate and inspire tourists by volunteer ambassadors, e.g., retired elderly or students. Apart from visiting the major tourist attractions, tourists are encouraged to discover different faces of the cities and explore the unique cultural features of local communities.

It should be a low-budget scheme as we suggest the government to recruit volunteer. As the tour will be taken place in local community, the main expense of the scheme is the rent for venues. When the scheme has the government funding for starting up, the expenditure will be supported by the tour fee.

Driving visitors to small communities, overcrowding problem in the city centre can be alleviated.

CONCLUSION

We have conducted 4 interviews with the local citizen of Amsterdam. We received their opinion of the crowdedness in Amsterdam and we asked for their solution. They are all from Amsterdam who aged from 21-33. Two of them think that the street where they were are crowded to them. And all of them think that Amsterdam is crowded to them. Two of them realized that the problem of crowdedness is getting serious.

We also asked for the solution to the crowdedness problem in Amsterdam. They stated that expanding of the city and opening more shops around Amsterdam can be one of the solutions.

LIMITATIONS/ REMARK

The suggestion faces several limitations as follows.

1) The short term performance may not be effective as the city council needs a series of promotion for the new type tourism.

2) As the accommodation region for tourists in Amsterdam is mainly in the city centre, the crowdedness of tourists may still occur in morning or at night.

3) It may arouse oppositions from travel agencies for mass tourism as it would decrease their interests.

REFERENCES


Cheung Kam Sun 53093594
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Inhabitants vs Tourists

Aims
- Release the pressure of tourism towards Amsterdam inhabitants
- Suggest possible varieties of tourism Amsterdam could develop
- Balance the perspectives of economic benefits and livable city

Challenges
- Crowdedness (5,000,000 tourists and 700,000 inhabitants), who majority gathered in the city centre → affect the quality of living to residents nearby
- 10% of employment related to tourism, i.e. cutting number of tourists is impossible → solutions other than tourists control are required

Solution - Separation
1. Separate tourists and Inhabitants
   1.1 Tourists (where to allocate) → Concentrated tourists hotspots, e.g. around Dam Square ← (how) Land use policy: listing and regulating purposes of land in designated area, e.g. entertainment and leisure, but not for residence
   1.2 Inhabitants (where to allocate) → Surroundings of tourists hotspots ← (how) Self-decision of moving out to avoid crowdedness; subsidy: to low-income group who cannot afford the cost to move out; those who could tolerate the crowded environment would decide to stay (they do not consider crowdedness as a ‘problem’)
   Note: daily necessities (e.g. supermarkets and restaurants) have to be satisfied in resident areas to avoid inconvenience for inhabitants going to the tourists hotspots frequently

2. Separate tourists by purpose of travel
   2.1 Entertainment (where to allocate) → City Centre; Red Light District; Coffee Shop
   2.2 Eco-tourism (where to allocate) → Amstelveen; Amsterdamse Bos Park
   2.3 Leisure (where to allocate) → Amsterdam Nieuw-West ← (what) Resorts ← (how) outsourcing to private sector for construction and management
⇒ Tourists with different travelling purposes would go to different parts of Amsterdam/the Netherlands, which lowers the pressure and crowdedness of the city centre
⇒ Promotion of diversified travelling have to be done by the government, which encourages the function of bypassing and attracts more tourists with different travelling purposes → higher economic benefit from tourism

Report by FAN Chun Yan Jonathan, LI Jin Yi and WONG Cheuk Ka Cheryl
Solution of crowdedness in Amsterdam from the governmental perspective

Background:
- Studying in Environmental policy in City University of Hong Kong
- Take part in Summer School Programme in University of Amsterdam for one month
- Aims to identify contemporary public policy and public management challenges in Amsterdam and formulate pragmatic solutions for those challenges
- Study focus on the over-crowdedness in Amsterdam
- Use qualitative method to conduct our study
  (i.e. participant observation, interviewing, document analysis)

"Visit Amsterdam, See Holland" is good for Amsterdam?
Since 2009, the international visitors’ spending consistently in overnight visits of the total destination have increased, including city and region with 40% growth (Amsterdam Marketing). This reflected that the tourist-related industries have rapidly increased.
- 12 million hotel bookings registered in the Amsterdam in 2014
- The demand for the hotels in Amsterdam has increased 11% from 2013 to 2014
  (Research, Information and Statistics)

However, more tourist-related industries will cause spatial conflicts with the local community since there is a trend that it is taking larger proportion in the land use in order to develop its' tourism.

Continuous growth of the number of tourists raise crowdedness in Amsterdam
Since the government didn’t have a comprehensive urban planning with the balance of economic development and living quality of locals, Amsterdam is getting crowded. Because of the limited carrying capacity of Amsterdam, there are no clearly separation between the tourist spot and local residents which city is more crowded as the tourists and locals are sharing the same space. Based on our interview, we found that the negative impact to the locals is more obvious in summer which is the peak season of the tourist activities with the growing population of tourists.

CHALLENGE

Cannabis tourist or prostitution cause nuisance to community
In Amsterdam, Coffee Shop and Red Light District are very famous which there is almost two million tourists in 2014 Amsterdam to consume the cannabis in the 'coffee shop' everyday. (The Irish Times)

The local authority in southern border areas will rank moderate to high levels of soft drug tourism, coffee shop nuisance and illegal soft drug dealing. According to Benschop, Wouters and Korf (2015), the data of related incidents is like that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public nuisance incidents</td>
<td>24,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft drug incident</td>
<td>5,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft drug offences recorded by the prosecution service</td>
<td>3,882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pressures from tourists to local community
In fact, there are more than 70 ice cream, waffle and Nutella shops which are famous among the tourists in the city centre (Dutch News). The more tourist related shops open, the less living related shops survive. Since those chain shop will raise the rent price of the shop, the small and medium-sized enterprises may not be able to afford, so the small business will close and large company survive.

Observation:
- Less types of shops in visitor spots (always tourists serving shops)
- Seldom see the shop that has the local traditional cultural characteristics

Interview result:
- Dissatisfied with high living cost caused by tourist consumptions
- Price level and living costs in the centre is higher than outside the centre
- Financial burden occur

Suggestion

Limiting the numbers of daily visitor by set a maximum for the visit population
Hong Kong has implemented “one trip per week” in 2015 to tackle the problem caused by the massive mainland travelers, including the maximum urban, parallel goods trading, and inconvenience to Hong Kong citizens. So take reference from Hong Kong, this policy can lessen the burden of Amsterdam, otherwise the citizens be seriously disturbed.

Goal:
- Develop the tourism sector in a sustainable and fair way
- Balance the gain and loss between the residents and visitors
- Protect Citizens’ rights and needs

Method:
- Restricting the daily visit population
- Mitigate the nuisances that created by tourists

Expected result:
- Broader the urban space
- More comfortable and convenience for the pedestrians

Adapting the underground parking system

According to figures, the number of bikes in Amsterdam estimated around 800,000 which is three times of cars. More than 60% of local people use their bike on a daily basis (amsterdam, 2016). But there are not enough space for parking which leads to the problem, land scarcity.

Goal:
- Provide more space for people to park their bicycle
- Provide more spare lands for living

Method:
- Adopt the automatic parking system (APS)

Expected result:
- Minimize the land use of parking
- Double or even triple the capacity of parking area (Unimorns, 2015)
- Mitigate the problem of crowdedness

Develop an Eco-tourism

Amsterdam is next to two big cities, Rotterdam and The Hague, where can help to share the huge population of tourist with Amsterdam. Moreover, the landscape of these three cities are completely different, each of them have their own features. Therefore, it might not induce a vicious competition among those three cities. As Netherlands is a transit-oriented city, it is convenient for people to travel around the country by public transport.

Goal:
- Diverse some people out of the City Centre in order to lessen the pressure of crowdedness of Amsterdam central

Expected result:
- More tourist can explore more places and develop new tourist spot out of the City Centre
- Promote the idea of environmental protection

Method:
- Develop a transportation hub to connect with all the surrounding tourist spots
- Develop some new tourist spots into the rural areas
- Organize some bike tours in Amsterdam, like: Countryside Bike tour

Conclusion

Amsterdam could take reference from Hong Kong and other countries. Also, the public mediation and negotiation is necessary for government to pay effort on since it allow different parties to voice out which can help government to allocate its resources in an optimal way.

References:
- [List of references]

Limitation

Time consuming
- Take long times to do the public mediation, negotiation, and drafting the proposal
- Building a comprehensive basic infrastructure and facilities
- Do the promotion

Difficult to strike the balance between different stakeholders and aspects
- Limiting the tourists number:
  - Local residents VS Business sector
  - Eco-tourism
  - Human benefits VS Environmental protection
  - Underground parking system:
    - Land owners & residents VS government
TOURISM IN AMSTERDAM

Reuse of public space

**Aims**

- Understand the background and effects brought by tourism in Amsterdam
- Provision of measures to maintain the livability and sustainability of Amsterdam

**Background information**

- Hotel welcomed 6.7 million tourists in 2014
- Total no. of tourist: 14 million in 2014
- No. of coffee shops and cafe: ~ 1500 and mainly located in the central part of Amsterdam
- No. of hotels: 421 hotels with 26,287 rooms

**Methods**

- 5 Individual interviews
- Street observation (red light district, Nieuwmarkt, Spui)
- Secondary sources (scholarly journal article, Research Paper)

**Suggestions**

- **Vertical expansion**
  - Construction of high rise buildings can solve the over-crowding problem in the city center.
- **New Town Development**
  - New towns can be developed in the outskirt or suburbs of the city.
- **Urban Planning**
  - Route rationalization of transport can be carry out. Relocation of hotels and bars.

**Conclusion**

To preserve the livability and sustainability of Amsterdam, we suggest the government to adopt the above measures by reusing public space.

So, it can fully balance the socio-economic and environmental development in Amsterdam.

**Limitations**

- Limited sample size
- Time-Consuming
- Reliability and accuracy of data

**Consequences**

- **Boost of property value**
  - Annual price rise drastically since 2013
- **Economic Development**
  - 5.4% of GDP! (around 46 billion)
  - 9.6% of employment! (700 thousand jobs)
- **Problem of crowdedness**
  - Local are annoyed by the drunk pedaling beer bikes and garbage left on the street by visitors. (Reimerink, 2015)
- **Pollution problems**
  - Air pollution is a prominent causes of death in Amsterdam. Traffic is a source of generation of pollutants.
- **Social cost**
  - Inhabitants face the social problems like traffic congestion and higher living cost.

References:

1. UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2013 Edition