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To cite this article: Meghann Ormond & Francesco Vietti (2022) Beyond multicultural 'tolerance': guided tours and guidebooks as transformative tools for civic learning, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 30:2-3, 533-549, DOI: [10.1080/09669582.2021.1901908](https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2021.1901908)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2021.1901908>



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Published online: 23 Mar 2021.



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# Beyond multicultural ‘tolerance’: guided tours and guidebooks as transformative tools for civic learning

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## ABSTRACT

In bringing people together that otherwise might have little more than passing contact with one another, tourism is appreciated for its potential to transform mindsets by fostering multi-perspectivity, a cornerstone of global citizenship education, among both ‘tourists’ and ‘locals’. Hence, while tourism plays a significant role in marginalising and exploiting immigrants’ bodies, labour and heritages, it also holds significant potential as a critical pedagogical tool for transcending the limits of multicultural tolerance discourse and combatting exploitation and xenophobia. In this article, we reflect on two Europe-based global citizenship-inspired initiatives bringing together migration and tourism in novel ways: Migrantour guided walking tours and the Roots Guide guidebook. They endeavour to rework guided tours and guidebooks, two of tourism’s most common pedagogical tools, into ‘good company’ that supports the Arendtian practice of ‘visiting’ as a key mode of civic learning. In so doing, we explore the representational and structural opportunities and challenges that these two initiatives encounter as they seek to co-create multi-dimensional narratives and routes in ways that recognise guides’ diverse experiences and perceptions of the places they call home, avoid stereotypical representations of ‘communities’ and hold space for the real-life frictions that accompany diversity.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 29 August 2020  
Accepted 2 March 2021

## KEYWORDS

Global citizenship education; multi-perspectivity; Hannah Arendt; public pedagogy; migration; transformative learning

## Introduction

In bringing people together that otherwise might have little more than passing contact with one another, tourism has been appreciated for its educational potential to transform mindsets by exposing both ‘visitors’ and ‘locals’ to diverse perspectives on, and ways of living in, the world (Reisinger, 2013). Yet, while tourism may have the capacity to serve as a powerful vehicle for co-learning and emancipation, the superficial cultural and social exposure to and consumption of ‘the Other’ with which it is frequently associated can also serve as an instrument of oppression (Werry, 2008; Aytar & Rath, 2012). In this article, part of a special issue examining tourism’s potential and limitations as a social force for peace, we call attention to the ways in which an ethics of ‘tolerance’ underpinning the construction and wielding of common ‘tools’ of tourism – like guided tours and guidebooks – perpetuates this ‘tourism paradox’ (Boluk & Carnicelli, 2019:

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171) and examine strategies that deploy political theorist Hannah Arendt's (1977) notion of 'visiting' to move beyond it.

Political theorist Wendy Brown (2009) conceptualises 'tolerance' as a liberal democratic discursive de-politicisation of both the sources of political problems and the solutions to them, via the substitution of 'emotional and personal vocabularies' calling for justice and equality by political solutions that only hold space for uncomplicated celebration of 'diversity' and 'difference' (Brown, 2009: 16). Examples of this abound in tourism. Consider, for instance, the ways in which countless urban 'ethnic' neighbourhoods get sanitised as peaceful playgrounds of multicultural consumption for visitors (Shaw et al., 2004; Aytar & Rath, 2012), with immigrant and racialised 'Others' – spatially fixed and arranged into folklorised categories – rendered carriers of exotic scents, tastes and sounds that allow a privileged 'us' to reproduce and consume the variety of the world in 'our very own' cities. Conventional tourism practices' embrace of a de-politicised and containerised exposure to 'the Other' largely papers over social, economic and political inequalities while, at the same time, reinforcing, exacerbating and capitalising on them.

How, then, might critical tourism scholars and practitioners adjust the common 'tools' of tourism such that they can serve as pedagogical vehicles fostering not an ethics of multicultural tolerance but, rather instead, another kind of ethics that recognises our roles in 'the constitutive histories and powers organising contemporary problems and contemporary political subjects' (Brown, 2009: 16)? We examine this question through the lens of two Europe-based global citizenship education-inspired initiatives to which we are each closely tied in critical action research practice: Migrantour, a European network of intercultural guided urban walking tours, and Roots Guide, a guidebook of the Netherlands narrated by people with diverse migration backgrounds. Both initiatives seek to move beyond merely promoting 'our' tolerance of 'the migrant Other' and, instead, to foster the mutual recognition and dialogue among diverse social actors necessary to temper growing xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment. Yet Migrantour and the Roots Guide routinely encounter representational and structural challenges rooted in a discourse of multicultural tolerance that risk undermining the initiatives' objectives of re-politicising and challenging entrenched narratives that 'sometimes personalise, sometimes culturalise and sometimes naturalise' (Brown, 2009: 15) diverse perspectives and forms of inequality, contestation and conflict.

In the pages that follow, we first present this article's conceptual underpinnings. After observing how a multicultural politics of 'tolerance' gets implicitly reproduced through commonplace conventions and tools of tourism, we examine the ways in which a global citizenship-inspired politics of multi-perspectivity necessitates a fundamental transformation of such conventions and tools. We then discuss our guided tour and guidebook initiatives, Migrantour and the Roots Guide, exploring a set of representational and structural challenges we have encountered in working to make a shift towards fostering a more politically progressive form of engagement through 'visiting' (Arendt, 1992). We outline here the tactics we have developed to consciously and continuously disrupt 'tolerant' tourism narratives in order to foster greater civic recognition of and dialogue around real-life dissonances involving different social actors and interests. We conclude with brief reflections on how these experiences can be informative for practitioners developing similar initiatives and the scholars studying and/or contributing to them.

## From touring to visiting

Recognising tourism's 'worldmaking' force as an 'interpretable and malleable carrier/creator/confirmer of being and becoming' (Hollinshead et al., 2009: 427), scholars like Belhassen and Caton (2011) and Higgins-Desbiolles and Blanchard (2010) have stressed the significance of incorporating a more critical moral pedagogy into formal tourism education, which has long been driven and heavily informed by free market-based moral logic, so that future tourism industry and

policy actors – who are also engaged citizens – may consciously incorporate values of democracy, social justice and human rights into their practices.

Beyond the realm of formal tourism education, the values underpinning the production and use of tourism sites (e.g., museums, heritage sites, parks, etc.) and tools (e.g., guided tours and guidebooks) – powerful interpretive and performative vehicles for public pedagogy (Christie & Mason, 2003; Ablett & Dyer, 2009; Mair & Sumner, 2017) – also merit, and increasingly receive, considerable scrutiny for the uneven conditions they not only perpetuate but also engender between ‘foreign’ visitor and ‘local’ host as consumer and object of consumption, as spectator and performer of exotic difference (Urry, 2002). Cheng et al. (2010: 116) suggest that underpinning such relationships is a tacit co-enactment in tourism, first, of mutual ‘strangerhood’, ‘whereby visitors and hosts treat each other as ideal types and objects’ and, second, of service, ‘whereby both parties understand that the tourist is at leisure and the host is there to serve’ the tourist’s needs and expectations, ‘with no anticipation on either side that the tourist will adapt to the host context’ (116). If tourism is ‘one of the only contemporary sites outside of the education industry where explicitly designated, non-vocational learning about other times, places, and peoples takes place’ (Werry, 2008: 17), then these fundamentally uneven conditions of ‘strangerhood’ and ‘service’ severely disable our capacity to learn about and from one another in a civically minded way.

Yet, in tourism’s hegemonic narrative ‘walls’ that culturalise, naturalise and obscure uneven power structures (Brown, 2009), there are cracks through which light can enter. Wearing and Wearing (1996) refer to these cracks – moments and spaces in which mutual recognition and dialogue are possible – as ‘chora’, the ‘space between being and becoming or the “space in which place is made possible” [...] given meaning by the people who make use of the space’ (Grosz, 1995, in Wearing & Wearing, 1996: 233). It is on ‘chora’ – and the encounters that generate active ‘chorasters’ instead of flaneurs merely gazing through their own lenses upon the Other – that many educational, social and volunteer tourism initiatives focus, seeking to trouble both conditions of ‘strangerhood’ and ‘service’ in order to work towards more radically open, democratic and sustainable tourism practices.

In supporting the development of ‘chorasters’, Migrantour and the Roots Guide – explored later in this article – engage in a critical and reflexive form of global citizenship education (GCE) that embraces multi-perspectivity as a key tool with which to uncover and recognise the uneven processes that obscure difference, create inequalities, and maintain exploitation and our positions in these processes, ‘with a view to changing them and their attendant assumptions, identities, attitudes and power relations’ (Mannion et al., 2011: 452). A cornerstone of GCE, multi-perspectivity encompasses both the consciousness that one’s ‘view on the world is not universally shared, and others may differ profoundly’ (Dill, 2013: 40) and the competence of ‘think[ing] beyond the confines and particularities’ (40) of one’s own circumstances. It equips one to better grasp and navigate the range and dimensions of contemporary global interdependence and the social, economic, technological and environmental opportunities and challenges such interdependence poses.

The latest in a series of moral pedagogical movements concerned with the organisation and management of diversity over time and in space, GCE has emerged in the wake of assimilationism and multiculturalism. Whereas assimilationism sought social harmony through the reduction of diversity within the nation-state, multiculturalism sought it by placing emphasis instead on celebrating the societal gifts brought about through cultural diversity, while simultaneously abstracting ‘culture’ by obscuring internal heterogeneity and rendering it folklorised heritage that ‘really need not be taken seriously’ (Dill, 2013: 91), thus contributing to the de-politicisation inherent to tolerance discourse (Brown, 2009). GCE, by contrast, draws attention to our mutual imbrication in the narratives of one another’s lives and how these ‘multiple, overlapping enacted narratives are the sources of [our] allegiances, belonging and identity as an individual and a member of larger collectives’ (Dill, 2013: 153). It has not escaped critique. GCE’s acceptance of a

de facto 'global world economy and society' (Mannion et al., 2011: 452) complicates framings of the nation-state as the privileged container of civic political engagement. Without a circumscribed sphere of mutual accountability, individuals' 'pre-political virtues' like care, respect and responsibility are held by some to be 'projected onto human problems unmediated by a [collective] political framing' (Butcher, 2017: 133-134) with little chance to effect political change. Yet, while complicating national belonging, GCE is increasingly appreciated for its framing of diversity as the intersectionality of forces that, at different scales and sites, shape us as individuals and our capacity to act (Nussbaum, 2002).

In our late-modern era where 'humans need to work together [...] to achieve common understanding and mutual recognition in a world without fixed truths' (Gillies, 2016: 152), an embrace of multi-perspectivity could attract critique for fostering ethical relativism (Wansink et al., 2018). Yet, for political theorist Hannah Arendt (1977) and philosopher and GCE proponent Martha Nussbaum (2002), both a plurality of perspectives and mutual recognition of these different perspectives are requisite to developing informed individual judgement and enabling adequate deliberation and collective action in democratic societies:

Political thought is representative. [...] This process of representation does not blindly adopt the actual views of those who stand somewhere else, and hence look upon the world from a different perspective; this is a question neither of empathy, as though I tried to be or to feel like somebody else, nor of counting noses and joining a majority but of being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not. The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion.

(Arendt, 1977: 241)

This 'enlarged mentality' (Arendt, 1977: 241) can be accomplished through what Arendt (1992) calls the practice of 'visiting'.

As a mode of civic learning, 'visiting' requires one, on the one hand, to pay 'considered attention' to and engage with 'stories of an event from each of the plurality of perspectives that might have an interest in telling it' and, on the other, to have one's sense-making interrupted and to reflexively embrace the ensuing disorientation that comes with grappling with 'how the world looks different to someone else' (Biesta & Cowell, 2012: 59). It is distinct from conventional notions of 'tourism' and 'empathy', which, Biesta and Cowell (2012: 50, citing Disch, 1997: 159) argue, tend to obscure and erase plurality as well as dismiss friction and distance: 'The former [tourism] does so by an objectivist stance that holds to "how we do things" as a lens through which different cultures can only appear as other. The latter [empathy] trades this spectatorial lens "to assume native glasses, identifying with the new culture so as to avoid the discomfort of being in an unfamiliar place".'

With our judgment of the world around us and others in it mediated intersubjectively, not only 'our choice of company' (Arendt, 2003: 145-146) – i.e., the range of others' viewpoints with which we choose to engage and surround ourselves – matters but so do the forms or vehicles through which we are exposed to our company's viewpoints. For Arendt, the key to enlarging one's mentality is 'not to see through the eyes of someone else, but to see with your own eyes from a position that is not your own' (Biesta, 2016: 187; cf. Gatta, 2014). Yet the dialogical exchange of perspectives that this requires has been poorly facilitated by tourism's conventional pedagogical vehicles, which are instead largely used to sustain the earlier-mentioned objectifying conditions of 'strangerhood' and 'service' (Cheng et al., 2010). Cohen (1985: 13, 15) argues that guided tours and guidebooks derive their utility from translating 'the strangeness of a foreign culture into a cultural idiom familiar to the visitors' in ways that both integrate tourists 'into the visited setting as well as insulat[ing them] from that setting', ultimately themselves becoming the 'company' or 'bosom companions' (Bhattacharyya, 1997) with which visitors most closely engage. If this is indeed so, then to what extent can guided tours and guidebooks effectively be

used to move beyond the treatment of one another as ideal types and objects and instead to foster 'visiting' as a form of civic learning? To what extent can they themselves be adapted to become 'good company' (Gillies, 2016: 154, our italics) for both tourists-as-visitors *and* their hosts? Guidebooks, by and large, have functioned unreflexively as Orientalist texts, 'secur[ing] ethnocentric perspectives, producing other spaces and subjects for Western consumption, and caricatur[ing] entire histories and cultures according to a predetermined set of values that reinforce European Superiority' (Lisle, 2008: 163; Bhattacharyya, 1997). Likewise, guided tours are frequently dominated by heritage narratives that erase or marginalise the presence and claims of subaltern groups (Modlin et al., 2011; Dolezal & Gudka, 2019). Indeed, Cheng et al. (2010) argue that guided tours, guidebooks and tourism maps actively train their users' gazes 'away from thinking about either structures of inequality or the power of collective action and social movements', noting that chorastic opportunities tend to come about instead more through the accidental 'slippages and fractures' (Cheng et al., 2010: 116) in users' consumption of them.

Yet, over the last decades and around the world, civic and political activist groups increasingly have appropriated guided tours and guidebooks, recognising them as powerful vehicles of public pedagogy 'containing possibilities for both reproduction [of] and resistance' (Sandlin et al. 2010: 2) to dominant narratives (see, e.g., Cheng et al., 2010; Counter-Cartographies Collective et al. 2012; Dolezal & Gudka, 2019). Such social and responsible tourism initiatives seek to counter-map traditionally marginalised people's (e.g., homeless, Black, LGBTQ, etc.) narratives onto the ways in which both 'tourists' and 'locals' have framed and experienced them and the places relevant to them. These initiatives' attention to 'dissonant heritages' (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1996) not easily reconciled with dominant values and experiences can be understood as efforts to re-politicise and enlarge public discourse by 'empower[ing] voices that are marginalised or ignored in authorised [heritage] discourses about places and the people within them' (Campos-Delgado 2018: 490). This enables a shift away from an emphasis on 'tolerance' (Brown, 2009) and towards acknowledgement of what anthropologist Anna Tsing (2005: 4) calls 'friction' – 'the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference' –, a disorientation fundamental to Arendtian (Arendt, 1977) 'visiting' as civic learning. Yet there is little work examining *how* such initiatives endeavour to accomplish these objectives (but see, e.g., Christie and Mason (2003) on critically reflexive guide training). In other words, beyond swapping out old messages for newer, more progressive ones, what are the additional mechanics necessary to fundamentally transform tourism's conventional pedagogical vehicles in such a way that they embrace and embody a different kind of ethical engagement with difference?

## Contextualising Migrantour and the Roots Guide

In this article, we reflect on our shared experience of being in pivotal roles in two initiatives to which we ourselves have contributed to creating and developing over many years. Both of us are university scholars engaged in critical action research (Kemmis et al., 2013). Meghann, the Roots Guide's editor/curator and scientific coordinator since 2018, is a cultural geographer and a migrant with both American and Portuguese citizenship living in the Netherlands. Francesco, Migrantour's scientific coordinator from 2009-19, is an Italian social anthropologist. We share a focus on collaborating with practitioners and civil society in the fields of mobility and heritage to contribute to public debate on migration and tourism (Pink, 2005; Beck & Maida, 2013). For the following discussion of challenges and opportunities that we and those with whom we have collaborated in the development of our respective initiatives have encountered, we draw on qualitative interviews with production team members and guides as well as our own ongoing observations of decision-making dynamics within our respective initiatives. The type of self-reporting in which we engage here aligns with critical action research practice, our embedded participation offering privileged insight into our initiatives' practices, our understanding of our

initiatives' intentions and practices, and the conditions under which those practices are formed (Kemmis et al., 2013: 188).

Migrantour and the Roots Guide are countermapping initiatives focused specifically on migrant heritage. Often categorised as 'foreign' guests, people with migration backgrounds have long been excluded from participation and demonised in public discourse as well as marginalised and excluded in the authorised heritage discourses (Smith, 2006) of their receiving contexts. Where people with migration backgrounds and their tangible and intangible heritages have been incorporated, they frequently have been exoticised, objectified and celebrated by 'locals' and 'tourists' alike as representative 'hosts' of the faraway countries and cultures from which they or their ancestors have come (Rath, 2007; Aytar & Rath, 2012). This 'touristification' of cultural diversity has come about, note Aytar and Rath (2012: 2), in a 'globalizing world – where local difference and place identity are increasingly important – [such that] heritage and cultural diversity have become crucial components of the cultural capital of post-industrial societies'. Specific expressions of immigrant heritages, hence, become conveniently 'tolerated' in Brown's (2009) sense so long as they maintain their worth as cultural capital capable of attracting visitors, employment and investment. Indeed, as a tool of public pedagogy, tourism has played a significant role in fostering and celebrating multiculturalism (Dill, 2013).

The potential of people with migration backgrounds to transcend 'strangerhood' (Cheng et al., 2010: 116) and acquire what we refer to here as 'localhood' – in other words, to becoming themselves recognised hosts of the places in which they live – requires the enfolding of the experiences and 'memories of migrants in their diversity and specificity' (Gouriévidis, 2014: 1) into dominant discourse and recognition of immigrants' interwovenness into the fabric of their places of residence. However, it is only in recent decades, and within the framework of multicultural policy, that migration, claims Gouriévidis (2014: 1), has been able to escape its status as a '*non lieu de mémoire*' ('non-place of memory'). She notes that sites of public pedagogy, like museums, are increasingly 'encouraged to reflect the socio-cultural implications of [...] the increasingly plural face of the populations composing modern states' (Gouriévidis, 2014: 1). Yet, while gradually gaining visibility in the processes and places where the collective identity of local and national communities is built (Basso Peressut & Pozzi, 2012), migration-related stories, memories and representations by and large continue to occupy a peripheral place in dominant historical, cultural and social narratives (Hintermann & Johansson, 2010). It is in this context that Migrantour and the Roots Guide have developed.

### ***Migrantour***

In line with the Council of Europe's (2005) Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society's (the Faro Convention) advocacy for recognising and strengthening 'heritage communities', Migrantour fosters the expansion of the 'right to cultural heritage' among people with migration backgrounds such that they not only have 'the right to benefit from the existing heritage, but also the right to take part in the selection of new cultural expressions aimed at belonging to the notion of cultural heritage' (Zagato, 2015: 147). To do this, Migrantour focuses on the development and use of intercultural guided walking tours as a tool for local community-building and to advance 'dissonant' (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1996) narratives about the role of migration in processes of urban transformation and heritage-making.

Originating in Turin, Italy, Migrantour is a decade-old network that brings people with first- and second-generation migration backgrounds together with tour operators, local institutions and NGOs to co-create intercultural guided walking tours in 15 European cities (Turin, Milan, Genoa, Florence, Rome, Marseille, Paris, Lisbon, Brussels, Ljubljana, Naples, Bologna, Cagliari, Catania and Pavia), with new cities currently joining. To date, and thanks in part to European Commission funding, network partners have been able to train more than 600 people with first-



and second-generation migration backgrounds as guides (or 'intercultural companions'), co-create 40 intercultural guided walking tour routes, and reach approximately 30,000 walking tour participants (ACRA., 2016, 2020). While accessible to international tourists, the year-round tours are undertaken primarily by local residents and school children from the cities in which they run. In this article, we focus specifically on Migrantour's development in Italian cities.

### **Roots Guide**

Like all modern nation-states, the Netherlands is supported by heritage narratives that are officially authorised and shared to forge belonging to an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1984/2006; Smith, 2006). However, while more than one-fifth of the Netherlands' population has a first- or second-generation migration background, contemporary national authorised heritage discourse largely has obscured and marginalised their contributions and heritages, with attention to the country's slavery and colonial heritage notably absent (Witte, 2019). In light of this, Roots Guide has explicitly worked to develop a public pedagogical tool targeting domestic tourists in the Netherlands that draws on written and visual storytelling, guides' meaningful places and experiential travel techniques to enable users to undertake both inner and outer journeys that inspire them to use migration as a lens through which to revisit what they think they know about themselves and life in the Netherlands, starting at their own doorsteps.

Roots Guide is an interactive, reflexive guidebook of the Netherlands in its final stages of development at the time of writing, with a planned launch in mid-2021. The project emerged in 2016 as a collaboration between a Netherlands-based non-profit organisation – which offers storytelling workshops and events for and by people with diverse backgrounds – and a small group of artists and academics. The resulting guidebook features personal stories and personally significant places of 34 people with a diverse array of internal and international migration experience who draw on their own perspectives and experiences to guide users around 'our Netherlands'. Arranged not around specific regions or cities like a conventional guidebook but rather in global citizenship-inspired thematic clusters, the guides' stories come together to foster users' cognitive and socio-emotional engagement with themes like peace and conflict, identity and belonging, and community participation (UNESCO, 2015).

### **Co-creating narratives and routes**

Because people with migration backgrounds are frequently exoticised (Aytar & Rath, 2012), 'tolerated' (Brown, 2009) and/or marginalised (Gouriévidis, 2014) in dominant heritage discourse and the tools of tourism that propagate it, Migrantour and the Roots Guide seek to de-centre mainstream narratives by valuing diverse and dissenting voices. To do this, both social tourism-based initiatives have made use of participatory storytelling and mapping techniques with their guides to ensure that guides have a significant sense of ownership in both narrative content and route development. In acknowledging that mapping and storytelling are always 'a situated, political process with a social context, purpose and effects' (Counter-Cartographies Collective et al., 2012: 441; Campos-Delgado, 2019), the initiatives explicitly recognise their guides as locals that – regardless of whether they have resided in or intend to reside in these places for a few months or their whole lives – contribute to and intimately know the places in which they live, possessing the authority to speak about these places and the lived and inherited successes, defeats, joys and struggles with which they associate them.

With Migrantour, network partners throughout Europe each implement a roughly standardised route co-creation and guide training programme informed by critical pedagogy and designed as an emancipatory praxis of co-learning, based on principles of citizenship and agency and aimed at strengthening co-learners' socio-political critical reflexivity and creating new



knowledge that will challenge dominant discourses, ideologies and practices (Boluk & Carnicelli, 2019). First, a preliminary study is carried out on their respective city's history, focusing on connections between different migratory flows, the transformations of the places in which migrants have come to live, and the tangible and intangible cultural heritages in these places that have emerged as a result. Then, in response to an open call disseminated by network partners, people with first- and second-generation migration backgrounds interested in becoming part-time guides – most often members of cultural associations, cultural mediators, former teachers and tour guides – participate in a free training course. The training course (24-30 hours in length) involves contributions both from academic perspectives (e.g., anthropologists, sociologists, geographers and historians) on topics related to immigration in urban contexts and from professional tour guides on group management and storytelling techniques.

Migrantour guides engage in a walking tour route and narrative co-creation process with network partner staff, fellow guides-in-training, and the academic and professional coaches from the training course. This process begins with guides-in-training drawing a series of mental maps (Lynch, 1960) through which they express their experiences of and relationships with the city in which they live. These maps show their daily routes, the places they usually visit and landmarks significant to them. With their own mental maps based on experiences prior to joining Migrantour in hand, guides-in-training then exchange information with one another, overlaying their personal routes to develop a shared map of significant places. Once this common base has been generated, guides-in-training carry out ethnographic fieldwork – engaging in participant observation, undertaking qualitative interviews with residents and creating a visual archive documenting the changes that have taken place in their residential areas over time.

Finally, the guides' personal narratives and the fieldwork material are rooted to specific places in the area covered by the guided walking tour in which they can most effectively resonate with each other. For example, Rome's Esquilino market has become a stop on a Migrantour walking tour route because it offers an opportunity for guides not only to explain some aspects of the market's history as a meeting place for generations of the city's immigrants but also for guides to recount their personal memories about markets frequented in the places they lived before moving to Rome and to arrange encounters with the market's migrant workers open to describing aspects of their jobs and goods on sale to tour participants. The resulting tangible and intangible heritage presented during the guided walking tours is therefore always the outcome of an intersection of narratives, with no one narrative being privileged over another (see Harrison, 2010). Some Migrantour guides experience 'friction' (Tsing, 2005) when merging these different degrees of narration because they must shift from their own experience and point of view to assume the responsibility of sharing others' stories and points of view. This sometimes requires challenging their own convictions, as V., a Genoa Migrantour guide with a Romanian background, observes:

Meeting with the other guides also helped me to question myself. For example, before attending the training course, I admit that I had a lot of prejudice towards Roma people, a negative feeling I had developed in Romania and that I brought with me to Italy. Basically, I did not want to be confused with them. During the training I had to work on this attitude and, only thanks to this path that I have taken, now, when I talk about the Roma community during the walks, I'm sincere and credible, starting with admitting that I also had prejudices and telling about how I've tried to overcome them.

The Roots Guide guidebook's narrative development involves prospective guides – identified both through an open call and selective sampling to ensure representation across the country's provinces – volunteering their time to participate in a series of in-depth interviews and photoshoots with the storytelling facilitating team. Through these interviews and photoshoots, guides acquire the skills to develop and reflect upon a story expressing a specific message or question that they wish to share with 'the Dutch public', which they are free to interpret as they wish. Guides' first-person narratives are then crafted by the storytelling facilitation team from the interview material, after which they are reviewed, edited and sometimes completely rewritten by

each guide until they are satisfied personally with the result. This months- – sometimes years- – long dialogical co-creation process seeks to ensure that the written and visual stories faithfully reflect the guides' desired message or question as well as their individual voice. Many guides' emotion-infused, hand-drawn point-of-view sketches (Hawthorne et al. 2015) of their meaningful places also are included. Clusters of these written and visual stories then get framed by a set of intra- and inter-personal experiential travel and creative reflection activities co-designed by the production team and guides to help guidebook users engage with the guides' stories and the global citizenship themes that emerge from them as well as to develop users' own stories.

Unlike with Migrantour, Roots Guide's guides did not themselves initially shoulder the responsibility to represent the Roots Guide's broader narrative. Due to the Roots Guide's conceptual evolution over time from a loosely narrated collection of individual stories to a more tightly narrated interactive guidebook, guides' personal narratives were developed in intense collaboration with the storytelling facilitation team but in relative isolation from other guides. As Roots Guide is still in development, guides are at the time of this article's publication beginning to gain a fuller overview of how their personal narratives relate to fellow guides' narratives and to co-develop the user-focused activities that thematically frame their stories. Hence, guides' experience of Roots Guide to date has been mediated largely by their experience with the storytelling facilitation process as well as by regular newsletters and gatherings (e.g., shared meals and guide-initiated workshops and tours).

Guides interviewed perceive the co-creation process as intensely personally empowering. Those with international migration experiences have come to recognise that their perspectives and voices matter. Others with internal migration experiences, meanwhile, have begun to see themselves as migrants, sometimes for the very first time reflecting on the impoverished ways in which migration and privilege are discussed in mainstream Dutch society. One guide, M., a dairy farmer and cheesemaker adopted as a baby from South Korea by white Dutch parents, for example, found the dialogical narrative development process deeply transformative, helping her to better understand and articulate herself in personal, civic and professional realms: 'It would be nice', she observes, 'if everyone could go through this experience once in their lives as part of the process of learning how to be a citizen'. While invited to participate in the Roots Guide initiative as much as they would like, guides demonstrate a varied sense of overall project ownership: some talk about the Roots Guide as 'ours', while others are hesitant to 'impose' themselves, referring to it as 'yours' when engaging with the production team. Therefore, the production team has sought, first, to be very careful to not silence guides' voices where they are most present, such as when editing their stories to adhere to a standardised story length or to ensure narrative coherence and clarity for readers and, second, to ensure that the guidebook's broader narrative framing and activities complement and enhance guides' individual messages.

### **Avoiding stereotypical 'community' representations**

Mutual objectification and stereotyping condition relations between hosts and guests in tourism encounters, oftentimes leading to superficial consumption of the Other instead of meaningful dialogue and exchange (Urry, 2002; Cheng et al., 2010). For Migrantour and the Roots Guide to foster the practice of 'visiting' (Arendt, 1992) as an alternative to the gazing flaneur's practice of tourism (Wearing & Wearing, 1996), our initiatives have had to be continuously alert to the ways in which they both can and do fall into the trap of reproducing multiculturalist representations of 'diversity' and 'community'.

Migrantour network members and guides must constantly reflect on the risks of simplifying and trivialising, even unconsciously, the themes dealt with during the tours. Throughout different points of Migrantour's initial development and in the initiative's spread throughout different European cities, network partners and guides have experimented with the delivery of content

during the walks that has produced a range of results and sometimes provoked criticism by walking tour participants and researchers analysing Migrantour's impact. For example, early in the initiative's history, Migrantour network members often opted to engage in 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak, 1990) – the provisional acceptance and tactical use of essentialist foundations for identity categories as a strategy for collective representation to advance a clear political goal. Although sensitive to the challenges posed by this strategy, Migrantour guides were encouraged to bring together a collection of symbolic foods, crafts, photographs, anecdotes and so on that would be useful to evoke the stories gathered during their training course. These objects materialised and reified cultural differences attributed to different immigrant communities during tours, first, by mediating the encounter between the guides and tour participants, making the experience manageable and acceptable for both parties and, second, by mobilising a counter-narrative emphasising migration's role in enriching cities' cultural heritage in the face of dominant discourses stigmatising 'ethnic neighbourhoods' as notorious and dangerous places. In some cases, however, the effects of such choices ran contrary to intentions, effectively consolidating new stereotypes and folklorising cultural differences in ways that led some walking tour participants to perceive themselves as 'looking at immigrants' as if they were in a 'human zoo', rather than having opportunities for mutual dialogue and exchange.

Roots Guide faced similar representational challenges. Its production team initially struggled to avoid reproducing conventional guidebook conventions that exoticify, tokenise and commodify others (Lisle, 2008). While its storytelling facilitators were focused on drawing out individual contributors' stories as organically and faithfully as possible, the initial overall framing of the collection of narratives was problematic. In seeking to trouble notions of 'Dutch' identity, several individuals' personal stories were linked to a set of narratives about iconic objects in the Netherlands with foreign origins. For instance, the co-created personal story of N., a Dutch-Turkish shop owner selling Turkish handicrafts, was paired up with a brief history of the iconic 'Dutch' tulip's own Central and West Asian origins that, while inspired by N.'s own reflections, were penned only by the storytelling facilitators. Likewise, the production team developed their own place recommendations accompanying guides' stories with a view to help guidebook users 'travel faraway at home' through places and events linked to the guides' national, cultural and religious origins. Two years into the project, the production team recognised that this first iteration had largely gone the path of Collins and Castillo's (1998) guidebook celebrating the multicultural character of Sydney, Australia, in the way it categorised guides primarily as representatives of their or their parents' faraway countries of origin. In uncritically celebrating multicultural diversity and exoticising its guides' 'non-Dutch' otherness, the team was essentially eclipsing, and hence de-politicising (Brown, 2009), the Roots Guide's guides' personal everyday lived experiences within the Netherlands.

To turn Roots Guide into a guidebook that would not essentialise, 'other' or exclude, the production team chose to fundamentally trouble and twist elements conventionally deemed fundamental to a guidebook by consciously adopting a 'heritage-from-below' (Robertson, 2012) counter-mapping approach that frames guides as local hosts with the authority to speak about their past and present experiences in the Netherlands on their own terms. Consequently, the places featured in the guidebook now are chosen by guides themselves to highlight personally meaningful places associated with their stories (e.g., the Amsterdam metro line that internal migrant A. appreciates for the great diversity it showcases in contrast with her tiny hometown; the steel factory that reminds L., a second-generation descendent of Spanish guestworkers, of her father; or the suburban McDonald's fast-food restaurant cherished by S. as a meaningful spot for connecting with new friends after moving to the Netherlands from Palestine). This marked departure in approach has required guides to not only think about their stories as contributing to the enrichment of the Netherlands' heritage but also the everyday places significant to them as characters in those stories.

Roots Guide's guides' stories are now strictly about them as individuals, with no 'community' representation taken for granted by storytelling facilitators. The guides themselves decide how they wish to represent themselves and they, by and large, opt to frame themselves as individuals, talking about issues that personally matter to them (e.g., love, education, inequality, legacy, etc.). Though guides are informed that they will be read by 'the Dutch public' as part of an educational tool seeking to 'reframe how migration is thought about in the Netherlands', few have sought to use their stories as platforms from which to make declarations about how 'migrants or refugees are like this or that'. This de-emphasis on framing guides as representatives of specific 'communities', however, has also conflicted with the production team's desire to have greater representative diversity in terms of national origin, religious beliefs, gender, profession and sexual orientation among the guides, acknowledging that Roots Guide is also intended as a space for supporting the voices of groups traditionally marginalised in guidebooks, history books and mainstream media.

Over time, Migrantour also came to dismiss its initial multiculturalist focus on celebrating cultural diversity. In seeking to offer an expanded, more complex heritage narrative, Migrantour began to see their guides not as ambassadors presenting or selling 'their' heritage but rather as storytellers sharing their own views and interpretations of particular parts of a city (Bryon, 2012). Furthermore, in the wake of critical reflection (Mellino & Vietti, 2019; Pozzi & Ceschi, 2019), Migrantour network members opted to foreground ethnicity's intersections with gender, age, social class, length of residence and other variables in examining the outcome of integration processes and inter-group relations between 'majorities' and 'minorities' (Pastore & Ponzo, 2016). They are increasingly committed to avoiding the production of normalised, pacified and univocal representations of the neighbourhoods featured in the walking tours, discussing with guides how to hold more space for the emergence of contradictions, conflicts and resistance in their narratives. Consequently, inequalities and relationships of subordination and domination related to the neoliberal distribution of power and that concern tourism's (and Migrantour's) impacts on people and the cities in which they live are highlighted more explicitly:

I live in the Porta Palazzo district and mostly accompany school groups on visits to the district. Using language appropriate to their age, I always try to explain to the children why there are houses in the area like the one where I live, with small apartments, lots of people and no lift, and others are all renovated [...] I also explain to them why there are certain messages written on the walls, why they see so many police around and why some people would like to remove poor people from the neighbourhood in order to open new shopping centres and trendy clubs. I don't use the word 'gentrification' with them, but I give them concrete examples of how changes in the neighbourhood affect my life as a citizen with a migration background.

(M., a Turin Migrantour guide)

In the last three years, the Migrantour network has cautiously expanded, seeking partners in new cities that will not manage Migrantour walks as a stand-alone activity but, rather, as part of a broader commitment to social cohesion in their respective areas. In the Italian city of Catania, for example, Migrantour walks are organised by an organisation that works with residents with both migration and non-migration backgrounds to implement actions aimed at regenerating the city's San Berillo neighbourhood 'from below'. In this way, Migrantour distinguishes itself from 'slum tourism' by committing to not making diversity, poverty and marginality the object of the tourist gaze (Frenzel, 2020). Instead, by deconstructing migration-related stigma and stereotyping as well as embedding 'immigration issues' within broader socio-economic forces (e.g., unemployment and housing dynamics) that bring about societal transformation, the tours are intended to function as vehicles for residents 'to understand the everyday places where they live, work, shop and socialise', providing them 'with a basis for fighting proposed changes that often destroy the centres of social life, erase cultural meanings and restrict local participatory practices' (Low, 2011: 391) and addressing the poverty-tourism nexus in urban areas by involving marginalised and vulnerable groups in a process of empowerment (Dolezal & Gudka, 2019).

## Fostering conditions for 'visiting'

Migrantour and the Roots Guide have chosen the guided walking tour and guidebook, respectively, as public pedagogical tools to enhance participants' and users' perspective consciousness within the places in which they live. While the initiatives share a focus on integrating migrants and migration into local and national heritage discourse, their differing modes of delivery have unique parameters, offering different possibilities for participants and users to engage with the initiatives' objectives. Guided walking tours offer physical proximity and potential for dialogue with guides and fellow tour participants, with real-time updating and tailoring of content to tour participants' needs and interests. Guidebooks, on the other hand, enable users – individuals or in small groups of family or friends – to turn to them when and how they like. Yet they communicate unidirectionally to a specific audience and their content can quickly become out-dated. Guided walking tours necessitate tangible engagement with heritage, while guidebook narratives can compensate for potential lacks in visible heritage with the emotional pull of their stories and descriptive detail. Furthermore, walking tours require an itinerary of experiences concentrated within time and space, while a guidebook does not need to be used in a linear or continuous fashion. Here, we draw attention to some ways in which these formats' diverse characteristics impact how we have developed content to foster conditions conducive to the practice of 'visiting' (Arendt, 1992).

Migrantour's initial focus was on national and international tourists interested in discovering neighbourhoods not usually included in conventional city tours, guidebooks and tourist maps. Over time, however, most network partners realised that the guided walking tours mainly attracted local residents wishing to know some parts of their city better and school-aged children on educational excursions. This increasingly led guides to see themselves as facilitating access to everyday places in neighbourhoods frequently perceived by other city residents as alien and inhospitable, potentiating a more invested exchange reminiscent of Jane's Walks, an initiative inspired by urban activist Jane Jacobs's work championing the voices of everyday people in planning and civic involvement. This is evidenced in an account from A., a Milan Migrantour guide with an Italo-Moroccan background:

The most important stop on the Via Padova walking tour, in my opinion, is when we go to the House of Muslim Culture. It always happens that none of the participants has ever entered an Islamic space of worship in Italy. So, we explain that we must take off our shoes, then the imam – someone who has lived in Milan for 50 years and knows everything about the neighbourhood – welcomes us, we sit in a circle, and we talk for at least half an hour, answering all the tour participants' doubts and questions. When the meeting ends, people have a completely new idea of what Islamic prayer spaces in Italy are like and how they work.

In physically uniting local hosts capable of making these places accessible and understandable to tour participants living in the same areas who have imagined them through the filter of popular stereotypes and prejudices, guides like A. are actively 'opening the city' (Sennett, 2018) to render urban borders more porous within an ever-more xenophobic political context.

While Migrantour's guided walking tours provide the opportunity for immediate encounter and dialogue, Roots Guide – which targets residents of all ages in the Netherlands with some travel experience that are open to engaging in a different kind of interaction and dialogue – focuses on developing connection between its local guides and users differently. In harnessing the emotive power of storytelling to connect people, its interactive format foregrounds not only *guides'* personal narratives and places significant to them but also the recognition and development of *guidebook users'* own stories and the constellation of places meaningful to them. In disrupting the guidebook format's conventional unidirectional gaze, Roots Guide ultimately seeks to map both its guides' and guidebook users' heritages onto the contemporary landscape and put them into dialogue, troubling constructions of 'Dutchness', 'strangerhood' and 'localhood' through this juxtaposition. It does this via exposing guidebook users to first-person stories

thematically clustered and arranged in a narrative arc that brings attention to the various drivers for migration, the challenges of setting up one's life in a new place, and the ways in which a sense of home and connection get forged. Each cluster of guides' stories is supported by a suite of 'inner' and 'outer' journeys comprising interactive reflexive activities designed to enhance users' emotional, cognitive and physical connections to the guides' stories and places associated with them as well as with users' own everyday landscapes and companions. These 'inner' and 'outer' journeys include: 1) questions that foster users' dialogic engagement with the guides' stories and broader global citizenship concerns (e.g., various forms of privilege, stereotypes, constructions of home, practices of community, etc.); 2) guides' personally meaningful places linked to their stories that users can visit; 3) experiential travel activities that draw on mindfulness and psychogeographical techniques to spark mindsets more familiar to users when they travel far away from home than in their everyday lives (e.g., spontaneity, curiosity, appreciation and reflexivity); and 4) pages with prompts and dedicated writing space on which users are encouraged to build up the layers of their own stories.

## Conclusion

For Arendt (1977), the ability to develop informed individual judgement and engage in adequate deliberation and responsible collective action in democratic societies necessitates being able to think 'representatively' – in other words, a multi-perspectivity that both entails being conscious that perspectives beyond one's own exist and actively recognising the legitimacy of a range of these different perspectives. Critiquing both 'tourism' and 'empathy' as modes of engaging with others, Arendt (1977) advances the notion of 'visiting' as a preferred mode of civic learning through which to develop 'a certain kind of modesty: living one among many, engaged in a world that does not mirror oneself[, enabling] richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning' (Sennett, 2018: 302). With this article, we have embraced 'visiting' (Arendt, 1992) as an alternative ethical practice to conventional tourism practices that have long served as vehicles for perpetuating a multicultural discourse of 'tolerance' (Brown, 2009; Dill, 2013) that abstracts, naturalises and depoliticises oppression, inequality and conflict. In so doing, we have sought to engage with what Blanchard and Higgins-Desbiolles (2013: 2) call 'the invisible elephant in the room': '[t]he essential tension between the multiple dimensions of peace (as a process) and the confining dimensions of tourism (as a product)' by suggesting that those working in tourism not only face the urgent task of replacing oppressive content with more progressive messages but also that some of the most common pedagogical vehicles of tourism – like guided tours and guidebooks – need to be fundamentally retooled in order to adequately convey those messages and support dialogic civic encounters with the diverse people voicing them.

Because simply being exposed to and immersed in the stories and points of view of others does not, in and of itself, necessarily foster the disorientation necessary for personal transformation (Reisinger, 2013) or lead to meaningful cross-cultural dialogue, especially in short visits, it becomes even more imperative for guided tours and guidebooks to adapt in ways such that they become 'good company' (Gillies, 2016) capable of fostering the discovery of 'intersection points' between hosts and visitors 'from which to intervene and struggle together' (Counter-Cartographies Collective et al. 2012: 447; Christie & Mason, 2003). In this article, we used Migrantour and the Roots Guide – two Europe-based initiatives aimed at 'mobilising hospitality' (Germann-Molz & Gibson, 2007) to resist dominant discourse associating 'the host with home, territory, stability, and ownership on one side, and [...] the guest with mobility, estrangement and un-belonging on the other' (Germann-Molz & Gibson, 2007: 16) – to examine how we might trouble and twist conventional guided tours and guidebooks into pedagogical tools offering 'good company' that enable 'visiting' (Arendt, 1992) in different European contexts where xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment are on the rise. To offer 'good company', Migrantour and



the Roots Guide have focused on co-creating multi-dimensional tour narratives and routes in dialogic ways that recognise guides' diverse experiences and perceptions of the places they call home, avoid stereotypical representations of 'communities' and hold space for the real-life frictions that accompany diversity and its management. Doing so has required explicit engagement with three different but overlapping challenges: narrative ownership, representation and participant/user engagement.

First, in contrast with conventional tools of tourism that frequently advance 'tolerant' narratives *about* 'the (migrant) Other', Migrantour and the Roots Guide have explicitly embraced a 'nothing about me without me' approach by recruiting people with diverse migration backgrounds as guides and by foregrounding guides' involvement in the development of narrative content and routes. Participatory storytelling and (auto-)ethnographic mapping techniques have been essential to accomplish this, with guides themselves being stimulated individually and collectively to develop both the consciousness and competence of multi-perspectivity, strengthening guides' critical reflexivity (Christie & Mason, 2003). In this way, even before reaching the general public, the initiatives' public pedagogical objectives get enacted during the process of narrative and route co-creation.

Second, unlike conventional tools of tourism that often represent 'the (migrant) Other' as members of 'exotic' communities distinct and divorced from 'our own', Migrantour and the Roots Guide have sought to recognise the 'localhood' of people with migration backgrounds and their corresponding authority to contest and broaden local and national heritage discourses that may be dissonant with essentialist constructions of 'culture' and 'community' typical within multicultural 'tolerance' discourse (Brown, 2009; Dill, 2013). A key challenge for both Migrantour and the Roots Guide has been to avoid reproducing and reifying superficial multicultural tropes through which both guides and tour participants/guidebook users are used to engaging with each other. In order to open up and hold space for the discomfort for all involved to acknowledge and engage with 'the constitutive histories and powers organising contemporary problems and contemporary political subjects' (Brown, 2009: 16), both initiatives have adopted a global citizenship-aligned ethic of framing people both with and without migration backgrounds first and foremost as individuals with intersectional collective identities, allowing for 'immigrant issues' to be unpacked in relation to gender, age, class and broader socio-economic forces. Recognition of the significance of holding space for emotional discomfort, an essential component of transformative learning, is increasing among scholars concerned with pedagogy of/as/ and tourism and strengthening tourism's potential for bringing about societal change (Werry, 2008; Reisinger, 2013; Walker & Manyamba, 2020).

Finally, Migrantour and the Roots Guide have retooled conventional disembodied guided tour and unidirectionally narrated guidebook formats to enable 'visiting' (Arendt, 1992) by embracing an interactive, dialogic approach that recognises the significance not only of the authority of guides' interpretations but also of visitors' own interpretations and of bringing these in relation to one another in ways that facilitate deeper, more reflexive learning (Ablett & Dyer, 2009). This dialogic approach holds potential to undermine the tacit co-enactment in tourism described by Cheng et al. (2010: 116) of mutual 'strangerhood' and of service.

While a straightforward path to facilitating progressive social change may be lacking, much can be done within tourism to strengthen providers' and users' awareness of its profound pedagogical potential, of what kinds of politics conventional tourism tools and practices are already inculcating, and of the urgency for consciously troubling and carefully twisting these in ways that work towards achieving more humane ways of living together in an ever-more diverse world.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to sincerely thank our article's three anonymous reviewers, Ingeborg Mehus and Chih-Chen Trista Lin for very helpful comments that have strengthened the article's message and honed its contribution to the field.

## Disclosure statement

Meghann Ormond has been, since 2018, the curator/editor and scientific coordinator of Roots Guide, a project legally owned by the non-profit organisation Stichting Pocket Stories, registered at the Kamer van Koophandel in the Netherlands under registration number 66886090 with ANBI status from 21/06/2017. Her position is unpaid and voluntary. Francesco Vietti was the scientific coordinator for the Migrantour project from 2009-19. He continues to collaborate with the social tourism cooperative Viaggi Solidali (cooperative registration number: A161747 of 05/01/2005), a Migrantour network partner. The authors do not financially benefit from this research or its publication.

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