Between loss and hope; leisure and tourism education and addressing place grief

roos.gerritsma@inholland.nl

“We go for the yes people.” This statement by Amsterdam tourism professionals made me wonder: what about those who say no? Those who experience urban transformation not as progress, but as loss?

Cities are living systems, constantly changing. In Amsterdam North, rapid urban development and (over)tourism have disrupted familiar places, social networks and identities. Residents may experience *place grief*: mourning the transformation of a place they still call home.

Could leisure and tourism professionals/students help communities navigate such transitions? Rather than merely designing attractive experiences, they could facilitate remembrance, dialogue and collective meaning-making.

At the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Amsterdam of Inholland UAS, we explored this potential through co-created interventions: an industrial heritage exhibition, virtual reality experiences and storytelling activities with residents. These encounters revealed a profound need for recognition, connection and opportunities to imagine alternative futures.

Regenerative placemaking goes beyond physical improvements. It involves restoring relationships, acknowledging loss and cultivating *Active Hope* (Macy & Johnstone, 2022). Drawing inspiration from *Hospicing Modernity* (Machado de Oliveira, 2021), I increasingly wonder whether leisure and tourism professionals could become *hospice workers for places*: accompanying communities through transitions, honouring what disappears and helping new possibilities emerge.

Perhaps people who resist change are not necessarily against transformation. Perhaps they are asking for recognition of what is being lost. By listening, creating meaningful experiences and facilitating collective reflection, leisure and tourism professionals can help bridge memory and imagination, grief and Active Hope.

Regeneration may begin not with changing places, but with acknowledging what they mean to people. More: Between Loss and Hope - essay on Place Grief - Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Amsterdam