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*Examining the Operationalization of Degrowth Principles in the Context of Sustainable
 Tourism Businesses*

Sustainable Entrepreneurship Project

MSc Sustainable Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

The capacity of the Earth's atmosphere and biosphere to serve as a stable foundation for social and economic development is being eroded by the never-ending pursuit of growth. Tourism is strongly tied to the urgency of degrowth as it is one of the world's largest sectors and a key driver of global economic growth. As the engine of the industry, tourism businesses are increasingly forced to reinvent their business models to adhere to the degrowth paradigm. However, studies on degrowth in tourism are scarce. To fill this knowledge gap, this research adopts a qualitative research approach in a form of multiple case study to examine the operationalization of degrowth principles in tourism industry businesses by drawing on six semi-structured interviews with representatives from four sustainable tour companies in the Netherlands. This study found that the operationalization of degrowth principles in the tourism industry involves the de-commodification of tourism activity, the reduction of carbon emissions from transportation, the altered patterns of production and consumption, and the importance placed on the travel experience.

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INTRODUCTION

Economic growth is widely seen as a primarily political and economic goal (1). The capacity of the Earth's atmosphere and biosphere to serve as a stable foundation for social and economic development, on the other hand, is being eroded by the never-ending pursuit of growth (2). Coupled with a rising recognition that economic growth does not necessarily improve the quality of human life (3), this highlights the urgent need to seek new alternatives (4). One of these options is the degrowth concept, which calls for a paradigm shift away from the endless pursuit of economic growth and toward the concept of 'right-sizing' global and national economies (4).

Tourism is strongly tied to the urgency of degrowth as it is one of the world's largest sectors and a key driver of global economic growth (5). Many destinations have been overdeveloped to the point where they must right-size or downscale their tourism activity. Degrowth from a tourism perspective is based on a concept that opposes traditional mass tourism and prevents exploitation of the local community (5). Although many societies support tourism for its economic benefits, many fail to recognize that the industry should be developed according to each destination's natural capacity (6). Current issues with over-tourism are one indicator of the problem (7). Degrowth proponents argue that destinations and their communities have limits, and that many destinations have already exceeded these boundaries and beyond their carrying capacity (6). Over-tourism causes social and environmental degradation, such as increased pollution, a loss of security and community, and a loss of cultural authenticity (8,9). As a result, while tourism is capable of safeguarding a destination's cultural and natural legacy by maintaining its value, it can also be the primary source of its destruction (8).

Several studies argue that building a truly sustainable tourism business that does not contribute to the damage of social, cultural, and natural heritage necessitates the development of a new tourism model that does not rely on limitless economic growth (7,10,11). To address the challenge of changing the tourism industry into a "steady-state economy," Hall et al. (2010) advocated for "qualitative development but not aggregate quantitative growth at the expense of natural and social capital" (11).

Following these needs, tourism businesses are increasingly forced to reinvent their business models to adhere to the degrowth paradigm. Numerous research has already been conducted on operationalizing degrowth principles inside businesses (1,4). Hankammer et al. (2021), for example, provide a set of guiding principles for businesses pursuing degrowth and their means of implementation (1). Nonetheless, the case studies chosen to examine the actual implementation of degrowth concepts are in the setting of retail and manufacturing companies (1,4,12). As a result, a cohesive understanding of the adoption of degrowth principles and the associated opportunities and challenges in implementing them has yet to be put into a tourism context.

To address the knowledge gap, this study investigates the operationalization of degrowth principles in the context of sustainable tourism businesses. Thus, this study answers the following research question: "How can the degrowth principles be operationalized in the context of sustainable tourism businesses?"

The above aim is achieved by pursuing the following objectives:

1. To explore the degrowth practices pursued by sustainable tour companies, and
2. To investigate the associated challenges in implementing them.

This research adopts a qualitative research approach to examine the operationalization of degrowth principles in tourism industry businesses by drawing on six semi-structured interviews with owners and managers in four sustainable tour companies in the Netherlands: Tours That Matter, Hungry Birds, Better Places and Inside Rotterdam. By investigating how the degrowth principles can be operationalized in sustainable tourism businesses, this research advances theoretical perspectives on degrowth in tourism and provides guidance to sustainable tourism businesses on how to innovate their business models to be compatible with the degrowth paradigm.

This study is structured as follows. Section 2 provides the theoretical framework employed to analyse the degrowth principles in the context of tourism industry businesses. In Section 3, this study details the methodology adopted for the work. Section 4 and 5 presents and discusses the findings, while section 6 contains concluding arguments concerning contributions, limitations, and possible future areas for research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Degrowth and Tourism

After the 1950s, when productivity levels skyrocketed, and capitalism altered the world, people became addicted to growth, or what Latouche (2010) refers to as "consumerist bulimia" (13). Economic growth is now widely viewed as a primary political and economic goal (1). However, there are physical limits to economic growth. Combined with a growing realization that economic progress does not continuously improve the quality of people's lives (3), many citizens, politicians, and experts conclude that growth is not only unsustainable but also undesirable (6). This underscores the critical need to seek alternatives (4). In this regard, degrowth is proposed as "an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and improves environmental conditions at the local and global levels in the short and long term" (14).

As one of the world's major sectors and a significant engine of global economic growth, tourism is inseparably linked to the urgency of degrowth (5). Many destinations have been overdeveloped to the point where they must right-size or downscale their tourism activity. The issue started in the late nineteenth century when technical advances offered speedier but less ecologically friendly modes of transportation, shortening travel times to tourist locations. This transition aided the creation of new forms of tourism and signalled the beginning of mass tourism (5). The excessive tourism activity from mass tourism causes over-tourism, leading to social and environmental degradation, such as increased pollution, a loss of security and community, and a loss of cultural authenticity (8,9). Thus, while tourism can help protect a destination's cultural and natural legacy by maintaining its value, it can also be the primary source of its destruction.

By arguing that many destinations' natural growth limits have already been exceeded and their carrying capacity levels have been reached, approaches to degrowth-induced development propose abandoning growth and, in particular, any form of development that promotes nothing more than a quest for profits on the part of capital owners and results in disastrous consequences

for the environment and humanity (15). Thus, from a tourism standpoint, degrowth is founded on a notion that opposes traditional mass tourism and prevents local community exploitation (6). Degrowth in tourism is described by Hall et al. (2010) as fostering "qualitative development but not aggregate quantitative growth at the expense of natural and social capital" (11). It also focuses on opposing the homogenizing impacts of economic and cultural globalization, frequently resulting in regions looking the same (16). Degrowth-inspired travel prioritizes long-term and flexible scheduling, participation in non-mainstream activities, rejection of materialism, and intense social interactions (5).

The business sector, which serves as the major engine of tourism development, is critical to the degrowth transition. Following these imperatives, tourism businesses are increasingly forced to reinvent their business models to adhere to the degrowth paradigm. Research has already been conducted on operationalizing degrowth principles inside businesses (1,4). Hankammer et al. (2021) provides eleven guiding principles for firms pursuing degrowth organized into four stakeholder groups: society, environment, customers, employees and management, and communities. However, their case company selection is limited to the consumer goods industry.

In the tourism field of literature, several studies have shown how degrowth principles could be applied in a tourism context (5,6,10). However, most of the literature about degrowth in tourism is more focused on the way of travel in general and less on how the tourism industry businesses should contribute to a smooth transition towards degrowth (6). Hence, this study delves into the relevant tourism literature to explore the potential operationalization of degrowth principles advocated by Hankammer et al. (2021) within the tourism industry.

Degrowth Principles in the Tourism Industry

To illustrate the proposed framework for degrowth principles in the context of the tourism industry, a conceptual framework table (refer to Figure 1) has been developed. This table highlights the degrowth principles and potential ways for their adoption in tourism industry businesses.

Figure 1. Framework Table for Operationalizing Degrowth Principles in Tourism Industry Businesses

Stakeholders Group	Degrowth Principles in Organizations (by Hankammer et al., 2021)	The Means of Operationalization in Tourism Industry Businesses
Society	Repurpose the business for the environment and society	Degrowth-oriented businesses in tourism prioritize community and environmental benefits over profits and strive as locally owned companies that meet local needs.
	Promote the societal acceptance of degrowth thinking	Degrowth-oriented businesses in tourism contribute to societal acceptance of degrowth thinking through education and awareness
Environment	(3) Reduce the environmental impact along the value chain	Degrowth-oriented tourism businesses focus on reducing environmental impact along the value chain and embracing circular economy concepts. They intend to minimize GHG emissions by encouraging low-carbon

		forms of transportation and discouraging long-distance and air travel.
	(4) Promote product and service design for sustainability	Degrowth-oriented tourism businesses optimize experiences by prioritizing depth, extended visits, and meaningful engagement with the local culture
Customers	(5) Encourage sufficiency	Degrowth-oriented tourism businesses prioritize sufficiency, attracting only a small number of high-quality tourists. Furthermore, they stimulate short-haul trips to promote travel closer to home and less flying.
	(6) Enable usage and sharing of products	Degrowth-oriented tourism businesses promote sharing and collaborative consumption, such as ride-sharing and home-sharing.
Employees & Management	(7) Demonstrate leadership commitment and implement democratic governance	Degrowth-oriented tourism businesses emphasize democratic governance which promotes a participatory decision-making process
	(8) Improve the work-life balance of employees	Degrowth-oriented tourism businesses provide flexibility in working time and space for their employees and develop attitudes for creativity to avoid work stress
Community	(9) Be locally embedded and community-based	Degrowth-oriented tourism businesses strive for community-based tourism and seek to improve the well-being of local communities without degrading local resources.
	(10) Enable autonomy and capacity development	Degrowth-oriented tourism businesses contribute to community empowerment and capacity development
	(11) Be open to sharing resources	Degrowth-oriented tourism businesses promote resource sharing to foster equal access to available resources

Society

As depicted in Figure 1, the first two principles emphasize that a degrowth-oriented business should aim to improve society in general, either through providing direct benefits or education (1). Degrowth-oriented organizations strive to repurpose the business for the benefit of the environment and society (Principle 1) by de-emphasizing profit maximization and instead focusing on community and environmental benefits. It should be highlighted that it is not required for a degrowth company not to generate profits. On the other hand, profits are required for a company's survival; nonetheless, it is essential to examine how profits are distributed and whether they take precedence over other interests (4).

Education and raising awareness also contribute to public acceptance of degrowth thinking (Principle 2). They educate people about the impact of their purchasing decisions and promote oppositional activism against negative behavior, for example, by educating people on the negative impact of the conventional mass-tourism. Building coalitions between organizations and stakeholders is critical for normalizing new behavior (17).

Furthermore, most studies in the tourism literature examining firm size disparities show that small tourism businesses benefit the destination and the host population more (6,18,19). Hence, to smooth the transition to degrowth, businesses must shift away from profit-maximizing capitalistic forms of mass tourism and toward alternative models dominated by small, locally-owned companies that satisfy local and regional needs (20).

Environment

Principles 3 and 4 are directly associated with environmental goals (refer to Figure 1). In degrowth-oriented companies, every value creation should seek ways to reduce negative and increase positive environmental impacts (1). One way to do this is to employ circular economy principles to reduce material and energy throughput (1).

An examination of tourism-related GHG emissions reveals that travel to destinations is a major contributor (21). Air travel alone contributes to approximately 40% of tourism-related CO₂ emissions (22). Hence, according to Andriotis K (2018), degrowth-inspired travelers should only use low-carbon transportation modes (6). To address this, degrowth-oriented tourism companies should strive to reduce their environmental impact all through the value chain (Principle 3) by promoting low-carbon modes of transportation with lower ecological footprints, such as cycling and public transportation (buses, ferries, and trains), while reducing long-distance and air travel.

Furthermore, degrowth-oriented tourism companies promote the sustainable product and service design (Principle 4) by adopting slow tourism, which stresses depth, extended stays, and involvement with local culture (23). By emphasizing extended stays and deep exploration (24), slow tourism reduces the need for the fast-fashion trend of frequent travel and minimizes the environmental impact associated with transportation.

Customers

Customers are the focus of Principles 5 and 6 (see Figure 1). Degrowth-oriented organizations should promote sufficiency (Principle 5) to avoid overconsumption and excessive resource use (25). Mass tourism is subject to the issue as it is the most harmful and irresponsible consumption in tourism (6). As such, degrowth advocates for alternate forms of tourism that allows for only a small number of high-quality tourists while also including the local population in the development process (6).

In tourism, enable usage and sharing of products (Principle 6) should be based on sharing and collaborative consumption (e.g., ride-sharing and home-sharing) (6). Furthermore, as advocated by degrowth advocates, a shift from long-haul to short-haul travel may be the only way to accomplish substantial emission reductions (6). Thus, degrowth-oriented tourism companies should be able to encourage sufficiency by providing small-scale tours and stimulating short-distance travel and collaborative consumption.

Employees & Management

As shown in Figure 1, principles 7 and 8 pertain to organizational structures. Because the organizational structure of typical profit-driven companies is considered a mechanism that forces the economic production system to develop, democratic ownership structures (Principle 7) are essential for organizations aiming for degrowth (26). To ensure democratic governance,

top management must be dedicated to corporate values, especially when resisting business-as-usual trends (25), or mass tourism in this context. Stakeholder participation in decision-making processes is also critical to democratic governance. Degrowth-oriented tourism companies should mitigate the negative effects of increased tourism activity by openly incorporating locals in decision-making (6).

Furthermore, because degrowth emphasizes excellent quality of life, companies should ensure employee work-life compatibility (Principle 8) (1). Job sharing is proposed in which two or more people share a job and the revenue that comes with it (27). The resulting increased leisure time contributes to the so-called 'amateur economy', in which a significant amount of free time can be utilized for meaningful unpaid, volunteer activities motivated by personal motivation (1). Going full circle with degrowth in tourism, job sharing, and as a consequence, an increase in leisure time can stimulate society to travel slower (6) and thus contribute to degrowth tourism practices.

Communities

Finally, Principles 9, 10, and 11 pertain to interactions with the community (refer to Figure 1), whether with network partners or with local and disadvantaged communities (1). Degrowth organizations are community-based and locally embedded (Principle 9) (1). In tourism, degrowth-oriented companies seek community-based tourism (21). Community-based tourism, which embraces bottom-up development methods, is a sort of travel to local indigenous communities that attempts to include and benefit local communities from any development (28). The intense interaction with local communities creates a sense of local distinctiveness and contributes to cultural preservation.

Furthermore, ensuring community or host acceptability is critical as degrowth seeks to generate benefits for the local community and improve its welfare while incurring no costs to local resources (6). Community empowerment for capacity development (Principle 10) can be through financial contributions or promotional benefits in tourism. For example, by only visiting local entrepreneurs, degrowth-oriented tour companies provide financial benefits to the local community. Degrowth-oriented businesses should also be open to sharing of resources (Principle 11), for instance, by participating in a knowledge network to foster equal access to resources (1).

Overall, degrowth-oriented tourism companies strive to apply, foster and stimulate the feature requirements subject to each principle of degrowth mentioned above.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research process was chosen, consisting of several key steps. Initially, an interview guide was iteratively developed, drawing upon the existing framework and literature presented in section 2. Subsequently, a purposive sample selection for the case companies was undertaken. Interviews were then conducted with representatives from the case companies to explore the understanding and application of degrowth principles at the case companies. The collected data were subjected to rigorous analysis, employing the abductive coding technique. Finally, this process led to the enhancement of a framework for the operationalization of degrowth principles in sustainable tourism businesses.

This study adopted a qualitative research design in the form of a multiple-case study. Given the lack of empirical research on this specific topic, qualitative research is most appropriate to fit the purpose of this research (29). The case study design offers in-depth insights into a specific topic instead of surface-level information with a broad interpretation (30). Furthermore, the case study design is especially beneficial in explaining the 'how' and 'why' of current events over which the researcher has little to no control (31). Multiple-case studies approach is proposed for this study due to its considerable benefits for wider exploration of the research question and theoretical development, as well as more accurate and generalizable explanations (32).

Sample Selection

The case companies for this study were selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select the research units based on characteristics or attributes important to the study (33,34). A sample of four sustainable tour companies were selected based on several characteristics, including their commitment to sustainability, adherence to some of the degrowth principles, and willingness to participate in this study. Details of the organizations are provided in Table I.

Table I. Details of Case Companies

Company	Office Based	Area of Service	Short Description
Tours That Matter	Amsterdam	Amsterdam	Tours That Matter provides its customers with "positive-impact tours" designed based on the topics that matter to the local community in Amsterdam
Better Places	Leiden	Globally (with only local guides)	Organizing tailor-made tour by putting customers in direct contact with local travel experts. They involve the local population as much as possible, provide a clear waste policy and limit CO2 emissions.
Hungry Birds	Amsterdam	Amsterdam	A sustainable street food tourism company. Work with shop/restaurant/café owners in Amsterdam that are locally owned or managed, use local and seasonal products and services and benefits the local community.
Inside Rotterdam	Rotterdam	Rotterdam	Providing small-scale walking and biking tours off the beaten track of Rotterdam city. The tour themes include roof tour, food tour, and architecture tour.

All four companies uphold sustainability values and local community involvement as the centerfold of their tours. Furthermore, the majority of their business practices meet the requirements of organizations that adhere to the degrowth paradigm put forward by Hankammer et al. (2021), which was previously discussed in the literature review (e.g., locally embedded, community-based, repurpose the business for the environment and society). Thus, the four companies were expected to be able to provide valuable insights in answering the research question and therefore selected as the case studies for this research.

Data Collection

The semi-structured interview guide can be found in Appendix A, and the list of interviewees in Appendix B. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted between April and May 2023

with representatives from the four companies. Two co-founders of Hungry Birds and two of Tours That Matter were interviewed individually. The remaining two interviews were with the founder of Inside Rotterdam and the Product Manager of Better Places. To understand the research question comprehensively, this research seeks to interview owners, CEOs, and managers who have had substantial involvement in the business. The interviews were conducted in English using online meetings (five interviews) and one face-to-face interview. The online interviews were conducted at the request of the interviewees as it was more convenient for them to do during the busy season of tourism. Previous research has shown that online interviews produce data of a comparably high standard to face-to-face interviews (35).

The semi-structured interviews were based on an interview guideline which enables the comparability of the interviews (31). The guide consisted of open-ended questions and was developed through an iterative process. This study used questions resampling the principles of degrowth and their potential means of operationalization in the tourism industry, as previously disclosed in the theoretical framework. Although the interviews were kept conversational and flowed naturally, the guide was designed to cover topics relevant to the research question. Questions were thus adapted to the situation and sometimes posed in varying order, depending on the answers provided. This allowed conversations to flow naturally, and the semi-structured form of the interviews allowed for flexibility in obtaining new insights from the interviewees regarding the topic (36). The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to one and a half hour. Recorded interviews were transcribed using the transcription software Avrio and manually corrected by the researcher. To maintain confidentiality, each interviewee was labeled based on a combination of a letter indicating the company and participant number (e.g., A1 for company A's first participant).

Data Analysis

Using a thematic analysis approach, the data gathered were organized in Atlas.ti, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. An initial coding list was generated according to the conceptual framework presented in section 2. Through an iterative process of reading and rereading the transcripts, this research included a combination of emerging and predetermined codes (37), allowing for the inclusion of new degrowth practices as the interviews were being analyzed. The first-order codes, including the new ones, are then mapped into second-order themes, which are the eleven principles of degrowth to theoretically piece together "what's going on here" (38). For the codes summary and data structure, see Appendix 4. This study therefore employed an abductive method, combining empirical data with the theoretical framework to arrive at credible explanations for the operationalization of degrowth principles in the tourism sector (39). Finally, triangulation of sources was performed to enhance this study's reliability and internal validity through content analysis on the case companies' websites (37).

Research Quality and Ethical Considerations

To reduce response bias, a pilot interview was conducted to clarify potentially vague questions and suggestive questions to be re-phrased neutrally (40). To maintain internal validity (a good match between findings and reality), the researcher monitored her self-perceptions by exchanging opinions with colleagues working on different topics (30). To maintain external validity (transferability of the results), this study sufficiently discloses the research setting and the participating companies (30). To maintain consistency (consistent and dependable results), this study transparently elaborates on any changes throughout the research process (30).

The interviewees were asked to read and sign the informed consent before the interviews to give them important information about the research and ensure they were comfortable participating (41). In addition, consent to record the interview was sought from the interviewees for ethical and legal purposes (41). More information on ethical considerations can be found in the informed consent (see Appendix 3).

FINDINGS

The results section presents this study's findings, focusing on applying degrowth principles within the case companies. Following the research question, the analysis provides insights into how tourism companies operationalize these principles into degrowth business practices. The findings are presented in alignment with the eleven degrowth principles in business proposed by Hankammer et al. (2021). Each principle is examined separately, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the degrowth practices as well as the challenges in implementing them.

Figure 2. Table for findings regarding the degrowth practices pursued by sustainable tour companies

Stakeholders Group	Degrowth Principle (by Hankammer et al., 2021)	Corresponding degrowth practices within the case companies
Society	(1) Repurpose the business for the environment and society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The company is established to satisfy local needs • Growth is an organic approach to pursue a greater impact on the community without externalizing costs to the environment and society • Profit is not prioritized but rather plays only a facilitative role in sustaining social goals • Keeping the size of the business at a local level to maintain quality and control over the tour activities • Measure performance by social/environmental metrics
	(2) Promote the societal acceptance of degrowth thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building stronger coalitions for collective behavior change • Oppositional activism and educational campaigning on the negative impact of tourism
Environment	(3) Reduce the environmental impact along the value chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate customers to travel using low-carbon transportation (e.g., by train instead of flying) • Eliminating the use of single-use plastics during the tours
	(4) Promote product and service design for sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing slow travel tours
Customers	(5) Encourage sufficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting more local instead of international tourists to stimulate travel closer to home and less flying • Keeping the size of the group limited to a small number of people to prevent damaging the local infrastructure and crowding one space

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide off-the-beaten-track-tours • Turning travelers from consumers to prosumers by engaging them in participative activities with the locals
	(6) Enable usage and sharing of products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate sharing of resources through ride-sharing or home-sharing
Employees & Management	(7) Demonstrate leadership commitment and implement democratic governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders involved in participatory decision-making • Strong commitment to company values that oppose mass tourism
	(8) Improve the work-life balance of employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling job sharing • Providing flexibility in working time and place
Community	(9) Be locally embedded and community-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-creation with the locals in designing the tours • Provide only locally guided tours • Storytelling about the history of the place • Ensure host acceptability through open communication with the local community • Tours are designed to create local distinctiveness and preserve local culture which contributes to experience richness • Visit local entrepreneurs instead of the big chain
	(10) Enable autonomy and capacity development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering local communities by giving financial and promotional benefits from the tours • Provide educational training to the community • Stimulating tour partners to acquire sustainability certification
	(11) Be open to sharing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in knowledge networks focused on sustainable tourism • Be open to sharing the business model with other players

Society

Repurpose the business for the environment and society

All four case companies are strongly dedicated to using business as a force for good, thereby repurposing business for society. To begin with, they established their company with the fundamental goal of meeting local needs. For example, Better Places has eliminated the intermediary role commonly found in tour services. A tour company would typically sell the trip and function as a middleman between the customers and the local community. Better Places, on the other hand, revamped such a model and instead assured direct communication between customers and the local guides, stating, "So our client is directly in contact with someone local, the one that is organizing the trip itself and that means that the more profits also goes to the destination. So the destination really profits from tourism" (A1). This direct interaction allows a larger part of income to go to the destination, supporting the local community. In a similar vein, Tours That Matter was found to prioritize the needs of the city instead of the predominant focus on satisfying tourist demands, explaining, "So what we do

with Tours That Matter from day one is we decided instead of making a product where we think, oh, this is what tourists like, we make a product where we think this is what the city likes" (B1).

Furthermore, Tours That Matter expressed a de-emphasis on economic profit, as explained by one representative, "The money is never something that we really think about. Well, we think about it in terms like, we have to pay our bills... in our way of working, it's almost impossible to put money first" (B1). Hungry Birds also agrees that it only plays a facilitative role to "sustain the other two" (C2). As such, the case companies also underscore the importance of going beyond financial metrics and prioritizing the measurement of social impacts, as explained by one representative, "Our performance evaluation is completely on the social impact" (B2).

Growth, however, is still seen as partially favorable by the case companies, and thus none of them explicitly approaches degrowth. However, Hungry Birds and Tours That Matter see growth not as an end in itself but as an organic means to gain greater societal impact without externalizing costs to the environment and society. As one representative explained, "I think the thing that we are always saying to ourselves is we have to develop our tours and the way that we work in a way that we can grow... like with our last company, when you feel like the more people I get, the worse my impact is gonna be, then you're doing something wrong. So it has to be like... more people would mean better impact" (B2).

Furthermore, Hungry Birds and Inside Rotterdam set clear boundaries for their corporate growth by keeping the business size local due to concerns about losing control and flexibility, as explained by one representative, "We got a lot of advice from some other people, friends and accountant and other parties. They said that we should really grow, that we should go to other countries and we should go to other cities... we just didn't feel the need for that. We felt that means that we are gonna lose the control of the company" (C1).

Promote the societal acceptance of degrowth thinking

In promoting the societal acceptance of degrowth thinking, the first corresponding practice found within the case companies is coalition-building to normalize new behavior. For instance, Tours That Matter collaborated with the municipality and started the network 'Reinvent Tourism' to encourage other partners in the industry to adopt responsible practices; as one representative stated, "We work with the municipality also, so we really want to like push this message of, tourism can be different and can be positive impact tourism" (B1).

Secondly, the case companies are involved in oppositional activism and educational campaigning. Better Places collaborates with the Impact Institute and universities to raise awareness about the true cost of flying; as mentioned by the representative, "we have started last year a project with the Impact Institute. So it's an institution to calculate a true price of flying. And that's also was published in the newspaper. So we work together with also universities to include them in papers or education. So there are a lot of things how we want to contribute to make people aware of it. So we're not afraid to give a guest lecture or a presentation because we want people to hear it" (A1). Such efforts strive to raise awareness and motivate a shift towards responsible and sustainable travel practices in the pursuit of degrowth thinking. However, none of the companies explicitly addresses degrowth; thus, they only implicitly promote post-growth-related thinking.

Environment

Reduce the environmental impact along the value chain

The findings highlighted several strategies the case companies use to reduce environmental impact along the value chain. One significant approach is to encourage customers to travel using low-carbon modes of transportation. Better Places promotes the use of trains rather than flying, as stated by the representative, "for every destination within Europe, for example, we have a blog of how to travel by train to a certain destination, to inform and stimulate them to also have another idea of traveling" (A1). While for the other three companies, it is more of a challenge to stimulate customers to use low-carbon transportation as they only provide day-tour services and are not involved in the transportation booking process from and to the destinations.

Furthermore, some of the case companies have to some extent incorporated the circular economy by trying to eliminate single-use plastics during tours. For instance, Inside Rotterdam ensures that "All the places that we visit don't use a single-use plastics" (D1) and "We have reusable ones clean afterwards" (D1).

Promote product and service design for sustainability

The findings reveal several strategies the case companies use to promote service design for sustainability by providing slow travel tours which contribute to optimizing experience richness. Better Places encourages customers to embark on longer trips outside of Europe, setting a minimum duration of eight days for requests on their website. As the representative stated, "We want to stimulate people to also travel for a longer period of time when they travel outside of Europe and people cannot do a request on our website below eight days" (A1). The slow travel approach also reduces the reliance on air travel, as further explained by the representative "What we do inside the destination is diminish domestic flights so that they can take a bus or a slow travel that is say, longer in a certain destination and don't see everything of the country, but just, you know, explore really the destination more" (A1).

The other three companies, which only offer day-tour services, provide only walking and or biking tours which also support the concept of slow tourism. As one representative highlighted, "The walking tour is just a way for people to be able to, to smell, to experience, to have like the real 3D, 4D, 5D, whatever feeling of what, what a place really is about" (B1). These findings highlight the companies' commitment to slow travel principles and improving the quality of the travel experience through building deeper connections with the destination.

Customers

Encourage sufficiency

The findings highlight several practices implemented by the companies to encourage sufficiency. One approach involves preventing mass tourism by limiting the size of the tour groups to a small number of people. As one of the interviewees explained, "A group size is maximum 15 persons per guide... sometimes you see groups in the city with like 25 people... it has a bigger impact on the infrastructure, also on their presence in the city... by making the group smaller... you can dive into the city better" (D1).

Another approach to encourage sufficiency involves attracting local rather than international visitors. Tours That Matter and Inside Rotterdam focus on attracting groups that are already present in the local area. This approach enables them to prosper without relying on an influx of weekend tourists who would only fly into the city for a short period of time. As stated by the representative, "The groups that we are having are already in Amsterdam... So it's also a little bit of a different target group that we don't really have people that only come for the weekends to Amsterdam" (B2). Adding to efforts in fighting mass tourism, the companies also offer off-the-beaten-track tours, as stated by a representative from Hungry Birds, "We also don't do our tours in the city center. We try to do it a bit more outside in the less populated nice area" (C1).

Furthermore, to avoid unsustainable consumption, Tours That Matter aims to turn travelers from consumers into prosumers by engaging them in participative activities with the locals. For example, one representative mentioned, "In the morning, they have a tour, and in the afternoon, they're actually gonna cook for the neighborhood" (B1). This approach encourages travelers to actively contribute to the local community instead of just consuming.

Enable usage and sharing of products

The findings reveal related strategies that can stimulate the sharing of resources through practices such as ride-sharing and home-sharing. Inside Rotterdam emphasized the importance of providing customers with information about public transportation and electric sharing bicycles, stating, "So like that they can use public transport and how they can get the tickets" (D1) and "use the electric sharing bicycles and the brands that are there" (D1).

Better Places also facilitates home-sharing by emphasizing small-scale accommodations or homestays where visitors can stay with locals. As mentioned by the representative, "We use a lot of small-scale accommodation or homestays where people really stay with the locals" (A1). These approaches encourage customers to utilize shared resources and promote more efficient use of available resources required in the degrowth paradigm.

Employees & Management

Demonstrate leadership commitment and implement democratic governance

The findings reveal degrowth practices which exhibit leadership commitment and democratic governance. Better Places highlights the inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making processes, as the representative mentioned the existence of regular stakeholder meetings, stating, "We do have certain stakeholders... decision making, it's always possible to share ideas and then discuss it. So it's very open" (A1).

Furthermore, Inside Rotterdam emphasizes core company values that fight mass tourism. The representative mentioned, "There's some values that are at the core of inside Rotterdam... small scale, personal, and original" (IR). These values oppose the homogenization of destinations that are often subjected to mass tourism. Furthermore, the companies actively engage in discussions to decrease their footprint in the city and raise customers' awareness about their tours' impact. This demonstrates a strong commitment to company values and a proactive approach to challenge tourism's current unsustainable business norms.

Improve the work-life balance of employees

The findings reveal practices aligned with "Improving the work-life balance of employees." The first associated practice is job sharing. The representatives highlighted the guides' ability to pursue other interests and work in diverse jobs. One representative from Hungry Birds stated, "The guides definitely can and are open for other positions at other companies... For example, another one of our guides is also working with jewelry... another one is sometimes cooking things... she's interested in the cooking aspect" (C1). This flexibility allows guides to explore their passions and achieve a better balance between work and personal life.

Additionally, the case companies provide flexibility in working time and place, promoting a healthier work-life balance. One representative from Hungry Birds emphasized, "We are not at all like very strict that okay, you have to start working at nine and you finish at five. Let's say do your job in a convenient time, but we need to trust that you're doing your job" (C1).

Community

Be locally embedded and community-based

All four companies represent great involvement with the local communities. For instance, they co-create with the locals in designing the tours. Tours That Matter's representative stated, "So we go into the neighborhood where we want to design a tour, and then we talk with change makers, pioneers, but also with kind of like the gatekeepers or the city makers that play a crucial role in that certain neighborhood" (B1). They also work only with local guides, as mentioned by Inside Rotterdam's representative "The freelance guides we work with, they're locals, and we bring their own network as well" (D1). Additionally, host acceptability is ensured and maintained by openly communicating with the local community. As best stated by one interviewee, "We have open communication, and we check with them regularly" (D1)

Furthermore, they preserve culture by providing storytelling about the history of the place. Inside Rotterdam's representative explained, "We always talk about the bombing of the city in the Second World War. We have like folders with pictures, like of historic pictures, to show people how the city used to look like and how buildings used to look like" (D1).

The tours are also designed to create local distinctiveness and preserve local culture. Tours That Matter extensively did research on the neighborhood regarding its context, history, and social issues. They engage with the community and organizing storytelling sessions to gather diverse perspectives. As mentioned by one representative, "The first step is for us to find out what is the context?... What are the social issues that are taking place here? Then we find people like BH... she's mainly just like present in a neighborhood for weeks, just goes around in her bicycle, talks to everybody, and then we start to organize these like storytelling" (B2). It is also crucial to visit local entrepreneurs instead of the big chains. As one representative explained, "We visit local entrepreneurs, small ones that are not part of chains. They are very much the money really goes into the local community." This ensures that money spent by tourists directly benefits the local community.

Enable autonomy and capacity development

The findings reveal corresponding practices that enable local communities autonomy and capacity development. Inside Rotterdam emphasized the financial and promotional benefits

provided to local communities through the tours, stating, "On one side, it's financially for like food that we buy there. But it's also, I think, promotion. We promote them on social media and create awareness about it as well" (D1).

Most of the companies also provide educational training, especially in sustainability. Hungry Birds's representative noted that the older generation of business partners in the community "are just used to doing things in certain ways, so they just keep on doing that in that way" (C1). Thus, they provide training to encourage partners to adopt different practices and strive for sustainability, stating "Sometimes we indeed train, okay, maybe we can try to do it differently." Similarly, Better Places encourages partners to pursue sustainable certification in tourism, as said by the interviewee "It's a certification system especially focused on tourism... and we also are simulating our partners to get that certification" (B1).

These practices highlight the companies' efforts to empower local communities by offering financial support and promoting their businesses as well as providing educational training which contribute to the capacity development of the region.

Be open to sharing resources

The findings highlight the four companies' active participation in knowledge networks and for Tours That Matter, their openness to sharing their business models with others. As one representative mentioned, "Now the Tourban network, that was very interesting too. So they're all sustainable tour operators or tour businesses, and we exchanged a lot of knowledge" (D1). This indicates their active engagement in a community of sustainable tourism practitioners, where they actively share insights and learn from each other. Notably, all case companies, except for Better Places, are part of the Tourban community, emphasizing their commitment to sustainable practices and collaboration within the industry.

In particular, Tours That Matter stands out by discussing the sharing and potential replication of their business model in other cities. They see tours as a powerful tool for driving change and even develop a guide on creating tours for change. As one representative stated, "I mean, obviously, we can use the model anywhere, 'cause it's really like tours as a tool for change. And right now, we're really also collecting this how-to guide, how do you create a tour for change" (B1). This reflects their eagerness to inspire and support others in adopting impactful tourism practices that could be compatible with the degrowth paradigm.

DISCUSSION

Overall, none of the case companies perfectly represent a tour company embracing degrowth as they face particular challenges. However, it is evident that all of the case companies have, to some extent, implemented most of the degrowth principles. An answer to the research question of how degrowth principles might be operationalized in sustainable tour companies can thus be found from the analysis of the four case companies.

The degrowth strategies employed by the case companies support non-mainstream activities engagement, materialism rejection, and strong social interaction (5). They raise the travel experience's quality while limiting how much a destination can handle. Sustainable tourism businesses can align with the ideal trajectory of development promoted by degrowth proponents which is "qualitative development but not aggregate quantitative growth at the

expense of natural and social capital" (11) by implementing the degrowth practices. For instance, providing off-the-beaten-track tours with meaningful interactions with the locals might promote optimizing the travel experience rather than maximizing visitor numbers, which can address pressing issues connected to the current phenomenon of over-tourism (8).

Additionally, degrowth practices such as that tours are designed to create local distinctiveness and preserve a local culture can help counteract the homogenizing effects of mass tourism, which frequently lead to regions having the same characteristics (16). The provision of slow tourism, which leads to extended stays and in-depth exploration (24), also lessens the need for the fast-fashion trend of frequent travel, contributing to experience optimization rather than visitor number maximization (11) and therefore significantly reduce emissions.

This study also agreed with Andriotis (2014) who contends that degrowth tourism model is a combination of the most sustainable feature of other forms of alternative tourism (5). For instance, ecotourism which focuses on environmental values is required in principle 3 and 4. Community-based tourism which aims to increase local involvement in tourism are required in principle 9 and 10, and slow tourism is required in 5. Despite that they share a number of similarities with degrowth tourism, the philosophical ideas of degrowth, which deal with limits in growth, anti-materialism, and volunteer sufficiency, such advocated by principle 1 and principle 5, are not adopted by them. As a result, even while we can draw the conclusion that degrowth tourism and other alternative forms of tourism have a noticeable convergence, they are not interchangeable. Degrowth unifies all favorable prerequisites of other forms of low impact/alternative tourism that different types of tourism do not (6).

The operationalization of degrowth principles in the tourism industry provides a lot of potentials to create the greatest form of tourism, as it features the best things we ought to get when traveling. Most of what requires in degrowth tourism, such as slow traveling and locality involvement, only give society an improved richness in experience when traveling, which contributes to enhancing the well-being of society (6). Thus, in the era of globalization, where every place starts to look and feel the same (16), degrowth tourism model provides the opportunity to bring back originality, local distinctiveness, rich-travel experience, and cultural perseverance (6). Degrowth tourism brings the potential of once again a world where travel is not a means to escape from the everyday grind but to experience the beauty of this world, and to use our basic human rights to travel through experiencing and learning, rather than polluting and destroying. Businesses' degrowth does not necessarily imply that we can expect them to shrink until ultimately they vanish (4), since profit generation is still allowed as long as it does not take precedence over environmental and societal interest (4). Quiet the opposite, the originality required by degrowth rather results in uniqueness, making the degrowth tourism model a potentially viable business model even though the priority has to stay high on society and environmental needs.

Tensions and Recommendation for Future Research

Firstly, corporate growth is at least partially perceived as positive, considering that growth are still associated with the ability of generating a wider social impact (1). However, Bocken and Short (2016) contend that a company with a significant impact can and should expand organically to take the spot of more environmentally destructive businesses (25). Thus, corporate growth in some companies with a clear purpose for the environment and society could potentially be nearing degrowth because degrowth aims to reduce societal output and

consumption. But ultimately, this is a matter that calls for broader societal or regulatory scrutiny.

Secondly, all four case companies expressed their struggle with not having enough power to influence the key behavior of travelers, such as choosing low-carbon transportation. The reason for this is partly due to the fact that three of the four selected case companies (Tours That Matter, Hungry Birds, and Inside Rotterdam) are only providing day-tour services, in which they are not involved in the transportation booking process from and to the destinations, as well as the accommodation or place to stay. Thus, they cannot stimulate or nudge their customers to choose low-carbon transportation and accommodation. This prevents them from contributing to nudging the bigger behavior, which otherwise will make a significant impact on degrowth-inspired travels (6). Thus, future research should investigate which form of tourism business fits more into the degrowth paradigm. Do they have to oppose the small-scale tourism that is valued in degrowth and organically grow bigger to have a bigger influence? These tensions are worth investigating in future research. The other explanation to why the case companies are having a small influence in changing society's behavior in traveling is because approaching degrowth is eventually a societal matter and requires a larger transformation where organizations, the regulatory framework, and society would have to play their respective parts (1). Therefore, future research can also cover the topic from the perspective of bigger actors, such as regulators or global tourism organization such as UNWTO.

CONCLUSION

With regard to the research question, '*How can the degrowth principles be operationalized in the context of sustainable tourism businesses?*' it can be answered that it involves the de-commodification of tourism activity, the reduction of carbon emissions from transportation, the altered patterns of production and consumption, and the importance placed on the travel experience (see Figure 2 for detail of the degrowth practices). Sustainable tourism business should refer to the degrowth practices found in this study to leverage their sustainability performance.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

From the theoretical perspective, this research bridges the existing theory of degrowth principles in organizations and their operationalization in the context of tourism industry businesses. Vice versa, this study also theoretically contributes to the tourism literature which advances the degrowth tourism business model. This research is also relevant to the practical world by providing guidance to sustainable tourism businesses on how to innovate their business models to be compatible with the degrowth paradigm.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Firstly, due to the nature of being a master thesis, this research faced limitations in time and financial resources. Secondly, one interviewee (A1) was only available for 30 minutes and hence not all relevant topics could be discussed in detail. Thirdly, due to the timing of this study which took place on the high season of tourism, online interviews have been mostly preferred to traditional in-person interviews, indicating that non-verbal communication was lost. At times, the interviewing process was hampered by slow internet and camera troubles. The fact that neither the interviewer nor the interviewees were native English speakers also created a limitation.

From an empirical perspective, this study is clearly limited by the selection of the companies analyzed. This study does not include other types of business from the tourism industry such as accommodation, transportation, and food and beverages. Thus, the findings of this study are limited to being applicable only for tour operators. Secondly, the case companies that we analyzed do not explicitly advocate for degrowth. Therefore, this study is only able to demonstrate how the degrowth principles are implicitly incorporated within the case companies.

Lastly, the applicability of the findings could be geographically limited to the context of the Netherlands. Thus, results of degrowth operationalization in tourism business might differ in other countries, for example the developing ones. Hence, future research could consider an international context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Guide

Quick setting

Quick personal greeting. Next, ask about the informed consent/make sure that it is signed and received.

Introduction of the project

This project is related to the Sustainable Entrepreneurship Project (SEP), which is the thesis of my master's. The purpose of this study is to examine how degrowth principles can be operationalized in sustainable tourism businesses. The goal of the interview is to understand how the principles of degrowth can be applied to tourism industry businesses.

Structure

A) Start with opening questions about the role of the participant in the organization

1. Please introduce yourself and your position at [the Case Company].
2. How long have you been working at [the Case Company]?

B) Questions focused on the purpose of our research: The eleven principles of degrowth by Hankammer et al. (2021)

Principle 1: Repurpose the business for the environment and society

1. Could you discuss how your organization prioritizes economic goals and social/environmental responsibility? Is it a struggle to prioritize social and environmental goals ahead of profit or does it provide more opportunity for the business?

Principle 2: Promote the societal acceptance of degrowth thinking

2. Just like any other type of business, tourism also does have negative impacts. How does your company educate society and potential customers to raise awareness of environmental and social issues in tourism? Do you communicate to them the negative impact of the tours you provide?

Principle 3: Reduce the environmental impact along the value chain

3. What is your approach in minimizing the emissions generated from the tour activities of your customers? (e.g., air travel, in-city transport, during their stay?)

Principle 4: Promote product and service design for sustainability

4. Do you allow for a co-creation with customers or the communities in the design process of your service?

Principle 5: Encourage sufficiency

5. How does your Better Places approach the issues of mass tourism, especially in terms

of protecting the travel destination’s environmental and cultural heritage?
 6. Does your company phase out unsustainable consumption options, and how?

Principle 6: Enable usage and sharing of products

7. Could you discuss the employment terms of your local guides or local partners with your company? (e.g., do they work exclusively for your company?)

Principle 7: Demonstrate leadership commitment and implement democratic governance

8. How does your company distribute decision-making power and control among employees and stakeholders? (e.g., is it more vertical or horizontal in terms of hierarchies?)
 9. What values are being communicated by the top management to the rest of the team?

Principle 8: Improve the work-life balance of employees

10. How does your company maintain employees' health (emotionally and physically) as well as satisfaction level?

Principle 9. Be locally embedded and community-based

11. How does your company involve the local community in the tours you provide?
 12. Why do you decide to operate locally?

Principle 10. Enable autonomy and capacity development

12. Does the community take part in designing the tours provided by your company?
 13. What is the impact of your business on the local community? (e.g., does the company help to strengthen the skills and competencies or empower the communities?)

Principle 11. Be open to sharing resources

14. Do you have collaborations with other organizations in which you share resources to improve sustainability?

c) End on a positive note:

Any additional information to address? Would it be okay to contact you again for a quick follow-up if any more questions arise?

Appendix 2. List of Interviews

Label	Company	Role	Format	Interview Mode	Date
A1	Better Places	Product Manager	Video Meeting	Individual	11 April 2023
B1	Tours That Matter	Co-owner	Video Meeting	Individual	3 May 2023
B2	Tours That Matter	Co-owner	Video Meeting	Individual	20 April 2023
C1	Hungry Birds	Co-owner	Phone Call	Individual	25 April 2023
C2	Hungry Birds	Co-owner	In-Person	Individual	24 April 2023
D1	Inside Rotterdam	Owner	Video Meeting	Individual	16 May 2023

Appendix 3. Informed Consent Form

INFORMATION SHEET & INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear [Name of Participant] of [Name of Company],

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research. This letter explains what the research entails and how the research will be conducted. Please take time to read the following information carefully. If any information is not clear kindly ask questions using the contact details of the researcher provided at the end of this letter.

Title of study: Examining the Operationalization of Degrowth Principles in the Context of Sustainable Tourism Businesses.

WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT?

- Many destinations and communities have exceeded their carrying capacity, resulting in issues of over-tourism such as environmental and social degradation, loss of cultural authenticity, and a sense of community. From the perspective of tourism, degrowth is presented as a potential alternative strategy that opposes mass tourism and seeks to prevent exploitation of local communities, but there is still a gap in the literature regarding the topic. To address the knowledge gap, this research aims to examine how the degrowth principles can be operationalized in the context of sustainable tourism businesses. For this study, 6 representatives from multiple case companies will be asked to participate in the interview.
- The case companies are included in this study due to their commitment to sustainability, which can provide useful insights on the research topic.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

- An interview consisting of multiple open-ended questions, lasting between 30 to 60 minutes.
- The interview will be recorded

DO YOU HAVE TO PARTICIPATE?

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without negative consequences
- You have the right to decline to answer particular questions

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS IN PARTICIPATING?

- There are no direct benefits but the research may contribute to further knowledge on the potential of the tourism industry in the degrowth/post-growth economy. This can help you to develop future business strategies for sustainability.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

- The data will be retained on the Y-drive of the University of Groningen server for 5 years, in correspondence with the university GDPR legislation.
- The interview will be recorded and transcribed and any sensitive data will be removed or pseudonymized. Only the author will have access to the recording. Supervisor and assessors will have access to the transcript and final report. Other parties will not be granted access.
- For confidentiality purposes, you have the right to ask to be anonymized.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

- The findings will be submitted for review in the master thesis, but will not be published in academic journals. The intended audience is supervisor, co-assessor and the participants/interviewees.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

- This research study has obtained ethical approval from the Campus Fryslân Ethics Committee.
- The researcher will uphold to relevant ethical standards.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, please sign the consent form below. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

Primary researcher: Hanifah Azzahra Hakimah (h.a.hakimah@student.rug.nl)

Institutional contact:

- Campus Fryslân, University of Groningen
- Wirdumerdijk 34, 8911 CE, Leeuwarden
- Tel: 058 205 5000

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title study: Examining the Operationalization of Degrowth Principles in the Context of Sustainable Tourism Businesses.

Name participant:

Assessment

- I have read the information sheet and was able to ask any additional question to the researcher.
- I understand I may ask questions about the study at any time.
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that at any time I can refuse to answer any question without any consequences.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

Confidentiality and Data Use

- I understand that none of my individual information will be disclosed to anyone outside the study team and my name will not be published.
- I understand that the information provided will be used only for this research and publications directly related to this research project.
- I understand that data (consent forms, recordings, interview transcripts) will be retained on the Y-drive of the University of Groningen server for 5 years, in correspondence with the university GDPR legislation.

Future involvement

- I wish to receive a copy of the scientific output of the project.
- I consent to be re-contacted for participating in future studies.

Having read and understood all the above, I agree to participate in the research study:
yes / no

Date

Signature

To be filled in by the researcher

- I declare that I have thoroughly informed the research participant about the research study and answered any remaining questions to the best of my knowledge.
- I agree that this person participates in the research study.

Date

Signature

Appendix 4. Link to Coding Documentation

[Shared Folder to Coding Documentation](#)