Enhanced Heritage Tourism Management through a Themed Landscape Approach: The Case of Brussels’ Art Nouveau

Kaat De Ridder
Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, Mechelen, Belgium
Dominique Vanneste
University of Leuven (KU Leuven), Leuven, Belgium

Besides being known as the birthplace of fries and waffles, Brussels is also referred to as a superlative Art Nouveau Capital. However, it appears that many of its visitors are unfamiliar with this city’s architectural style which is spread throughout the Capital Region. Due to both the specific opportunities and barriers of the Brussels context, an improved valorisation was explored through a themed landscape approach. This innovative tourism approach can enhance both the management and experience of the Art Nouveau patrimony as an entity. Applying a survey and interviews, this research examined the views of two relevant stakeholder groups: policymakers and tourism managers, and visitors. Two main research questions were addressed: whether these groups could identify the Brussels Art Nouveau as a themed landscape; and, in which way a themed landscape approach can overcome fragmented management and weak experience. Confronting both groups revealed interesting discrepancies as hidden hurdles for tourism destination management.

Keywords: Art Nouveau, Brussels, heritage, themed landscape, tourism management

Introduction

The Belgian capital region accounts for more than 500 public and private Art Nouveau buildings. Some world-renowned Art Nouveau architects, such as Victor Horta and Henri van de Velde, built their most remarkable creations in this city. Nevertheless, visitors to the Brussels capital region often do not seem to be aware of the presence of this patrimony despite the association of Brussels with culture and heritage. Despite this detected inconsistency, the Brussels Destination Management Organisation (DMO) claims the title of “European Capital of Art Nouveau” for Brussels. This patrimony is scattered throughout the Capital Region and is characterized by a large number of actors, objectives, visions, and power relations. A second obstacle within the specific context of this study concerns the complex Belgian and Brussels political situation, which fosters further fragmentation and differentiation. Additionally, the question arises whether such a vulnerable patrimony is suitable for (further) commodification. The existing dichotomy between architectural heritage on the one hand, and tourism on the other, creates a precarious situation that needs to be handled with a clear vision, linking management, commodification, and conservation.

The choice for Brussels as a case study area can be explained by two elements. First, within this research,
the subject of thematizing a tourism landscape applies very much to the Brussels’ Art Nouveau since there is a clear theme of which the tangible outcome (buildings) is extremely dispersed beyond the pre-18th-century city centre. The founding of Belgium in 1830 created a specific context in which Belgian Art Nouveau emerged. Therefore, the Belgian Art Nouveau is characterized by a hint of optimism and softness but is lively, cosmopolitan and energetic at the same time, and expressing the newly paired power and status of its young capital Brussels (Howard, 1996). Second, in the present political setting of Belgium, Brussels’ cultural assets are managed by the Flemish (Dutch-speaking) community and the Walloon (French-speaking) community. Although the intention is to integrate the cultural visions of both, to reinforce the role of Brussels as the joint capital, communication is not always optimal. This adds an additional management issue.

The exploration of the themed landscape approach for tourism and heritage conservation creates opportunities to identify the above-mentioned hurdles, and to find consensus in a common framework that, upon application, can both strengthen and improve the management and the tourism experience of the Brussels’ Art Nouveau. The application of this approach can strengthen and further develop the tourism potential of this patrimony, and upscale its fame and appreciation to a mainstream and international level. It creates an opportunity to find common ground between a landscape-centred approach on the one hand and a tourism-centred approach on the other. The themed landscape approach is partly derived from the conceptualization of the geo-tourism, and marks an impetus in the creation of an integrated multidisciplinary framework that fosters the consistency of the heritage. On the other hand, it is inspired by the elaboration of themed routes and trails that unite fragmented elements that are part of a thematic entity (Hall, 2005; Timothy & Boyd, 2015).

This research was developed from two angles. The visitor survey was made available in French, Dutch, and English. This part of the research was conducted at a location with a marker building in Art Nouveau style (Musical Instruments Museum, Kunstberg). One hundred and five (105) visitors indicated if, according to them, Art Nouveau heritage was typical, dominant, and/or part of the identity of the city. The researchers intended to grasp, through a number of statements (20), whether they perceived the Brussels’ Art Nouveau scene as an urban or tourism themed landscape or not, and if a themed landscape approach evoked ideas in terms of management and the visitor experience. These statements were subject of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to distinguish different dimensions and reveal once more a variety of tourists’ interpretations of heritage and urban landscapes. A representative set of policymakers, actors related to the (implementation of) policy, and managers (5) related to common collaboration, joined promotion, and tourism development of Brussels’ Art Nouveau and its conservation was interviewed in French and Dutch (Appendix 1). Content analysis was applied to the transcripts to recreate a set of visions and interpretations by these expert stakeholders, including power relations. Further we engaged in participatory observation while joining some guided tours.

The added value of this study lies in the comparison of the results of both visitors and actors related to tourism policy in the field with a focus on discrepancies. Therefore, this research is aimed at exploring the concept of “themed landscape” as a management tool by confronting the visions of two stakeholder groups, tourists and policymakers/managers. The focal concepts are developed before presenting the study’s results. The framework concerning landscapes is further outlined below through literature before zooming in on urban and tourism themed landscapes.

Landscapes
The term “landscape” has multiple meanings within the literature, ranging from a purely aesthetic or natural connotation towards a more cultural and social orientation (Burmil & Enis, 2004). According to Antrop (2006), the landscape is a synthetic and integrating concept of functional, physical but also esthetic, symbolic, and immaterial aspects. It is the product of a dynamic interaction between natural processes and human activity and it functions as a point of reference for the development and expression of the local identity (Markwell et al., 2004). Glikson (1967) considers a landscape as a holistic concept with various functions. Depending on whether a rural or an urban landscape is discussed, these functions include social, biological, economic, cultural, ecological, rational, and emotional aspects that interact and overlap with one another.

Most landscapes are cultural, integrating natural and built aspects, and also contribute to mental constructs (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). These mental landscapes are a reflection of an individual’s personal experience and social-cultural framework. Furthermore, it is a layered landscape of which the content depends on the person’s dominant vision and memories (Aitchison et al., 2000). Hence, these landscapes are not neutral due to the presence of socially constructed mental or symbolic layers (Isachenko, 2009; Aitchison et al., 2000). These intangible meanings are, in turn, constructed through the tangible objects that are present within the material and physical environment of the landscape (Sampson & Goodrich, 2009).

Consequently, landscapes do not only steer the creation of meaning, they are also physical and symbolic products of these meanings. Empowered stakeholders and users of the landscape are able to construct and/or alter the physical and symbolic shape of the landscape in order to reflect or change the meaning (Aitchison et al., 2000). Simultaneously, contradictory processes of an economic, social, or ecological nature take place in this space through time. Successive development phases create pressure which, if not alleviated, can affect the landscape negatively (Burmil & Enis, 2004). This implies that landscapes are in a constant state of transition (Urry, 1995). Therefore, it is important to apply a multifunctional approach to the landscape as an entity, instead of addressing each element individually with its own function within the landscape.

Markwell et al. (2004) stress that it is crucial to involve all stakeholders in the creation of the landscape, and to acknowledge their diversity and plurality in order to integrate all narratives. Power relations will additionally determine the direction of the commodification processes as well its beneficiaries (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). Due to the fact that landscapes imply various power relations, users and interpretations, the management of the system has to deal with obstacles and conflicts. This contributes to the need for planning and management even more. With “orgware”, as one of the three structural dimensions within heritage sites, Jansen-Verbeke (2009) refers to the type, the power, the network of organizations and structures that are involved in a sustainable development of landscapes. In other words, there is a need for mapping and in-depth understanding of the various underlying processes and actors that may influence and shape the landscape, congruent as well as opposite visions, approaches, and building blocks for synergies among the stakeholders.

Tourismscapes

The fact that a landscape is continuously produced and consumed by various stakeholders acting from different locations and levels is also applicable to tourism (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). Tourism landscapes or tourismscapes are constantly and differently constructed, consumed, interpreted, and appropriated by various groups and individuals, within space and time (Aitchison et al., 2000). The offer is provided by a set of bodies consisting of local and central governments, commercial organizations, and the non-profit sector. In the field of tourism, DMOs have a major role. In addition to possible pressure from within the landscape, tourism
competition exists between various landscapes being distinct destinations or different sites within a destination. Due to globalization and the increased interest in other cultures, landscapes may have to compete with each other to a greater extent (Prentice, 2001). This is particularly the case for cities.

Landscapes and tourism are not two discrete concepts, but are interlinked and constitute a continuum (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). Tourism may function as an intermediary in the creation of spatial and mental layers within landscapes as they cannot be separated from the (human) activities by hosts (locals) and guests (visitors) that take place within the destination. Consequently, the meanings of landscapes change along with the evolution of these activities (Isachenko, 2009; Cunningham, 2009). Due to the uniqueness and the specific identity of the urban landscape, it is not possible to apply a “one size fits all” approach upon the development of the urban tourism product. Nevertheless, once a well-developed tourism product is in place, tourism can function as a catalyst for the local and regional, social, and economic dynamics within these landscapes (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). This may result in the rediscovery of architecture and can help in valorizing the intangible by embedding it in the tangible (Aitchison et al., 2000; Lasansky, 2004; Ockman, 2004).

Interactions between landscapes and tourism are characterized by a high degree of complexity, partly due to the multidisciplinary nature of both landscapes and tourism. As a consequence, this field of research remains fragmented. Stoffelen and Vanneste (2015) distinguish two perspectives regarding this matter: a tourism-centred perspective, and landscape-centred perspective. Following a tourism-centred perspective, symbolic notions of the landscape originate from the tourism context, and not from local interactions between environment and society. However, emotions and meanings that are location-specific are relevant for both locals and tourists, and are integrated within the landscape (Williams & Stewart, 1998). The risk of such an approach lies in the tourismscape being reduced to an idealized and romanticized notion of the overall landscape while supporting the creation of a destination myth for the purpose of the commodification of the past (Markwell et al., 2004; Prentice, 2001; Urry, 1995). This is partly supported by a homogenizing trend (Aitchison et al., 2000, Markwell et al., 2004) sometimes even resulting in “Disneyfication” or over-aestheticization (Matusitz & Palermo, 2014; Gravari-Barbas, 2017). Such selective interpretations and representations may result in the possible alienation between the users of the landscape, in this case tourists, and locals, and the various meanings attributed to the landscape, possibly provoking conflict.

A themed landscape must thus meet the expectations of both, visitors and the local community, which is challenging if the landscape aims to preserve its identity (Aitchison et al., 2000). An urban landscape is endowed with meaning since it consists of a significant historical stratification in combination with cultural and natural values (UNESCO, 2011; Van Mechelen, 2006) and many performative and architectural aspects that feed a thematization of the landscape (Edensor & Kothari, 2004). Moreover, urban landscapes may provide the opportunity to link the past in an innovative way to the present, while supporting and stimulating future development (Aitchison, MacLeod, & Shaw, 2000).

**Thematisation of Tourismscapes or Themed Landscapes**

According to Sternberg (1997, p. 952), thematization of a landscape can be defined as the meaningful and significant positioning of an attraction or a destination by means of themes that can be categorized under “picturesqueness, freakishness, technological wondrousness, and sensuous romance”. Nonetheless, such a theme needs to take into account the points of reference of the landscape as well as its specific identity (Aitchison et al., 2000). A themed landscape is not a mere sum of the present historical elements. Selection,
interpretation and “packaging”, readability, permeability, planning, organization, and signage are crucial elements in the creation of a themed tourism product (Ashworth, 1988; Markwell et al., 2004; Tiesdell et al., 1996; Aitchison et al., 2000).

As previously stated, the complexity lies in finding a delicate balance between a workable and manageable theme, and the expression of multiple present layers and subtleties within the landscape. Therefore, the composition of the content of the themed landscape is a critical aspect as it needs to take into account the various stories, perspectives, and interpretations without neglecting a storyline and a reference frame. Today, it is common knowledge that all stakeholders need to be involved in order to avoid a selective and simplified landscape and internal conflicts, resulting in a lack of sense of place and supporting community (Markwell et al., 2004; Prentice, 2001; Dove, 1997). However, in practice, many hurdles make it difficult to connect the multiple elements of heritage throughout the “scape” (Markwell et al., 2004). Including architecture as a central theme throughout the landscape acts as an interesting lever to stimulate the (urban) identity, foster cultural appreciation as well as support the protection of the heritage through its positioning within a sustainable cultural context (Prentice, 2001). The protection of the patrimony must, therefore, be an inherent part of the tourism strategy (Savage, et al., 2004) and beyond, as in spatial planning and development strategies (Jansen-Verbeke & Vanneste, 2018) and territorial systems (Rodwell, 2015).

A re-interpretation of the conceptualization of geo-tourism may provide guidance in order to create common ground between the landscape-centred perspective and the tourism-centred perspective (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). This conceptualization is interesting as the concept of geo-tourism combines both physical landscape elements as well as the local identity within tourism development (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). The geological focus on the natural can be replaced by the architectural or material heritage focus on the cultural, as to stimulate the common ground and debate between tourism and heritage conservation regarding architectural tourism. This is one of the reasons why the landscape, with its material assets, is vulnerable in a tourism context (Vandeputte et al., 2015). This may be partly due to insufficient social awareness regarding the value of these elements as a product, which in turn assigns an important role in tourism (Hose & Vasiljevic, 2012). Although the involved stakeholders and context in our research differ from a geo-tourism context, the fields of tension remain the same. Within the conceptualization of geo-tourism, Stoffelen and Vanneste (2015) argue that the landscape-centred perspective considers the aspects of landscape and tourism as two separate, closed entities. According to this perspective, the landscape provides the resources for tourism whereas the latter makes the landscape into a (commodified) product. Therefore, tourism creates a sense of awareness regarding the importance of the landscape, related to the intrinsic attractiveness of the territorial sources that are present within the landscape (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015).

From the perspective of the tourism-centred approach, boundaries between the two subjects, tourism and landscape, are not that rigid; they influence one another, working towards a continuum. It builds on heritage tourism that combines the conceptual focus through the cultural and architectural elements within the landscape and the materialized identity. This creates a continuum that can tackle the internal challenge of fragmentation between tourism and architectural heritage. Both heritage landscapes and tourismscapes can be examined within the same framework through the integration of the complex interactions within the two scapes (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). In this regard, attention should be given to the commodification and institutionalization of the heritage resources for tourism as well as the moulding power that tourism in turn exerts on the landscape.
This creates the opportunity to integrate a political-ecological framework that involves the political, economic, social, and physical layers as well. It allows a broader understanding and overview of the (power) relations imposed on people and physical elements (Douglas, 2014) and a firmer integration of the (hidden) place-specific meanings. It shapes conditions to involve stakeholders within policy, implementation of network structures, and provides them with the necessary power.

In short, this conceptualization (i) acknowledges that the interpretation of the material elements within the landscape has a structuring role within the process of the creation of place-based meanings as well as of the tourism product, (ii) opens up for integration of various place-based meanings within the management processes of “tourismscapes”, and (iii) makes a tourism themed landscape a lever to overcome fragmentation between the urban environment and the tourism interactions.

## Findings and Discussions

The perception of the tourists is clear. Art Nouveau is (rather) not typical (53%) (Fig 1.a), is (rather) not dominant (72%) (Fig 1.b), and is (rather) not contributing to the Brussels’ identity (42%) (Fig 1.c). Although for the latter issue (identity), opinions are more nuanced with 46% agreeing somewhat or very much (Fig 1.c). Nevertheless, this appreciation is much richer and balanced if one tries to group a number of statements (see Table 1). Unquestionably, the most important dimension (component with an eigenvalue of 4.4 and explained variance of 22%) reflects unconditional appreciation. The second set of opinions (eigenvalue of 2.9, 15% explained variance) focus more on aspects of commodification; they agree positively with promotion and organization, but bring a lack of accessibility into light. The third group reflects disappointment, but sees elements for upgrading and improvement. The fourth, already less important dimension, reflects general contentment while the fifth represents, rather the contrary, a general discontentment (Table 1). From this, it becomes obvious that the appreciation of Art Nouveau as a themed urban landscape presented to tourists is very complex and highly differentiated. It is not an unambiguous subject, which is in turn important for policy makers to take into account. The analysis reveals that the factor “first” versus repeat visit makes a substantial difference as there is a correlation between (no) prior visitation of Art Nouveau heritage, and whether or not it is perceived as a themed urban landscape as well as a correlation between (no) prior visitation, and the perceived level of tourism potential of the Brussels’ Art Nouveau.

Participatory observation showed that repeat visitors were more informed about the Brussels’ Art Nouveau heritage and rated its tourism potential higher as they asked for more detailed information on the subject and have a high level of interest concerning the cultural content, in comparison to first time visitors (Opperman, 1997; Brida et al., 2014).

It is interesting to discover within the same research that all five interviewed policymakers and managers related to the Brussels’ Art Nouveau claim the Art Nouveau is not only “something very typical for Brussels” due to the fact that it is scattered throughout the Capital Region and because of the specific historical aspect, as Brussels is one of the cities where Art Nouveau originated and developed, but believe that this is undisputable. The opinions on the Art Nouveau dominance are divided. Some state that they consider this patrimony as dominant due to its presence in a large number of streets within the Capital Region and the high number of buildings (967) (Monumenten & Landschappen, 2019) compared to other cities. Others, such as the director of the residents association, claim that it is not dominant in the whole of the Brussels’ patrimony, which covers many neighborhoods developed in many distinct periods but he agrees that, at least by locals, it is recognized as “definitively part of the identity” and “really a cultural aspect that characterizes Brussels”.

Opperman, 1997; Brida et al., 2014. — Monumenten & Landschappen, 2019.
Therefore, there is a clear mismatch between what is believed to be a projected image and the perceived image. A possible explanation for this discrepancy is the fact that the key persons related to management and policy regarding tourism and/or heritage are more familiar on a professional level with this patrimony. Consequently, they might overestimate the impact of this heritage on/within the urban landscape as an overall marker contributing to a visitors’ experience.

![Figure 1. Brussels' Art Nouveau being typical, dominant, and part of the identity of the city according to the perception of the visitors (n = 105). Source: own data.](image)

Finally, visitors were asked in the questionnaire about the Brussels’ Art Nouveau tourism potential and to what extent this could be (better) developed into a tourism product (Fig. 2). Surprisingly, a large majority of the respondents, 81%, state that the Brussels’ Art Nouveau has somewhat or a lot of tourism potential which contradicts their relative unfamiliarity with Art Nouveau as architectural heritage and as an urban landscape marker. It might be that the positionality of the researcher—very much in favor of and inspired by the potential of Art Nouveau—plays a part while the location near the impressive Museum of Music Instruments being one of the outstanding Art Nouveau buildings in Brussels, has influenced the respondents as well. On the other hand, the building, as well as the introduction by the researcher, might have been eye-openers. Policymakers and managers related to the Brussels’ Art Nouveau all agree on the fact that the potential is without any doubt. Even the representative of the “Atelier de Recherche et d’Action Urbaines” (urban research and action atelier), which has a very broad approach, states that “this [guided Art Nouveau tours] is the most essential part of our offer right now. It’s about Art Nouveau and that’s what the public is interested in”. Only one interviewee (coordinator of the Art Nouveau Network), acknowledges the need to work towards a thematic framework for Art Nouveau and that its potential is not sufficient.

According to the perception of 59% of the visitors, the Brussels’ Art Nouveau tourism product is (rather) under-developed (Fig. 2.b). This refers to earlier findings that Art Nouveau is not known, nor discovered as a marker of the Brussels’ urban landscape nor tourismscape. Again, this is in contrast with policymakers and managers who think “the theme is relatively well developed”. These results indicate that the interviewees do
believe that further integration of the tourism dimension within the Art Nouveau landscape is possible, but that presently, they are doing very well. The creation of a well-thought-out Brussels’ Art Nouveau tourism themed landscape, requires further development and improvement without stakeholders from the management and policy side being fully convinced. It is possible that administrative and political barriers provoke a kind of mental lock-in.

The success of the creational process of a themed landscape depends, amongst others, on the level of cooperation and the type of information flow. A considerable obstacle regarding the further development of the Brussels’ Art Nouveau themed landscape was pointed out by the Coordinator of the Art Nouveau Network who mentioned the structural fragmentation and the absence of an integrating network. The existing organizations and institutions related to Art Nouveau all have their own strategies and actions. Although the Brussels’ Art Nouveau is embedded in a specific time and space-related context, its promotion is strategically determined by the Brussels Capital Region that focuses on the so-called Art Nouveau headliners and simplifies the Brussels’ Art Nouveau narrative. Furthermore, the entities, both public and private are situated on multiple administrative levels, and have difficulties in communicating since some depend on the Dutch-speaking and other on the French-speaking community. Furthermore, the tourism potential of the Art Nouveau heritage is underestimated by the public institutions and the strategy to realize this tourism potential differs substantially among private organizations. This is in turn different from the way the DMO “Visit Brussels” senses and observes the Art Nouveau as a tourism product.

![Figure 2. Brussels’ Art Nouveau: level of tourism potential and development of tourism product according to the perception of the visitors (n = 105). Source: own data.](image)

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

A landscape contains multiple meanings, functions, and characteristics. Therefore, it is not neutral nor static as its content and interpretation are subjective, personal, and depending on one’s stakeholder position. Tourism and landscapes are intertwined and must, therefore, be examined in such a manner. As for many tourism development issues, no “one size fits all” approach is available upon applying a (themed) landscape approach as it involves more than adding up multiple individual elements that are connected by a theme. A
coherent landscape requires acknowledgement of stakeholders, inclusion, engagement, and planning while being combined within a holistic approach and supported by organizational and political structures. Failing to recognize the above, results in a lack of coordination and communication leading towards internal conflict, missing sense of place, and simplification of the narrative. Furthermore, the existing dichotomy between a tourism-centred perspective on landscapes and a cultural/architectural perspective on landscapes complicates the conceptual process although some interesting models (e.g. derived from geo-tourism) exist.

The study revealed considerable discrepancies between crucial stakeholders. The perceptions of visitors and actors related to the policy and management of the Brussels’ Art Nouveau heritage differ substantially. This illustrates that visitors and decision-makers are not on the same page, and interpret the tourism dimension of the Brussels’ Art Nouveau in a different way. Moreover, one seems not to be aware of this issue. The discrepancy regarding the promotion of this patrimony, currently highlighting Art Nouveau headliners, hinders a unified positioning of the theme throughout the landscape. The recommendation is to utilize the significance and the inherent meaning of the Brussels’ Art Nouveau as a starting point in the creation of consolidated promotion from a themed heritage perspective. Thoughtful promotional activities can trigger public awareness regarding the Art Nouveau as well as initiate the harmonization of multiple stakeholders’ approaches, somewhere in the centre of the tourism-centred versus heritage-centred continuum.

Although both stakeholder groups agree on the level of tourism potential of the Brussels’ Art Nouveau, further development is required through specific management measures that take into account the unique identity and specificity of the heritage and the landscape. Further development can, amongst other factors, be attained through the implementation of an Art Nouveau experience centre. This centre can contribute to multiple purposes. Firstly, it can tackle the need for more qualitative interpretation regarding the heritage, whereas tourism can take on the role of educator while raising awareness regarding the particular context. Such a centre can develop specific visitor management measures as well as the indirect selection of visitors based on their desired intensity level of visitation. This can imply the spread of visitors throughout space, taking advantage of the scattered nature of the Brussels’ Art Nouveau heritage within the Capital Region, while positively handling the heritage’s limited carrying capacity. By embedding the Brussels’ Art Nouveau heritage within a broader contextualization with particular attention to political, social, and historical characteristics of the Capital Region, the pressure on Art Nouveau highlights as well as the risk of simplification will be reduced.

As cooperation and information flows are crucial for the wellbeing of the (themed) landscape, there is a need for an institutionalized multi-layered network structure that applies a holistic and inclusive strategy concerning the Brussels’ Art Nouveau heritage, but also a broker who manages to join forces of stakeholders within that network. The Brussels’ DMO has the inherent power to act as such a mediator while providing support to the multiple entities. The advantage of the DMO Visit Brussels is that it does not belong to either the Dutch- or French-speaking communities, acting as a stand-alone Brussels institution, reinforcing the local embeddedness within the Brussels Capital Region while acknowledging the complex interactions between tourism and the landscape.

Besides creating the opportunity to reveal elements that could have otherwise been overlooked, the (themed) landscape approach additionally allows one to explore methods to include and integrate multiple perspectives. It results in a comprehensive method that allows one to contextualize the heritage within a broader framework, whilst reducing the risk of simplification of the narrative. Exploring the (themed) landscape approach marks an impetus in finding a balance between conservation, valorization, and
commodification. Furthermore, it allows identifying and acknowledging present stakeholders while working towards a common ground between multiple groups. Future research may further develop this approach by involving a diverse set of stakeholders, such as residents who master the local narratives of the typical Brussels history and development in an international cultural and political context and/or live in an Art Nouveau building.

References

Aitchison, C., MacLeod, E. N., & Shaw, J. S. (2000). Leisure and tourism landscapes. Social and cultural geographies. London: Routledge.

Antrop, M. (2006). Sustainable landscapes: Contradiction, fiction or Utopia? Landscapes and Urban Planning, 75(3), 187-197.

Ashworth, G. (1988). Marketing the historic city for tourism. In B. Goodal and G. Ashworth (Eds.), Marketing in the tourism industry. The promotion of destination regions (p. 264). London: Routledge.

Brida, J., Disegna, M., & Scuderi, R. (2014). The behaviour of repeat visitors to museums: review and empirical findings. Quality and Quantity, 48(5), 2817-2840.

Burmil, S., & Enis, R. (2004). An integrated approach to landscape and planning. Journal of Architectural & Planning Research, 21(2), 140-151.

Cunningham, P. (2009). Exploring the cultural landscape of the Obeikei in Ogasawara, Japan. Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, 7(3), 221-234.

Douglas, J. (2014). What’s political ecology got to do with tourism? Tourism Geographies, 16(1), 8-13.

Dove, J. (1997). Perceptual geography through urban trails. Journal of Geography in Higher Education, 21(1), 79-88.

duCros, H., & Mckercher, B. (2001). A new model to assist in planning for sustainable cultural heritage tourism. International Journal of Tourism Research, 3(2), 165-170.

Edensor, T., & Kothari, U. (2004). Sweetening colonialism: A mauritian themed resort. In M. Lasansky & B. McLaren (Eds.), Architecture and tourism—Perception, performance and place (pp. 189-205). New York: Berg.

Glikson, A. (1967). The relationship between landscape planning and regional planning. Town and country planning problems. In IUCN Technical Series (p. 147).

Gravari-Barbas, M. (2017). Super-gentrification and hyper-tourismification. In Le Marais, Paris. In M. Gravari-Barbas, & S. Guinand (Eds.), Tourism and gentrification in contemporary metropolises. London/New York: Routledge.

Hall, C. M. (2005). Tourism: Rethinking the social science of mobility. Harlow: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Hose, T., & Vasiljevic, D. (2012). Defining the nature and purpose of modern geotourism with particular reference to the United Kingdom and South-East Europe. Geoheritage, 4, 25-43.

Howard, J. (1996). Art Nouveau: International & national styles in Europe. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

Isachenko, T. (2009). Cultural landscape dynamics of transboundary areas: A case study of the Karelian Isthmus. Journal of Borderlands Studies, 24, 78-91.

Jansen-Verbeke, M. (2009). The territorality paradigm in cultural tourism. Tourism, 19, 25-31.

Jansen-Verbeke, M., & Vanneste, D. (2018). Managing built heritage resources. In C. Cooper, S. Volo, B. Gartner, & N. Scott (Eds.), The SAGE handbook of tourism management: Applications of theories and concepts to tourism (pp. 516-536). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Lasansky, M. (2004). Tourist geographies: Remapping. In M. Lasansky, & B. McLaren (Eds.), Architecture and tourism—Perception, performance and place (pp. 165-185). New York: Berg.

Markwell, K., Stevenson, D., & Rowe, D. (2004). Footsteps and memories: Interpreting an Australian urban landscape through thematic walking tours. International Journal of Heritage Studies, 10, 457-473.

Matusitz, J., & Palermo, L. (2014). The disneyfication of the world: A globalisation perspective. Journal of Organisational Transformation & Social Change, 11(2), 91-107.

Monumenten & Landschappen. (2019, December 23). Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest. Inventaris van het Bouwkundig Erfgoed. Retrieved from: http://www.irismonument.be/index.php?search_cities=&s_street=&search_street=Alle+straten&search_number=Alle+huisnummers&search_typo=&search_style=501&s_architect=&search_architect=Alle+architecten%2C...&search_from=jaar&search_to=jaar&sect=

Ockman, J. (2004). New politics of the spectacle: “Bilbao” and the global imagination. In M. Lasansky, & B. McLaren (Eds.),
Architecture and tourism—Perception, performance and place (pp. 227-239). New York: Berg.

Opperman, M. (1997). First-time and repeat visitors to New Zealand. Tourism Management, 18(3), 177-181.

Prentice, R. (2001). Experiential cultural tourism: Museum & the marketing of the new romanticism of evoked authenticity. Museum Management and Curatorship, 19, 5-26.

Rodwell, D. (2015). Reconnecting the city: The historic landscape approach and the future of urban heritage. Journal of Architectural Conservation, 21(2), 136-138.

Sampson, K. A., & Goodrich, C. (2009). Making place: Identity construction and community formation through “sense of place” in Westland, New Zealand. Society & Natural Resources, 22, 901-915.

Savage, R. V., Huang, S., & Chang, C. T. (2004). The Singapore river thematic zone: Sustainable tourism in an urban context. The Geographical Journal, 170, 212-225.

Stedman, R. C. (2003). Is it really just a social construction? The contribution of the physical environment to sense of place. Society & Natural Resources, 16, 671-685.

Stembreg, E. (1997). The iconography of the tourism experience. Annals of Tourism Research, 24, 951-969.

Stoffelen, A., & Vanneste, D. (2015). An integrative geotourism approach: Bridging conflicts in tourism landscape research. Tourism Geographies, 17, 544-560.

Tiesdell, S., Oc, T., & Heath, T. (1996). Revitalising historic urban quarters. Oxford: Architectural Press.

Timothy, D. J., & Boyd, S. W. (2015). Tourism and trails: Cultural, ecological and management issues. Bristol: Channel View Publ.

UNESCO. (2011). A new international instrument: The proposed UNESCO recommendation on the historic urban landscape (HUL). UNESCO. Retrieved Augustus 28, 2019, from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002150/215084e.pdf#page=52

Urry, J. (1995). Consuming places. London: Routledge.

Van Mechelen, D. (2006). Flemish government—Announcement to the members of the Flemish Government. Regarding: Delimitation of areas of natural and agricultural structure in execution of the Flanders spatial structure plan. Retrieved Augustus 28, 2019, from https://www2.ruimte.vlaanderen.be/ruimtelijk/buitengebied/00_projectwerking/MVR_20060609_lexicon_agnas.pdf

Vandeputte, C., Vanneste, D., & Poesen, J. (2015). Geo-toerisme: Geo-wetenschappelijke en toeristische expertise hand in hand? Jaarboek De Aardrijkskunde 2015, 79-95.

Williams, D. R., & Stewart, S. (1998). Sense of place: An elusive concept that is finding a home in ecosystem management. Journal of Forestry, 96, 18-23.
### Appendixes

#### Table 1

*Differentiation in Visitor’s Perceptions Regarding Brussels’ Art Nouveau. PCA Analysis on 20 Statements (n = 105)*

| PC 1 | PC 2 | PC 3 | PC 4 | PC 5 | PC 6 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 4.4  | 2.2  | 2.1  | 2.0  | 1.7  | 1.5  |

| Statement | PC 1 | PC 2 | PC 3 | PC 4 | PC 5 | PC 6 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Visiting AN is without cultural damage | 0.434699 | | | | | |
| Historic value of AN is very high | 0.350908 | | | | | |
| AN is rare within Brussels’ totality | 0.358595 | | | | | |
| AN is of international cultural importance | | | | | | |
| Involve private AN buildings | | 0.604293 | | | | |
| AN significance is low due to lack of accessibility | | | 0.442466 | | | |
| AN = impression of authenticity | | | | 0.327135 | | |
| Poor physical condition of AN = low significance | | | | | 0.720797 | |
| Too few visitors for AN = little cultural value | | | | | 0.411425 | 0.418999 |
| AN repair works have a negative effect on its authenticity | | | | 0.433071 | | |
| Centre of Brussels = culture & heritage | | | | | | |
| Too many visitors to AN to have an emotional bond | | | | | | |
| AN has no potential for interesting experiences | | | | | | |
| Organization of AN tourism is focused on its cultural values | | 0.368198 | | | | |
| Qualitative interpretations leads to insight into AN | | | | | | |
| High AN significance because of promotion of its value | | | 0.377171 | | | |
| Substantial enough for along visit (retention) | | | | 0.356066 | | |
| Too scattered and therefore not worth the effort | | | | | 0.395482 | |
| Little information on AN | | | | 0.336480 | -0.304072 | |
| Other heritage is interesting | | | | | | 0.315181 |

*Notes.* All loadings between -0.3 and 0.3 are replaced by a blank; “Art Nouveau” has been abbreviated by “AN”;

Source: own data.