

A photograph of a busy city street with diverse pedestrians walking. In the foreground, a woman in a dark jacket and sunglasses on her head walks towards the left. Next to her, a woman in a purple headscarf and a dark puffer coat walks towards the camera, carrying a folder. Other people in various winter clothing are walking in the background. The street is paved with cobblestones, and there are cars and buildings in the background.

# Who Gets to Tell the Story of the City? Tourism, Migration & the Politics of Urban Heritage

Dr Meghann Ormond

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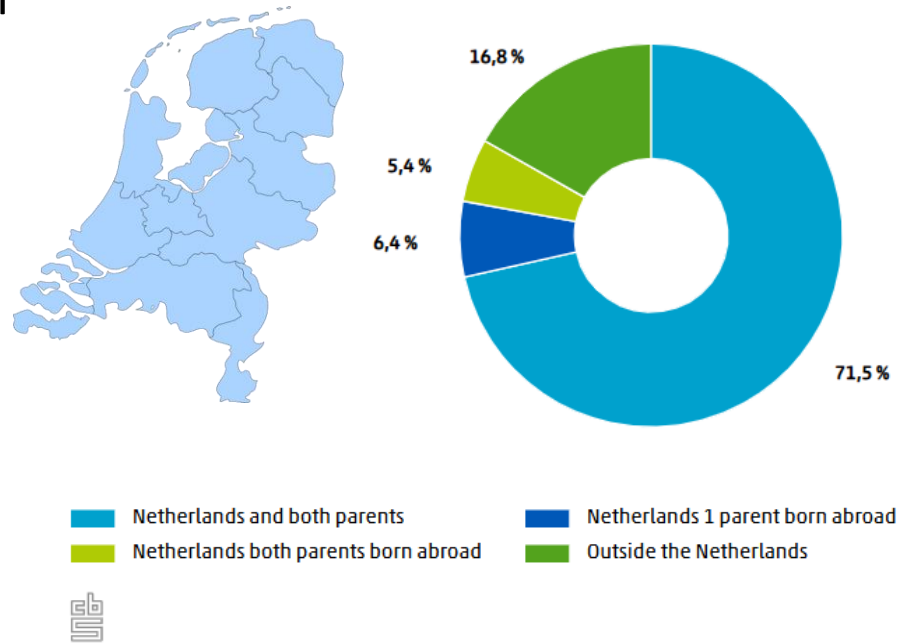
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2 April 2026

# Please stand up if...

- **You** were born outside of the Netherlands or lived parts of your life outside the country
- You have a **parent** born outside of the Netherlands or who lived parts of their life outside the country
- You have a **grandparent** born outside of the Netherlands or who lived parts of their life outside the country
- If you stood up for any of these questions, now please stand again

Population by country of birth, 1 January 2025





My  
journey

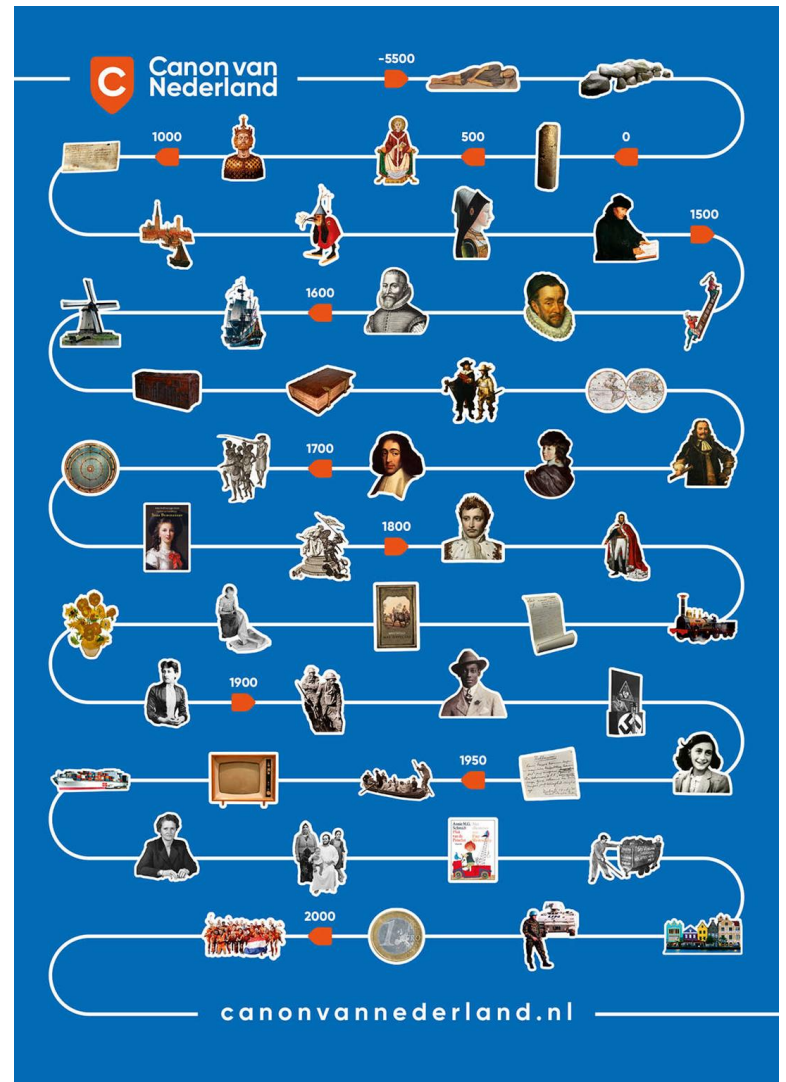
"Not so much 'Where are you from?' as 'Where are you between?'"  
(James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 1997, p. 37)



i am  
not a  
tourist



EXPATRIATE  
ARCHIVE  
CENTRE



# Post-WWII migration in the NL

Net migration

x 1,000

100

75

50

25

0

-25

-50

-75

1945 1950 1955 1960 1965 1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015

223,000

War in Ukraine 2022

Indonesia independent 1949

Guest workers from Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey 1960s-early 70s

Suriname independent 1975

Strict immig. policies for non-EU citizens 1990s-early 2000s

Asylum-seekers from Syria 2014+

International univ. students 2000-10s

Dutch emig. to Canada, Australia + US 1950s

Family reunification for guest workers, mostly Moroccan + Turkish + Asylum-seekers from fmr. Yugoslavia, Iraq, Iran + Somalia 1980s

Economic growth in NL + EU15 → EU 27 2000s



# Tourism-migration nexus

- Tourism and migration intersect through
  - Urban infrastructures
  - Labour markets and entrepreneurship
  - **Narratives about diversity and belonging**

## Penang Foodie's post



Penang Foodie  
17 July 2024 · 🌐

Foreigners are not allowed to cook these 13 Penang dishes starting 2025.

The Penang Island City Council (MBPP) will be enforcing a ban on foreign cooks in all hawker stalls, food courts and coffee shops starting next year once the new policy has been approved.

The 13 dishes are:

Nasi Lemak  
Asam Laksa  
Pasembor  
Mee Sotong  
Char Koay Teow  
Koay Teow Soup  
Hokkien Mee  
Curry Mee  
Wan Tan Mee  
Loh Bak  
Chee Cheong Fun  
Char Koay Kak  
Oh Chien



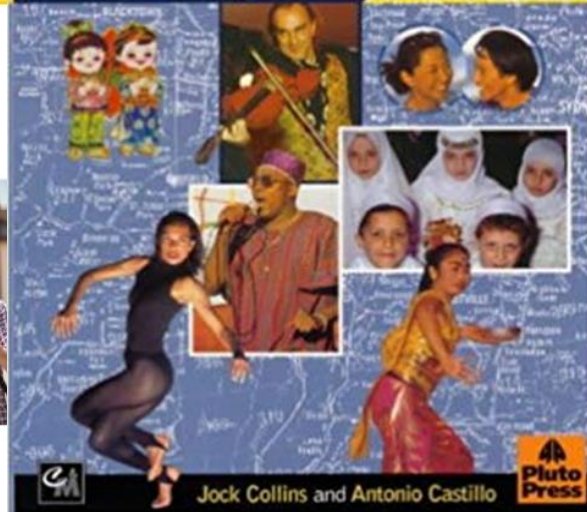
The ban was first introduced only from hawker centres in all hawker stalls, food courts and coffee shops

Source: MalayMail



+10







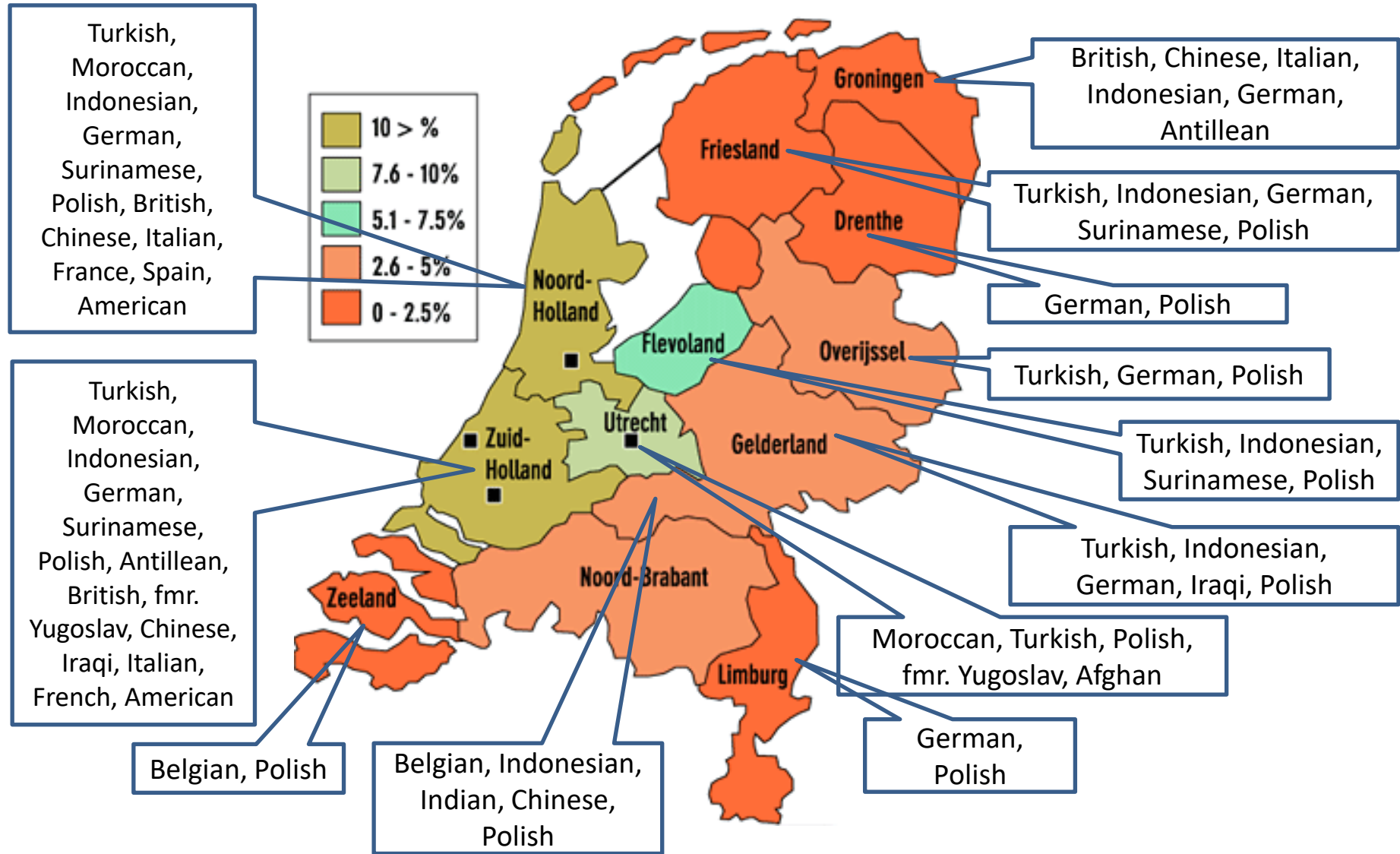
# The Faro Convention: the way forward with heritage



## Faro Convention (2005, ratified by the NL in 2024)

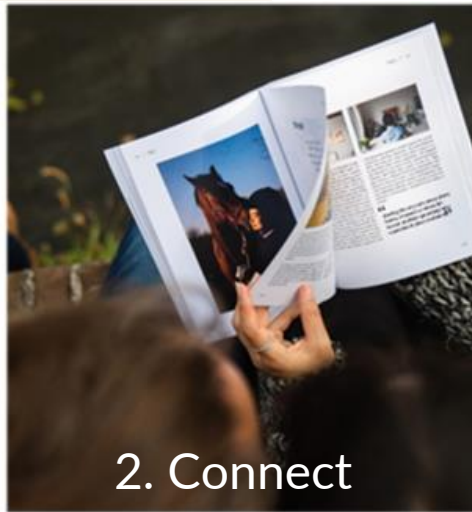
- People-centered approach to cultural heritage, emphasizing its role in human rights, democracy and cohesion
- Shifts heritage management from expert-only control to participatory governance, empowering 'heritage communities' to identify, value, and manage heritage







1. Reflect



2. Connect



3. Explore



4. Share





**Co-created, narrative-driven interactive walking tours**

Practice tourism  
with care &  
participation

Value diversity  
beyond  
exotification

See people with  
migration  
backgrounds as  
locals

Foster empathy  
through  
storytelling



COLLECTIVE  
NOUNS



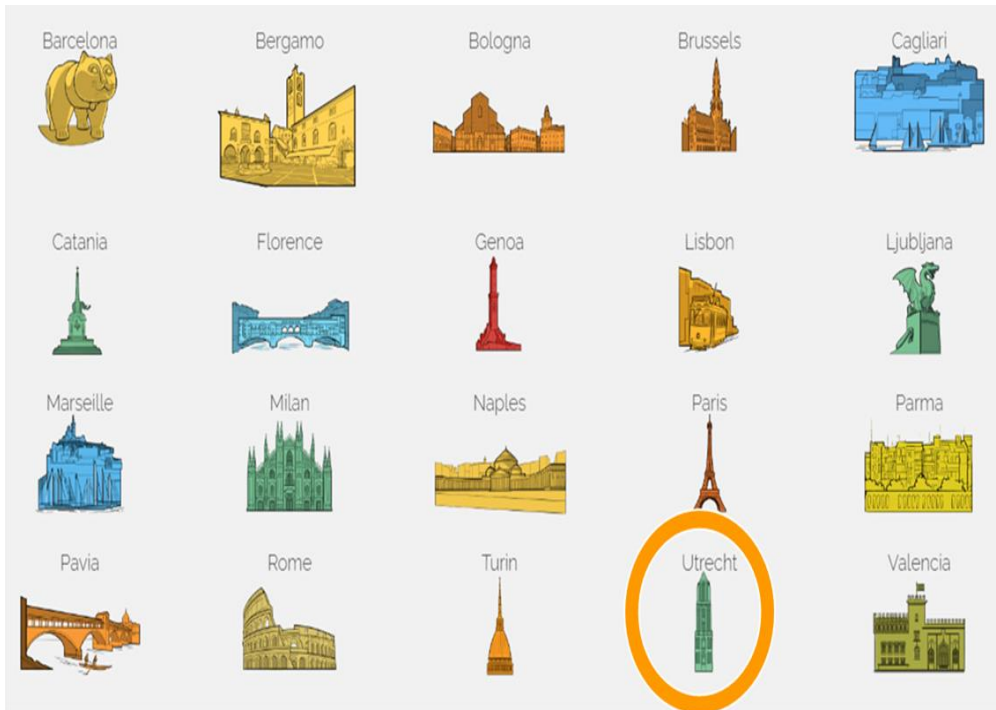
Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# migrantour Utrecht



<https://migrantourutrecht.nl/>



**Bridging contexts** – Newer immigration settings: gentle focus on recognizing migration’s role over centuries in local heritage

**Reflexive contexts** – Polarised urban settings: focus on enabling guides to engage in critical reflection with participants

**Protective contexts** – Long-term migration + weaker welfare: focus on care, stability, and safer narratives to support guides facing precarity and trauma

# Tour co-creation involves negotiating

- How neighbourhoods are represented
- What personal stories are shared
- How difficult histories are addressed



## Potential benefits

- Narrative change
- Dialogue and learning

## Potential risks

- Touristification
- Cultural commodification
- Gentrification

# What tour co-creators say they gain

People with migration backgrounds shift from being objects of interpretation to legitimate interpreters of their city



**"A sense of humility and nobility, an ability to to surrender and to be less judgmental... I have more compassion for other people."**

**"Being able to talk to a group of people, it's something very special."**

**"The day I understood the difference between inclusion, exclusion and segregation. That really, really opened my mind."**

<https://migrantourtrecht.nl/>

# Audience: Who takes the tours

Barcelona: 100 tours  
2000 particip./year  
Many tourists!

**Utrecht: Averaging 50 tours & 600 participants/year**

University students, departments/groups & conferences

Longer-term residents & newer residents

Civic organisations & NGOs

Governmental bodies - municipal, regional & national

Secondary school groups

Companies for DEI training & team-building

Private events



# Audiences: What they say they gain

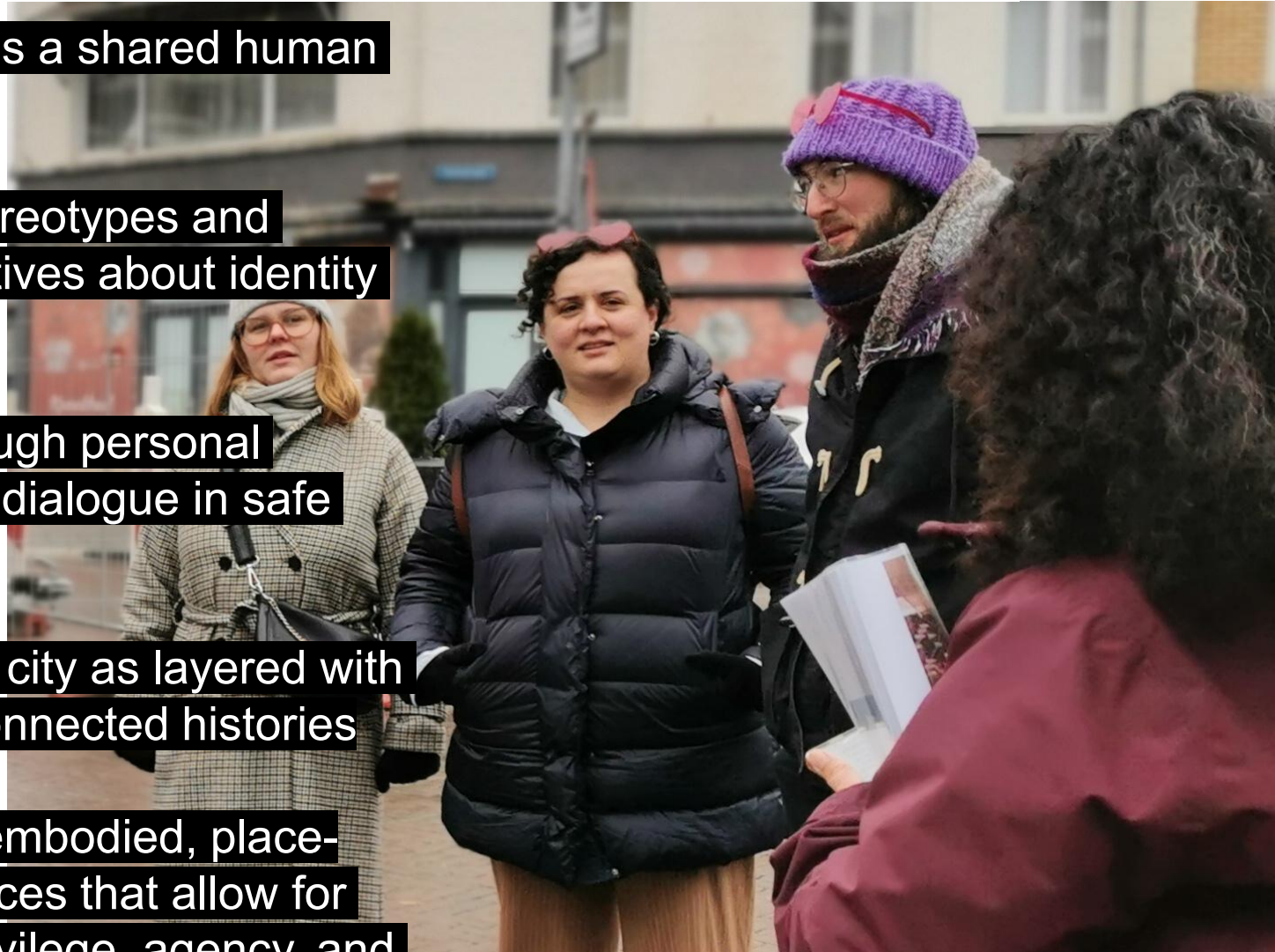
See migration as a shared human experience


Deconstruct stereotypes and dominant narratives about identity and belonging

Empathise through personal storytelling and dialogue in safe spaces

Understand the city as layered with multiple, interconnected histories

Learn through embodied, place-based experiences that allow for reflection on privilege, agency, and global-local connections



A diverse group of people walking on a city street. In the foreground, a woman with a purple headscarf and a woman with pink sunglasses are prominent. The background shows a busy urban environment with buildings and other pedestrians.

# Tourism actively shapes

- How migration is understood
- Who gets to explain/represent places

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