

European cities: Towards a “recreational turn”?

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ABSTRACT

The article puts forth the thesis that European cities are increasingly influenced by recreation, changing the essential quality of the urban space. I begin by setting out a theoretical framework in which cities are seen as specific places used as a resource by mobile individuals in a specific “dwelling regime.” The concepts of city, tourism and recreational turn are explained. The paper goes on to give a brief description of the context of tourism in Europe, with reference to data problems for a European-wide study of tourism on the local level of urban settings. Finally, specific processes of the recreational turn are reconstructed, leading to differentiated urban qualities of contemporary European cities: festivalization, investing in industrial agglomerations, “heritageing,” experiencing the modernity of cities, and the urbanization of tourist resorts. The conclusion reflects upon the consequences of recreation and mobility for the European city as a place for geographically plural individuals, where cohabitation becomes a crucial political issue.

Introduction

There is a gap in current urban studies: while great importance is attached to high-tech industries, communication, the image-producing industry, financial services and other business services, the question of recreation has failed to be recognized as a central point of analysis.¹ The sole approach to this issue appears via the label “urban tourism,”

1 This thesis calls for reconstruction of the scholarly approach to the relationship between tourism and the city, which is beyond the scope of the present paper. We can nevertheless use this as a provisory thesis, supported by the lack of importance given to tourism in readers and textbooks (Beaujeu-Garnier, 1995; Knox, 1995; Lichtenberger, 1998), as well as in urban theory (Soja, 2001; Siebel, 2004). Exceptions are the contributions of Burgel (1993), Hannigan (1998), Judd and Fainstein (1999), Moisy (2001) and

conceived as a specific activity (tourism) in a specific type of place (the city). This is surprising, given that European cities have long been touristic cities or have at least had touristic dimensions²: eighteenth-century Florence, Rome and Venice, as well as nineteenth-century Paris, Bruges and Rothenburg, were among the very first cities where tourism changed the mode of existence, albeit in very different ways.³ However, since the 1960s, tourism has grown tremendously in importance, affecting an increasing number of European cities. Thus, I argue that this neglect of tourism in urban studies is an obstacle to adequate thinking about cities: far from being anecdotal, tourism and recreation are *essential* for contemporary European cities and have to be considered as central to urban studies. Practices and economic activities, as well as the “gaze” (Urry, 1990)—the perspective/direction of the interpretation scheme of individuals, entrepreneurs, legislators and municipal leaders—of space, be it urban or not, is informed by recreation.

In this paper, I focus on several *qualities* of urban places, defined as ways of arranging urban areas, based on varying degrees of heterogeneity/diversity and density of social realities (Wirth, 1938; Lévy, 1999), as well as on how public space and touristic space are constituted—where tourism and recreation are present to varying extents. These urban situations, or “geotypes” (Lévy, 1999, 2003), have not arisen naturally or instantly, but have grown out of a gradual process that has transformed, temporarily, a location or an urban place into a touristic place.⁴ This process takes time and is embedded in a

Hoffman et al. (2003), which raise the problem of tourists and visitors in cities, and Ashworth and Tunbridge’s (1990) study of the tourist-historic city. Among the contributions to urban tourism are Jansen-Verbeke (1988), Law (1993), Page (1995) and Van den Berg et al. (1995). For a historical reconstitution of part of the issue, see Ward (1998) and Cocks (2001).

2 I use the term “touristic,” as coined by MacCannell (1976) from the French *touristique*.

3 The Grand Tour practice of European aristocrats, which developed between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, is sometimes considered a tourist practice, but I classify it as pre-tourist, i.e., as not quite a tourist practice. My argument is that the term “tourist” emerged only in 1811, reflecting a new discourse for new practices, based on the development of “sightseeing,” a “tourist gaze” (as opposed to a scientific gaze) and adequate “tourist equipment,” such as hotels (late eighteenth century), promenades (1800s) and the like. Nevertheless, the practice of the Grand Tour can be seen as one of the essential elements for the tourist practice occurring later (see Towner, 1996; Löfgren, 1999; Boyer, 2000; Équipe MIT, 2005).

4 It seems essential to distinguish between two processes that lead to the constitution of tourist places: (1) the transformation of a *location*, little or not appropriated by humans, maybe even “empty” or presenting a vacuum, into a tourist *place*, and (2) the insertion of tourism into an already constituted *place*, urban or otherwise, where tourism changes the quality of the place. From a geographical point of view, this allows also for a distinction between the concepts of “location” (the Greek *topos* or the German *Stelle*) and “place” (the Greek *chôra*, the German *Ort*), as well as a connection to Platonian and Heideggerian ways of conceptualizing space. See Berque (2000, 2005) for a fundamental contribution on this issue.

specific moment, a “dwelling regime,” where societal processes develop in a similar way.⁵ This temporal distinction is important, as it highlights the specificity of contemporary societies and European cities, which are informed by the recreational dimension. It also allows us to focus on the various processes of *touristification*, i.e., the coming into being of a touristic place.

In order to understand the emergence of tourism in the constitution of a city’s urbanness, I argue that a “recreational turn” has taken place in European societies, engaging space in various ways and serving, even in non-touristic situations, as a referent of meaning. As such, tourism operates as referent and integrator of a whole range of social phenomena. Indeed, images, discourses, practices and values of tourism are widely diffused through and “infuse” society (Lussault, Forthcoming). This occurs in a specific “dwelling regime” where space and spatiality are largely defined by mobility. A “dwelling regime” should be understood as the ordering and ordered way of constituting/experiencing space and of ways of coping with space. The central idea is that the association of quality of space (a city, for example) and place practices (tourism, for example) in an *ordered* way includes conceptions, images and values of space, as well as geographical referents of identity and technologies. In this dwelling regime, both the quality of places (the city as open to commuters, businessmen, tourists) and the individual’s ways of inhabiting different urban places (practicing the city as a tourist, for example) are informed by *mobility*. The issue of mobility is highly important, for individuals associate distant places with their practices far more than in otherwise organized societies. The questions “Where do individuals play that?” “Where do individuals discover that?” “Where do individuals relax?” are no longer answered exclusively by the response “at home.” This is without doubt one of the key elements of the importance of cities as places for recreation.

The paper begins with a rapid development of the theoretical framework within which the problem of tourism in European cities is approached. I shall then turn to the context of tourism and leisure in European cities, in order to elaborate the hypothesis of what I call the “recreational turn.” Finally, various urban situations in which tourism is present are described, in an attempt to reconstruct different processes of recreationalization.

5 See Équipe MIT (2005) for in-depth treatment of this topic. It is highly significant that the “production of space”—to use a Lefebvrian expression—of and in tourist places is different in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries: in analogy to manufacturing, the terms “pre-industrial” (1780-1830), “industrial” (1850-1920) and “post-industrial” (1950-?) tourism could be employed. But we still lack adequate studies of the development of tourism on a global scale.

Concepts and theoretical framework: Cities as places in a “dwelling regime”

Several concepts need to be defined and examined for their adequacy: “city,” “recreation,” “tourism” and “recreational turn.” These concepts establish a theoretical horizon, in which the spatial dimensions of society are seen as crucial. As such, the concept of space as allowing cognitive operations of orientation, distance, arrangement, spatial organization, placement, recognition of various spatial qualities and so forth is a central point of analysis. More precisely, it stems neither from an approach where space is seen as “naturally” built and explained by “natural laws” or closely related theories (such as in classical approaches of “distance decay”), nor from an approach in which space is seen as the material “surface” or Cartesian *res extensa* on which the social is projected. Rather, it is an approach where the central perspective is that of an actor- and practice-oriented “geography making” by various types of actors (Werlen, 1993, 1995, 1997). More precisely, it is an approach whereby this geography making stems from practice in everyday life, in which the multifold relationships to space are at stake (Stock, 2004a). This “doing with space,” which I call “dwelling” (*Wohnen* in German and *habiter* in French), is addressed within a phenomenologically informed practice-based approach rooted in twentieth-century developments of social theory (Stock, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006). The following concepts should be seen within this broader theoretical framework, in which actors fabricate space through their actions, while embedded in situations where spatial dimensions—from the local to the global, and from material to meta-geographical constructions—are co-constitutive of their actions.

The city as a specific kind of urban place

Approaching the touristic dimensions of cities raises the question of the kind of places concerned, of their *quality*: How can the concept of “city” be defined in contemporary Europe? How can we speak of “cities” without speaking of places that are not cities? This classical scientific problem is particularly difficult with regard to urban places because of confusion and difficulty in drawing adequate distinctions. One important question, often raised since Lefebvre (1974) or Castells (1973) in the late 1960s and early 1970s, is: Can we still speak of “the” city, or has the urban phenomenon become too manifold to assign one word to it? Many problems remain unsolved: (1) the urban/rural opposition—is the countryside an urban place for residence and recreation? (2) the “culturalist” definitions of the city in context—is there still a “European” city, in the sense of a culturally different urban place, or do processes on the global level affect cities in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America in the same manner, thus no longer allowing us to give culture-based definitions of urban spaces? (3) the delimitation of

city in comparison with agglomeration or “urban region”; and (4) the differentiated urban qualities of places, between global cities and small cities, industrial agglomerations, countryside, tourist resorts and the like.

Within the framework of dwelling, a city is seen here as a place of specific qualities with which its inhabitants cope, i.e., mobilize as resources within their actions, recognize as problems within their practices or give sense to by encoding a certain meaning through their practice. This meaning is constructed through the intentionality that guides the performed practice. Depending on the situation (the city is practiced in one way by the tourist and in another way by the resident), the individual experiences the city, and the city makes sense as a place for specific practices. It is therefore the quality of the place, mediated through the specific situation, which is important for dwelling. The problem of defining the city, then, lies in the definition of a certain quality of place, as compared to other kinds of places (urban or non-urban), that is mobilized during an action. Without probing deeper, we can use three important elements for the current purpose: (1) the distinction between different types of places where urbanness exists, at all levels of scale, making “city” one urban place among others; (2) on a local level of scale, seeing the “city” as designating the densest and most diverse organization of the urban; and (3) in comparison to tourist resorts, approaching cities as places with centrality that often have a poly-functional structure of urbanness (more diverse than resorts).⁶

Tourism as a subsystem of dwelling and as a specific kind of recreation

How do touristic dimensions contribute to the quality of the European city? How can tourism be defined? In order to fit into the actor-centered approach, the definition of tourism is one in which tourists are seen as essential. In fact, three interrelated issues are raised here: the definition of tourism, the question of recreation and the question of touristic places.

First, tourism is defined as a system of places, actors and practices that has emerged in order to allow for inhabiting *other* places for the purpose of recreation (Equipe MIT,

6 Therefore, in the further development, I deliberately do not take resorts into account—although they are of extreme importance in the spatial organization of contemporary European societies—because they are not cities. Nonetheless, it is true that many of the original resorts in Europe have been developing into cities: Cannes, Baden-Baden, Montreux. As such, they can be addressed as tourist *cities*, but not as resorts. The term “resort cities,” as used in Judd and Fainstein (1999), seems inappropriate for addressing the fact that contemporary cities may have a resort background, because they are no longer “resorts.” Still another problem is the existence of places, such as Palma de Mallorca, where a resort has been built on the Eastern part of the already constituted city, functioning thus as city *and* resort. The term “city-resort” (*ville-station*) has been chosen to describe this (Duhamel, 2003).

2002; Knafou and Stock, 2003). More narrowly, tourism could be defined as evolving in a sphere delineated by the various combinations of *displacement* and *recreation* of individual actors. It is therefore distinguished from other definitions of “visitors” for such multiple purposes as conferences, business, pilgrimage and visiting friends.⁷ The distinction is drawn between the everyday and the non-everyday, where the break with routine constitutes the essential experience. This has been called “de-routinization” by Elias (1986). Touristic practices are therefore seen as a kind of de-routinization based upon a specific relationship with space: through a displacement, a change of place, where alterity allows for a more efficient break with routine and recursive practices. This allows for an understanding of different practices implying mobility, where familiar places are distinguished from other places, where recursive and non-recursive practices are distinguished from each other. From a historical viewpoint, it seems important to see tourism as a relatively autonomous “sphere” or “domain” that has progressively emerged over time, between 1800 and 1850. It is this emergence of a new domain in human societies that contributes to understanding its relative importance in contemporary cities.

Second, recreation should be understood here as a break with the everyday in order to attain “controlled relaxing of self-control” (Elias, 1986) through various practices.⁸ At this point of the argument, it should be acknowledged that this dichotomy of recreational practices does not fit numerous recreational practices: going frequently to a second home, or to visit a friend or a family, are practices where the strangeness of place is mediated through a familiar “technology.” We might also question the relative importance of touristic practices in an age of mobility, where recreational displacement is no longer rare, such as in bourgeois and middle-class tourism between 1850 and 1950. Thus, it might be more adequate to conceptualize a continuum of recreational practices, where the otherness plays a greater or lesser role.

Third, touristic places are nowadays highly differentiated places. Their touristic quality of space emerges not only through markers—through space designed *for* tourists—but also through the situated action of tourists. A touristic place can be defined as a

7 For example, practicing a city for a conference is excluded, although conferences are an important structuring element of European cities in the present age of mobility (Stock and Duhamel, 2005).

8 Elias (1986) calls this “leisure” and defines a highly differentiated “spectrum of leisure.” One criticism can be raised from the spatial standpoint: he neglects the possibility of “going elsewhere” to practice “other” places, in short, to perform a “displacement.” The whole issue of vacation is omitted, because the possibility of leisure through geographical mobility is not taken into account. In contrast, the current conceptual framework defines “leisure” as recreation within a quotidian context, where familiarity with places is present, as distinct from “tourism” as recreation within a non-quotidian context of strangeness and otherness (for development of the importance of “other” places, see Hennig, 1997; Knafou et al., 1997; Löfgren, 1999; for reinterpretation of the Eliasian framework through space, see Stock, 2001, 2005).

place for touristic situations in the sense that the presence of tourists in a non-touristic place does not immediately transform the latter into a touristic place. Rather, the touristic place is a temporary result of the emergence and stabilization of touristic practices. As a first step towards a more differentiated approach, three elements might help to distinguish four fundamental types of touristic places (see Table 1). First, the tourist site (*site touristique*) is distinguished from other touristic places by its lack of capacity to receive staying visitors (bed capacity). Second, the tourist post (*comptoir touristique*)⁹ is distinguished from the resort and city by the absence of the local population in the former and its presence in the latter two. Finally, the tourist resort (*station touristique*) is distinguished from the tourist city (*ville touristique*) in that the latter has diverse urban and touristic functions, while the former has mono-functional characteristics. One element is therefore important in order to pinpoint a city where tourism is important: we need to look for diverse urban functions and centrality.¹⁰ The tourist city is a specific kind of urban place and a specific kind of touristic place, defining a certain mode of urbanity.

Table 1: Types of touristic places

	Bed capacity	Local population	Diversity of touristic and urban functions, including centrality
Tourist site	-	-	-
Tourist post	+	-	-
Tourist resort	+	+	-
Tourist city	+	+	+

Source: Adapted from Stock, 2003.

9 “Post” is derived from the trading post, established by colonial organizations, such as the East India Company. It means an access-controlled area, delineated for colonial purposes with little local linkages. The “tourist post” refers to such places as holiday clubs and resort hotels since the 1950s, the European bathing establishments of the 1850s, and tourist developments such as Beaver Creek in the U.S. and Les Arcs 1800 in France.

10 In a second step, these types of tourist places can be seen through a dynamic perspective, taking into account the past pre-tourist stage. Accordingly, we can outline some “development paths” of tourist places: from a vacant space to a resort as a typical *ex nihilo* development (Grande Motte, France; Prora, Germany); from a city to a resort-city, as in the case of Palma de Mallorca, Spain; or from a tourist post to a tourist resort. Attempts have been made to systematize these examples in Équipe MIT (2002) and Duhamel (2003).

The recreational turn: A new quality for urban space

The “recreational turn” is defined here as four interrelated processes: (1) the presence of tourists in urban places; (2) the desire, by local authorities or enterprises, to have tourists in their territory; (3) rejection of tourism (i.e., a negative attitude towards tourism); and (4) a general interpretation scheme—a “gaze” in the Foucauldian sense—based on tourism, with which to interpret the world.¹¹ It expresses itself in two main modalities, usually termed “tourism” and “leisure” (Knafou et al., 1997).

This recreational turn could be related to the works of scholars like Dumazedier (1988) on the “civilization of leisure” (*civilisation du loisir*) or Schulze (1997) on “society of experience” (*Erlebnisgesellschaft*). As the latter points out, the “esthetic” is a certain way of giving meaning to numerous practices. As such, recreation is a way of giving meaning to practices through a particular stance and attitude. Indeed, we observe that, although an effort is made, for example, climbing a mountain or going to an exhibition, that is not seen as work, but rather as fun and relaxation. This attitude is by no means “natural”—in the nineteenth century, British alpinists were seen as fools by the indigenous inhabitants of Switzerland—but rather corresponds to the emergence of a new social value for practice. In this way, we can also understand that the activity of shopping is a playful one, whereas the everyday task of buying is not.

“Recreational turn” is therefore an expression that tries to back up the hypothesis that greater importance is given to different forms of recreation in contemporary society, particularly in European cities.¹² The fundamental idea is that of a change in the quality of the urban space affected by recreation. European cities develop a new quality by the relatively increased importance of recreation and, more specifically, of tourism. The quality of urbanness largely depends on the presence of tourists, of tourist-related business and of images informed by tourism. A “real” city—a place defined by a certain quality of urbanness—is essentially defined by its touristic quality.

11 Urry’s (1990) use of the term “tourist gaze” could be adopted here if it were not overly affected by the visual paradigm. See MacCannell (2001) for interesting criticism of this aspect.

12 This plays an important role in the explanations of twentieth-century sociology and geography. Indeed, besides the question of amenity, raised by Ullman (1954), the question of a fundamental shift of society is addressed in sociology as “post-industrial” society. Fundamentally, scholars work with the idea of replacing the explanation of spatial dynamics by purely economic considerations—more precisely, exploitation of commodities in the central place—with a new kind of explanation based on the concept of amenity.

The context of the recreational turn of European cities

Several elements can be seen as essential in the ongoing process of recreationalization of urban space. Changing time budgets (working time down, leisure time up, especially in terms of vacations, which are 4-6 weeks a year and, with the 1997 laws of reduction of labor time in France, even up to 11 weeks for senior executives), changing financial budgets (general rise in living standards between 1950 and 1970 in Europe) and also new ways of practicing space, related to acquired touristic practices (more frequent but shorter vacations), are important elements. That means the long-term vacation—the German *Sommerfrische* or the French *villégiature* of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century—of one or two months is being replaced by more differentiated recreation practices: one- or two-week vacations, short weekend trips, long weekends, shorter but more frequent year-round vacations and the like. The tourist industry is aware of this change and advertises products such as “city breaks” and “short breaks.” This new organization of touristic practice is one important element of the rise of cities as places of recreation. This, by the way, invalidates the widespread thesis of touristic practices as “flight” from the cities to the countryside, mountains or seaside, developed by Enzensberger (1962) and widely acknowledged in the academic literature on tourism. What about the “flight” from the city to the city, or more precisely, from the (residential) suburb to the (touristic) center of the city?

In order to set the context for the processes affecting European cities, we would have to track down the statistics, but there is a lack of reliable figures. There are several obstacles to an adequate treatment of tourism in cities: at the local level, we find a huge discrepancy between figures, and varying assumptions and counting principles from one source to another. For example, the *Urban Audit* of the European Union (<http://www.urbanaudit.org>) and the European Travel Commission (<http://www.etc-corporate.org/>) established data sets on European cities, which are neither complete nor reliable. The research group on tourism in European cities, based in Vienna (<http://tourmis.wu-wien.ac.at/>), tries to address this problem. For Europe as a whole, the European Commission estimates 2.2 billion bed nights (ECT, 2005), the most important countries being Italy, Germany, Spain, France and the United Kingdom (for a breakdown by capital city, see Table 2). These figures have the advantage of coming from the same source, but the disadvantage of being discrepant from other sources. For example, the statistical surveys of the United Kingdom count 204 million foreigners’ bed nights and 490 million nationals’ bed nights (www.staruk.com), a figure well above that given by the European Commission; French surveys count 567 million foreigners’ bed nights (Direction du Tourisme, 2004), which exceeds the overall figure and is five times higher than that for foreigners given by the European Commission. Furthermore, these figures do not allow for a regional or local breakdown. Nevertheless, we can establish a cartographic construction known as a “cartogram” based on those figures (see Figure 1). It constructs the cartographical surface of countries depending on the importance

of tourism, rather than the area of the national territory. It allows for a visual appreciation of the importance of tourism in European countries.

Table 2: Bed nights and beds in some European capital cities

City	Bed nights (in millions)	Beds
London	60 (?)	179,000
Paris	60 (?)	116,000
Rome	38.9	114,000
Berlin	11.3	63,000
Prague	8.4	44,000
Vienna	7.9	40,000
Amsterdam	8.1	35,000
Budapest	5.2	34,000
Brussels	4.7	31,000
Lisbon	4.5	22,000
Stockholm	4.3	21,000
Helsinki	2.5	14,000
Oslo	2.5	14,000
Bratislava	1.0	9,000
Tallinn	1.2	6,000
Zagreb	0.8	6,000
Reykjavik	0.7	3,000
Laibach	0.4	2,000

Sources: ECT, 2005, and personal estimates.

Irrespective of the problem of exact figures, the conclusion drawn is that the scale of European tourism has increased significantly. The elementary counting unit nowadays is per million bed nights in an increasing number of European cities. Apart from those cities where tourism plays a key role, there are numerous cities where tourism is present, but on a much smaller scale. Yet, establishing the recreational turn by counting tourists or bed nights is not sufficient. As tourism can be defined as a system of places, practices, representations and actors with relative autonomy, other elements besides beds, bed nights and flows are required to establish the contemporary context of tourism in European cities.



Figure 1: Spatial Distribution of tourism in Europe

Processes of recreationalization

Several processes lead to the increased and differentiated recreational quality of European cities, following—and this is the main hypothesis—the initial quality of the place (see Equipe MIT, 2002; Duhamel, 2003). Indeed, the initial quality can be that of a tourist resort (e.g., Brighton) or an industrial agglomeration (e.g., Barcelona) or it can be tourist-oriented since the nineteenth century (Paris, Venice) or only recently (Bilbao). This historical element contributes to differences between European cities. Although there is no coherent theoretical framework for addressing these issues, the following processes can be observed.

Festivalization

Festivals can be defined as musical, operatic or theatrical events, taking place every year at the same place and approximately the same time. In this context, the concept has been extended to incorporate “events.” We find two kinds of urban places that are

important in that scheme: capitals (Edinburgh, Budapest, Istanbul, Vienna, Berlin) or medium-sized cities (Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg), on the one hand, and smaller tourist cities (Granada, Orange) or quasi-rural places, where the festival is the dominant urban attribute (Marcillac Jazz Festival), on the other. Festivals are also used to boost “anciently constituted” tourist resorts: Garmisch-Partenkirchen, San Sebastian, Verbier, Gstaad, Montreux, Baden-Baden.¹³ As a consequence, “festive cities” (Gravari-Barbas, 2001) are created on the basis of *fêtes*: Paris (*Nuit Blanche* or *Paris-sur-Seine*), Reykjavik, Dublin and so on, directed not only towards the city’s inhabitants, but, because of the increased geographical accessibility in terms of cost and time, to metropolitan inhabitants at the national and European levels, too. The inspiring model for conceiving of an urban space as festive space is probably the case of Ibiza (Équipe MIT, 2005). More generally, the attempt to create “events” is increasingly important, and is seen by promoters as one way to generate profit or to play with the image of the city. Sports events are exemplary for this process, because professional sport has grown in importance since the 1950s. Sportsmen and sportswomen have developed from amateurs to professionals, creating performances to be experienced as a spectacle by an ever greater audience. The “sports system” is now a huge industry, with virtually no break throughout the year, and performing on a global scale. The pattern of distribution of sports events points to metropolises and anciently constituted tourist resorts.

From manufacturing to recreation

The cities that Judd and Fainstein call “converted cities” (Judd and Fainstein, 1999; Hoffman et al., 2003) are those where manufacturing has been replaced by tourism.¹⁴ This can be increasingly observed in those cities and urban regions where the manufacturing sector has declined since the 1950s. The most spectacular examples are British and Irish cities: Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield and Birmingham have made enormous efforts to change the city’s image and/or its infrastructure and the practices of people. But also in France (Lille), Germany (Ruhr, Hamburg), Italy (Genova, Torino) and Spain (Barcelona, Bilbao), the effects of a new recreational dynamic can be seen (Gonzalez 1993; Lorente, 2002). The processes taking place are differentiated, spanning from industrial “heritageing” to festivals, from sports to the display and imitation of lifestyle.

13 An interesting initiative is the Festival of Britain, held for the first time in Edinburgh in 1951.

14 One could critically argue that all cities where tourism is important are “converted” cities, in the sense of a transformation of initial urban function into a tourist one, based on two processes: a complete transformation of the urban space into a tourist space, as in “touristified cities,” or a partial transformation, as in “cities with touristic functions” (Équipe MIT, 2002; Duhamel, 2003).

Liverpool is an interesting example because of the redefinition of what heritage might be: a malleable concept that can apply to virtually every situation. In the case of Liverpool, heritage defines the nineteenth-century harbor facilities. It coincides with urban regeneration directed at the establishment of touristic space. Two main operations were conducted: the preparation and recognition of parts of the city—the port and adjacent areas—as a “world heritage site” by UNESCO and the nomination as European Capital of Culture in 2008. The share of the hotel and catering sector in employment is about 5%, which is relatively small compared to Benidorm, where it is 50%.

Barcelona is perhaps the model for all these transformation processes (Équipe MIT, 2005). Tourists from all over Europe come to experience the leisure of the Barcelonese and to stroll like them along the main street, the Ramblas. This was made possible through a politics of urban regeneration, “boosted” by the hosting of the Olympic Games in 1992.

The “heritageing” of inner cities

The “heritageing” of inner cities creates what Ashworth and Tunbridge (1990) call “tourist-historic cities.” This process is not entirely new and has its roots in the nineteenth-century touristic development of Venice, Italy; Brugge, Belgium; and Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany (Équipe MIT, 2005). It has expanded throughout the twentieth century to the extent that few European cities are exempt from branding and image-construction through the slogan of “cultural heritage.” This labelling raises the issue of a landmark that is worth visiting and fits in MacCannell’s (1976) theory of a marker for a “thing” becoming a tourist attraction. The actors of this process are no longer local or the tourists themselves, which used to be the case in the nineteenth century. They are global or national actors, such as the UNESCO natural and cultural heritage project—roughly 1,000 “natural” or “cultural” sites are labelled, not to mention national laws for heritage protection. Nevertheless, the UNESCO labelling and accompanying discourse raises the problem of an adequate distinction between “cultural” and “natural.” Due to the esthetic, touristic and heritaged gaze—because of the definition, by a special board of actors, of these labelled things *as* worthwhile seeing—bio-physical elements (e.g., the Chinese karsts) become cultural.¹⁵

This process of heritageing is most important for small and medium-sized cities and transforms profoundly the quality of space, such as in Trier, Germany; Toledo, Spain; Pisa, Italy; and Carcassonne, France. This process has extended to cities of the whole

15 See Berque (2000) for a theory of the ecumene, where the problem of the natural and the cultural is addressed in a challenging way that goes beyond traditional approaches of the nature/culture “divide.”

spectrum of the urban hierarchy, where more or less adequate historical layers are invented in order to display them to visitors. Nevertheless, this process of heritageing is not self-evident and creates conflicts over which elements of cities are “heritageable” and which are not.

Approaching the modernity of metropolises

The contemporary practice of short visits to cities—advertised as “short breaks” or “city breaks”—a trip lasting usually for a long weekend, is one element of the presence of tourists in cities. This raises the question: as these tourists are mostly “urbanites” themselves, how can we understand their desire to visit a *similar* place? Besides the experience of heritage, Duhamel (Forthcoming) identifies another fundamental process in the touristification of cities from the perspective of the tourist: to experience elements standing for *modernity*. Since London and Paris of the nineteenth century, the modernity of metropolises has been at the center of the tourist agenda. Experiencing the urbanness of the city seems to constitute the key distinction from resorts and heritage cities: the touristic practice of the city is based on its being very urban, as a total experience. This also allows for an understanding of the multiple ways of residing in a metropolis as a tourist: exchange of apartments or staying with inhabitants rather than in hotels are forms of contact with the otherness of the place. The objective is to experience the city as an “insider,” thus transforming the other place into a familiar place. This is different than perceiving the tourist city as a collection of tourist sites.

From resorts to cities: A specific kind of urbanization

Finally, there is what can be called a “tourist city”: ancient tourist resorts—or, more precisely, “anciently constituted tourist resorts” (Knafou, 1996)—that become cities through the development of centrality and diverse urban functions. This is one kind of urban place completely overlooked in the literature, because it is addressed either as a “resort” or as a “normal” city without grasping the specificities of a city with ancient touristic elements. It can be described as the development of a mono-functional resort into a more diverse city, where tourism continues to play a key role, often embedded in what Soane (1993) terms “resort regions.” There are two kinds of such “tourist cities” in Europe: the larger ones (e.g., Nice, France; Brighton and Hove, U.K.; Wiesbaden, Germany) and the smaller ones (e.g., Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany; Saint-Malo, France; Montreux, Switzerland). They have in common their emergence as tourist sites *before* the more recent rise of mass tourism. This corresponds to the first and second periods of tourism’s development: the first between 1780 and 1830, the second

between 1830 and 1920.¹⁶ The process of urbanization is an interesting one: the diversification of recreational practices develops alongside population growth—both permanent and second homes—and the emergence of centrality in former non-central places.

Conclusion

If these observations and the proposed framework are accepted, the question has to be raised of how to explain the importance of recreation in cities. How can we delve more deeply into the process, and the temporary results, of the relatively greater importance that is given to the recreational practice of, business in, and “gaze” upon urban space? Is there a new—symbolic and economic—value of urban places as recreational, or, more narrowly, as tourist-oriented? At the same time, how can we avoid ad hoc explanations? The focus on places, prevalent until now, is insufficient; we have to embed places in a specific context, in which the constitution of this quality of space occurs. I therefore propose two key elements of a contemporary dwelling regime that contribute to the touristic dimensions of the urban today, as temporary results of a recreational turn.

First, European cities have been developing in the context of increased mobility, that is, the presence of temporary inhabitants and the temporary absence of city dwellers for very differentiated purposes: different forms of labor (conferences, business, meetings), recreation (leisure, tourism), sociability (friends, parents) and shopping (regular, occasional, sales) are nowadays associated with displacement and the practice of other places. In the case of recreation, it allows for the distinction between the place of residence and the place of “playing,” making it possible to experience density and alterity temporarily *without* residing in such places.

Second, the context of relatively increased recreational dimensions is related to the increase of time and incomes and to new positive values of recreation, such as described by the notion *Erlebnisgesellschaft* (“society of experience”). The expression and consequences are twofold: the qualities of space as experienced in touristic places are “imported” into everyday life, and this takes place in metropolises. The increasingly common sight of palm trees, climbing walls and even beaches (the *Paris-Plage* event) in cities; changing culinary items, such as olive oil in Scandinavia (Löfgren, 1999); and the rising coffee culture in traditionally non-coffee countries, such as the United

16 This is a rough delimitation I cannot expand upon here. In the literature, there is no consensus about the historic periods of tourism, every author applying his/her own definition—often based on the national history he/she is embedded with—with little attention to the work of others. See Spode (1987, 2003), Bertho-Lavenir (1999), Boyer (2000), and Towner (1996) for different timings of tourism.

Kingdom, give evidence of this notion. Together, mobility, recreation and the value of tourism greatly define the quality of contemporary urban space.

What are the consequences of this recreationalization of the city? Are cities still inhabitable for residents? Or, as Eisinger (2000) argues, is the city as a place to play only designed for the middle classes? How is the simultaneous presence of different inhabitants made possible in such cities? The question of “cohabitation” of differently mobile individuals in European cities can therefore be raised. This is a complex issue, because of scholarly discourse giving the resident priority over the “stranger.” Indeed, the whole social sciences literature underlines and takes for granted the importance of “community,” “neighborhood,” “identity with place,” “rootedness,” the “insider” and so on, and neglects what Simmel (1908) and Schütz (1932) called the “stranger” or what we could term nowadays the “temporary inhabitant” or the “outsider.” It is indeed significant that the negative discourse on tourists—alienating the indigenous through the tourist industry and inauthentic relationships—eclipses the positive dimensions of experiencing other places. To what extent is the question of the “right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1968) adequate to grasp what happens in contemporary European cities? Various processes have been changing the quality of cohabitation: suburbanization, immigration, gentrification, new cultures of mobility, heritage and globalization have led to a relatively more individualistic dwelling, where cohabitation is informed more by communities of interest, and less by exclusively local cultures. New *wahlverwandtschaften* (“chosen affinities”) arise between inhabitants of metropolitan areas. That opens up space for the analysis of cohabitation in cities in a world of mobile individuals, where residents of a given city are the temporary inhabitants of other cities, and, vice versa, cohabit with residents of other cities as temporary inhabitants in their “own” city. The European city becomes a “place of projects,” of mobile and geographically plural individuals. It constitutes a challenge for urban politics.

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