Architecture and urbanity of tourism

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Abstract

Tourism today reflects the limits of urban planning: sedentary and nomadic lifestyles. There is an overlap between different city users and geographical environments - sedentary and nomadic - which define a dynamic space that works with the existing historic fabric, comes face to face with the seasonal trends of tourist arrivals and are is to bring together those outstanding facets that defy the rules of the physical city.
Tourism can be planned, not only by defining accommodation and hotel structures, but by focusing on identifying the main elements of urban transformation and areas where planning can emphasize the elements of the territory destined for "reception" along interconnecting chains.
We can speak of 'tourist urbanity' as a large floating urban mosaic, capable of maintaining the links between episodes that belong to the cultural fabric of cities and the territory.

Keywords: urbanity, flows, evolved tourism, architecture, city

Introduction

There is a relationship between architecture, territory and tourism which is the basis for new urban landscapes, because the phenomenon of tourism can influence the processes of urbanization of places and how they are perceived, generating renewed urban metaphors helping to change social forms of aggregation and modes of communication.
In the dynamics of contemporary flows, where the phenomenon of tourism has a significant value, there is a sort of macro-place (destination), which includes all the spaces where people arrive and from where they often depart again. In what is a concrete relationship with places, tourism profoundly influences space to generate forms of urbanity, which often defy the rules of the city in the consolidated or traditional sense, and for which there is a need to define critical issues and intervention policies. The places of tourism, in fact, do not necessarily belong to the city, strictly speaking, but contain urban substance in that they are areas where tourists reside and pass through, as players bringing an urban culture and whose intentions are permeated with space-related action.
Today, one can speak of a hyper-tourism phase, a definition which may be useful to distinguish first generation tourism from current tourism , owing to the fact that the relationship established between the tourist industry, urban areas and local systems, is typically post-modern. In fact, in terms of territorial transformation as well as in economic and cultural terms, many cities have taken tourism as a reference model and tourist places have in turn adopted dynamics that are typically urban even when they are not pre-existing urban settlements.
The main objective of this contribution is to, starting from the concept of tourism as a generating phenomenon of urbanity and by the contemporary modern/post-modern dichotomy, delve what one side is a sort of explosion of the tourist space, with the acquisition of newer and larger areas, and on the other

side a veritable implosion of this same space, with the concentration in closed or half closed areas of a series of images and pure, stylized tourist landscapes. The discussion on the tourism space and its relationship with architecture and urban planning focuses on a scenario of development finally synthesized in the image of " tourist urbanity", as the great floating urban mosaic, capable of keeping together the threads that belong to the cultural fabric of the city and territory.

Tourism: generating phenomenon of urbanity

Tourism began as an urban phenomenon. An invention that crystallizes the values and the social practices even in areas that are distant from the urban model, based on attributes established for the city: mass, contiguity and monumentality (Cooffé, 2010).

Figure 1. Bathing machines

The tourist sites are not necessarily less urban than the city, they are just urban in a different way to the extent to which tourism induces changes in space, generating differential of urbanity that derives from physical relocation and cultural processes.
Clear examples of physical relocations are the phenomena in which the contemporary geography must include the new islands of Dubai, as the areas where tourism does not follow a logical location, based on natural or man-made landscapes as a tourist motivation, but induces a boost of "de-territorialization" (Raffestin, 1984) which introduces a first field of assessment regarding the perception of the landscape and the creation of tourist landscapes and their image, where architecture also plays a mediating role.
This investment in urban physicality can manifest itself in a wild competitiveness, but also for an imperative of creativity of the tourist sites, which are from this point of view workshops of urban and architectural forms, of real utopias or heterotopias (1) where in the concrete report with the places, tourism transfers an urban substance every time.
If on the physical relocation level you can now talk of new tourist areas, it is also true that there is a psychological construction on the cultural level, but sometimes also physical, a sort of "environmental bubble" (Boorstin, 1964) equal to that of the origin within which the visitor can move easily without ever coming in contact with the otherness of people and places.
Indeed the creation of the environmental bubble has been more common than what many people think and probably was an intrinsic character to the phenomenon of tourism from its inception. The reconstruction of an old England environment in the colonies and in resorts where mainly British tourists stayed in during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, is one example just as today it is the universal and recognizable space of tourist resorts.

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[1] Heterotopia was a term coined by the french philosopher, Michel Foucault, based on the model of utopian concept to indicate those spaces that have particular features of being connected to all the other spaces, but in such a way as to suspend, neutralize or reverse the groups of relationships that they design, reflect or mirror.

From a strong relationship between tourism phenomenon and the theme of the urban, research to date have reinforced a formula referring to the "urban tourism" which appears to be limited exclusively to the study of the links between tourism and the city. For a very long time the urban geography has been confused with the study of the city (Lussault and Staszak, 2003) only recently focusing attention on tourism as an urban phenomenon. Based on these premises we can identify tourism as a form of urbanity, a relationship with the space that starts from a project, an intention that regards the practice of areas and places.
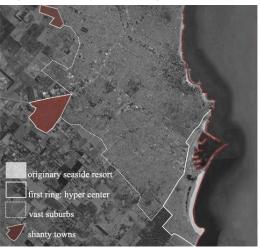
Reverse urban dynamics

The development of tourism over the past two centuries may be summed up in the invention of a different model, as opposed to the concept of urban defined as "one of the possible answers brought on by human groups regarding the problem of distances" (Lussault, 2007, p. 269) marked by the territorial contiguity and the evidence of demarcation between the city and its outside areas, and which today sees the emergence of spatial discontinuity as a characteristic of all contemporary urban organizations. This is evident by observing the occurrence of reverse urban dynamics, interweaving two sets of changes: cities take on tourism as a reference model and tourist areas adopt urban dynamics.

On one hand, cities have taken on services, consumption and leisure as primary and peripherized functions, instead of living and producing functions; in the same way tourist areas have 'discovered' their ability to own major attraction capacities, along with environmental and cultural quality, offering the largest number of urban products, in other words they gain the qualities of the city.

This phenomenon has been analyzed by Giotart (2002) that identifies the nature of contemporary tourism not only in a geographical perspective but as a factor of socio-economic spatial through the concept of transition from an eagerly visited space to ever changing and organized landscapes, up to that very significant image of consumed space.

In particular, referring to the phenomenon of reverse urban dynamics mentioned above, there is the comparison of two study cases traced to specific models: Nice as an example of urban development linked to tourism and Mar de Plata, as an evolution of a tourist spot based on urban dynamics typical of a big city.

Nice, located in the Côte d'Azur, is taken as a model of a city that becomes a tourist location, beginning with an image and a 'tourist reputation' created in the late eighteenth century, linked to the British aristocracy, hence the origins of the tourism phenomenon. The area evolves from a small bi-polar bi-nuclear aristocratic coastal town of the nineteenth century (Giotart's model indicates the presence of a historic centre and residential tourist neighbourhoods) to a large polynuclear and multipolar coastal resort town. It is a simple model that has been transformed into a more complex spatial structure, thus the original linear system changed into a more fragmented multipolar structure.

originary seaside resort

first ring: hyper center

vast suburbs

shanty towns

Mar de Plata, about 400 km below Buenos Aires, is an example of a unipolar and mononuclear resort, which became a multi-purpose, multi-polar tourist city with half a million inhabitants. It began as a seaside resort in the late nineteenth century, with the first bathing and tourist establishments all along the coast. The waterfront was built in an intensive way even after the Ley de proprietad horizontal which authorized the construction of high-rises and hotels. During the second half of the twentieth century there was an explosion in urban population, and it is during this period that a gap formed between the tourist area and the rest of the city, with the formation of vast suburbs and shanty towns.

Figure 2. City evolution: Mar de Plata

The dynamics of these transformations can be found in what Battilani (2007) considered the development of a different urban model focused on leisure activities and services, contrasted by both the industrial and cultural city. The dichotomy between the residential city (be it industrial or art) and the holiday resort was reinforced in the twentieth century, due to the functional specialization of cities that accompanied economic growth: on one side the cities where everything was directed towards the production or reproduction of work, and on the other side those cities which focused on a vision of recreational space.

Between 1960 and 1970 profound changes in economy and culture began to alter these skills. Together with the need to restructure the industrial cities there was also the need to start a long process of deindustrialization and the consequent re-definition of urban identity. The trade-off between attraction and efficiency had no reason to exist: now all the cities were confronted with the need to be attractive to humans and capital.

Local governments, and so many urban planning programs, passed from a vision focused on the supply of basic infrastructures to a more proactive one, from elementary promotional policies to more finalized and comprehensive ones.

The turning point was initiated by other American cities because they had already experienced the shift from an industrial economy to one that was more focused on services.

The change was not limited only to place marketing or economics, but it was the harbinger of a profound cultural transformation that exceeded the vision of rationalism, therefore tourism so closely tied to behavioural and cultural patterns of the time could not be adversely affected by the emergence of a post-modern city. The first and most obvious consequence was that each city, including industrial ones, in search of a new urban identity could develop their own tourist vocation and offer it through a marketing place. A similar but reverse aspect was the transformation that a few cities underwent whether they were bathing, mountain or spa resorts: their century long history and their economic ties between various sectors made them become complex cities.

The tourist space

The contemporary tourist area is configured as a collection of attractions, services, supply and demand, local or global actions, symbols and elements of authenticity. These are areas that appear and disappear at an ever increasing rate and the tourist market is on the lookout of new dimensions, even within already explored areas.

The contemporary tourist space is therefore very difficult to explore, it is multifaceted; one might even say that there are as many "tourisms" as the amount of tourists that head towards various destinations (Bernardi and Filippi, 2004). It is thus the need to refer to models that can describe the complexity of the tourism phenomenon and processes connected to it.

The contemporary tourism models have been analyzed in depth by geographers, sociologists and architects, who have identified two major trends that respond specifically in their apparently opposed aspects, to the transition phase that contemporary culture has crossed and is still crossing and with it the construction of space.The state of art shows on one hand a kind of explosion of the tourist space, with the acquisition of new and ever-expanding territories, on the other hand a veritable implosion of tourist space, with the concentration of a series of images and pure, stylized landscapes inside closed or semi-enclosed areas, the offspring of mental maps that move international holiday markets (2).

There are two main trends in the tourist processes of the last fifty years: modern tourism and postmodern tourism.

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[2] Augè, M. (1993)
Van der Duim R. and Caalders J. (2002
Minca, C. (1996 a)
Minca, C. (1996 b)
La Rocca R.A. (2005)

Modernity

The modern tourist space corresponds to the mass tourism forms of the 1850s onwards; a few sociologists of tourism (3) tie modern tourism to the industrial period, thus defining tourism as "industry".

Tourism defined as modern discovers and enhances distant places, often transforming them into icons, conceiving them as separate entities from other normal social activities. Distance still plays a key role in determining the quality and quantity of the flow and space of accommodation facilities, often dividing itself according to centre-suburban logics, respecting the hierarchical criteria of the distribution of resources and functions.

In this typically modern view there is the tendency, at a territorial planning level, to operate through the identification of areas or tourist districts, such as minimum units of tourist intervention. This approach corresponds to a zoning on a regional scale, that together with industrial areas, agricultural areas, urban areas, identifies tourist areas.

It follows that the retaliation of this tourism model is the need for protection in closed structures, with all the comforts of modern times, inserted in the mechanisms of the giant global tourist machine.

The segregation of duties, with an orientation towards markets outside the contexts and with a tendency to neglect the quality of the local landscape as a key component, often does not respect the quality of local cultural landscapes.

The tourist spaces are seen as enclaves (Judd, 2003), designed to manage the lives of the people by controlling four main aspects: desire, consumption, mobility and time. Desire and consumption are managed through promotion and marketing; time and mobility are closely confined (with hallways, gates, stairs and tunnels to define pathways and routes). Time is also marked by a schedule of events and shows so that the tourist may never get bored.

Postmodernity

What is postmodern tourist space, and what is its structure has been widely discussed by authors such as Eco (1986), Fjellman (1992); Bauman (1992,1996), Minca (1996), Nuryanti (1996), Ritzer (1997) , Amendola (1997), Cowen (2002), Mustonen (2006) and others.

According to Bauman (1996), postmodernism is a social phenomenon created in Western Europe during the late twentieth century and has different meanings for different people: it can be the promise of something new, and this is linked to modern research into new areas, or it can represent the image of the enormous speed with which today's society changes, or rather it represents the uncertainty and confusion about values and criteria that underpins modern life. But, above all, for Bauman, postmodernism is a mental state that tends to reflect itself. Today tourism is a fully postmodern expression.

The tourist space defined as postmodern tends to be seen as exhaustive world, the ideal framework within which to live a concentration of tourist icons and images and for this reason separated from the context, even physically. The two archetypical postmodern tourist areas defined in scientific literature (4), widely written or spoken about, are the Disney amusement parks and latest generation American shopping malls.

The post-tourist knows that when he goes to a historic location, he is not a time traveller; on a tropical beach, he is not a noble savage; in an indigenous area, he is not an invisible observer. Resolutely realistic, he cannot escape from his status as an outsider (Feifer, 1985).

The post-tourist knows that he is a tourist, this deconstruction of the usual forms emphasizes the importance of individual practices, whereby subjective negotiation of the meanings of the actor-tourist is

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[3] Boorstin, D. (1964),
MacCannell D. (2005[1976])
[4] Ritzer G.and Liska A. (1997)
Mustonen P. (2006)

essential and is also tied to the evolution of post-modern spatial and geographical thinking, paying closer attention to reality as perceived by the subjects.

The modern/postmodern dichotomy allows us to understand that there is a general cultural change and the tourism area is becoming increasingly important for both urban planning and for local and social development. On the one hand tourism influences and often determines a few spatial processes and the observation of the tourist area is essential for understanding the mutations that engender; on the other hand postmodern tourism is also proposed as a social project and as such reflects and often anticipates changes in society itself.

Evolved tourism: materials for an urban theory

In our society, "tourisms" are similar to real forms of open debate and dialogue between different cultures, guests and hosts, all able to promote the synthesis of life experiences and the concentration of emerging opportunities that a region is able to offer, establishing new urban interactions and unusual forms of staying together.

Louis Isodore Kahn calls these forms "human institutions". The place becomes home to specific institutions, which in turn require a particular spatiality as the home, street or square.

A post-modern reflection on the disciplinary contribution of architecture to regulate tourism area projects, carefully considers the tourist architecture as an architecture of route (Bandinu, 1996) always ready to offer images and therefore to put the question of organizing the space, inside the vast problem of social communication.

There is a widespread belief that tourist architecture, after the 1970s, was essentially an architecture that depended on a commercial logic, obedient to pure market logic, and this is perhaps why it has remained on the edges of a minimally interesting rhetorical speculation and of the search of any possible development alternatives. And it is also true that architecture has often been destructive, far from a true and deep architectural reflection.

It is important to note, however, that many native tourist places and facilities today have become industrial archaeology and thus heritage (Nuryanti, 1996), an example is the inclusion of seventeenth-eighteenth century Grand Hotels among national monuments of various European countries or the recent nomination of the English village, Blackpool, into the world heritage, as the first example of mass tourism (5) (Battilani, 2007). This means that the architectural production has materialized into reference 'models' inside a tourism dimension, made up of 'tourist regions' which, although changing over time and with transient boundaries, they were still objectively definable throughout the territory.

Today the concept at the basis of post-modern tourism is no longer the tourist region, but the *place* defined as "a fundamental interpretative category, constructed and reconstructed to give meaning to the space in which we move and act; it is, in a certain sense, the symbolic context that we process in order to behave in the world" (Dell'Agnese, 2001, p.8).

The place, and as a result the project, is a concept that is not as objectively unambiguous as the 'region' could have been, but is subjectively complex.

Secchi (2005) considers the concept of complexity, highlighting the historical reasons of transformation and regeneration of the city and the territory: from expansion to dissolution, from Utopias and the social project to the urban project. The contextualization of the scenarios, specific to urban planning, is not only geographical, political and socio-economic, but also and above-historical. The macro-phenomena such as tourism which have been occurring worldwide over the last two centuries distinguish themselves as soon

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[5] Blackpool's new type of accommodation facilities became the basis of their success: the streets lined with boarding houses and the neighbourhoods filled with company-houses (that were a mix between a hotel and rental homes) were important in making Blackpool the ideal holiday location for the working class during the beginning of the nineteenth century.

as the general and global scenario is replaced by a local reality, in a kaleidoscope of shapes and arguments characterized by a complexity which can no longer be traced to equally valid formulas.

Therefore, the new dimension will be that of mobility, the physical and mental one, one filled with commodities and information corresponding to the dimension that for the German sociologist, Bernd Guggenberger, is the feature of the post-modern individual, or rather that of a "new nomad".

In contemporary tourism you can thus identify the boundaries of town planning, able to compare residents and guests, permanent settlement and nomadism. There is an overlapping of different city users and geographical areas - settled and nomadic ones - that define a dynamic space that works with the existing historic fabric, compared with seasonal trends of tourist arrivals at specific times of the year and is able to repair the different situations of excellence beyond the rules of the physical city.

The assumption at the base of the advanced concept of tourism is that tourism can be designed, not only defining the scope tied to hotel accommodations and other facilities, but by identifying the elements of urban transformation and areas whereby the design may emphasize the elements of the territory aimed at "accommodation" as per interconnection chains.

Nomadism, permanence, mobility and attractions, therefore, become the cornerstones of contemporary architectural thought related to the development of the territories in which tourism plays an anticipatory role. Tourism has introduced and implemented urban metaphors. Tourist resorts can paradoxically be described as "anti-cities" (Boeri, 2011) since they do not rely on a historical complexity. There does not exist a society that lives a community culture. The city's image does not derive from 'knowledge' and by the tension of social life, so there is a dissociation between the urban and architectural-town factors and an anthropology/social path. We are dealing with areas in which urban consciousness is based on a continuous present that configures the tourist city as an area not crossed by time.

From this knowledge one can start a new urban reflection on tourist areas that for a long time has expanded to simple aggregations and today tends to develop thanks to complex systems. The main objectives in the planning of current tourist space thus regard the planning of time and flows, as a unit of measurement and the main parameter for the design of new development strategies of tourist locations. Thinking about planning an open system based on multiple and overlapping uses of a given area, where the density and the high concentration of activities and users, be they local residents and/or passing tourists, become key elements of the project.

Consider the tourist city as a workshop of the city. It causes the project to insist on the need for a transverse economical and urban model to the mere 'tourist package', in which the benefits generated from tourism can be distributed among different local agents, thus contributing to the specificity of a local scenario forced to deal with the larger global economy. The regeneration of the tourism context can be created outside of traditional tourist areas, in areas of low density, addressed not only to tourists but also to those who live in the city and experience it to the fullest. The tourist area can also become an area where one can live. It is the recognition of common values and places where one lives, where interests and attractions are closely tied to the raw material matter of the project, since there are no absolute dimensions for tourism; there are, however, proportions and relations that follow topological rules rather than measurable positions.

If up to now the architectural and urban project of the tourist space has reasoned on a typological and urban settlement level, the contemporary condition calls for the need to reason on a "topology" (6) whereby concepts such as convergence, limitation, continuity, connection and compactness finds its best formalization.The tourism planning is the generator of an intangible fabric made up of invisible flows, where the "informal" city overlaps the "formal" city defining a common area or a territorial, cultural and social circle where the common interests of different tourism types are concentrated and come together. One can therefore speak of a '"tourist urbanity", as the great floating urban mosaic, capable of keeping together the threads that belong to the cultural fabric of the city and territory.

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[6] The topology (from the Greek words τόπος, tópos, "place ", and λόγος, lógos, "study" the study of places) is one of the most important branches of modern mathematics.

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