Beyond Authenticity

Making sense of touristic-historic inner cities

Conceptualising the strategies of tapis plein (Bruges) and Urban Laboratory (Tallinn)

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Introduction

All around Europe and beyond, historic inner cities have been rediscovered as touristic attractions. Following large-scale renovation works, historical city centres started to attract an increasing amount of visitors that were seduced by their beauty, history and authenticity. However, as a tourism product such local vernacular and uniqueness are increasingly commodified and packaged into a heritage experience. Quasi-historical elements were added into the cityscape, like cobbled stones and 'authentic' street furniture. Such places became predominantly monofunctional enclaves for tourist consumption, in a sense perfect pictures of themselves. People started to refer to them as open-air museums or the European answer to Disneyland. Not surprisingly, the authenticity of the touristic-historic inner city has been questioned. I call such historic inner cities that became predominantly touristic 'touristic-historic inner cities'. It is important to realise that this is not the same as the 'tourist-historic inner city' that is found in much literature. It differs in the sense that the latter is the *tourists'* historic inner city and the former is the inner city that is predominantly touristic. Since this research also focuses on how local inhabitants relate to their increasingly touristic inner city, the name 'touristic-historic inner city' is more correct.

Authenticity in relation to such tourism and heritage environments is a lively debate within the field, that already started three decades ago and still remains far from clear. Approaches to authenticity have changed dramatically within the time, leaving many to conclude that it has become a banal and largely irrelevant debate. However, it still intrigues many, including myself and just as attempts to 'solve' it, any attempt to avoid it also seems highly unsatisfactory. It is one of the central themes within contemporary changes to place, culture and environment in the cultural economy of space.

Living in such touristic environments and coping with the transformation of local vernacular into a tourist product has not been researched to great extent within an European setting. Actively embracing such issues by contemporary urban actors as a sort of social activism even less. Such strategies can be found in the cities of Bruges and Tallinn, were the organisations of tapis plein (Bruges) and Urban Laboratory (Tallinn) are critically involved with their touristic-historic inner city. Their work might even be a quest for a more authentic city.

The research question is: *'What new, more 'activist' strategies can be distinguished that explore and exploit the authentic qualities of touristic-historic inner cities, and how can such strategies be conceptualised and evaluated?'* In order to answer this question the research will be split in a theoretical search for the role of authenticity in making sense of the touristic-historic inner city and secondly how authenticity relates to the practices and ideology of two activist organisations that are critically involved in exploring and exploiting the authentic qualities of their cities. Such authentic qualities are related to heritage, culture and environment. As will become clear, authenticity in this respect has different meanings than dominant conceptions in other contexts. By analysing the cultural strategies of tapis plein (Bruges) and Urban Laboratory (Tallinn), insight is gathered into how their strategies can be conceptualised and evaluated in special regard to their implicit or explicit relation to authenticity and what authenticity means in that context.

In this research I will argue that when making sense of authenticity related to touristic landscapes, it is important to emphasise the differences between the authenticity of the representations of space (the production of touristic narratives which encapsulate selected readings of the environment) and the authenticity of the representational spaces (space as how it is directly *lived* and emotionally embodied) of both tourists and inhabitants (which can of course only partly be recognised as two coherent and different groups) and how these different conceptualisations of space contradict and influence each other in complex ways.

This research will try to touch all those fields, but is mostly a search for the authenticity related to the representational spaces of local inhabitants, and empirically, two activist organisations that deal with these issues in particular. A reason for this focus is the lack of literature on the impact of touristic landscapes on the daily life – as how they give meaning to and derive meaning from their daily environment – of people in European (or Western) touristic landscapes. The influence of what is often identified as distorted and sanitised narratives of local culture has been researched in the context of tourist experience, but the field of local experience has remained mostly untouched, at least within tourism analysis. Tourism impact studies tend to be economic, and when socially oriented, mostly limited to simple notions of overcrowding and carrying capacity. Its implications on urban culture are profound, since it are such authentic qualities that become the commodity that tourism purveys. However, through freezing the inner city as a stage-set, it is precisely this urban culture that is under severe threat.

There is a need for a wider understanding of the impact of tourism landscapes on a more symbolic and emotional level of the everyday life of those that share their locality for tourist purposes. Urry (1990, pp. 156) ends his book 'The Tourist Gaze' with the same problem, when he asks *'what are the effects on societies whose built environment, conceptions of history, cultural symbols, social patterns and political processes, can all be in part remade as objects of the gaze?'* To achieve a possible answer, the literature on tourism and heritage must be enriched with the insights of humanistic and cultural geography, disciplines that focus on how people relate to and make sense of space, place and environment. This research explores some of such insights. Two strategies of authentication are conceptualised, that of confirming authenticity and unleashing authenticity. The strategies of tapis plein and Urban Laboratory will be conceptualised and evaluated in respect to these two types of strategies. The main hypothesis is that their strategies are best conceptualised as unleashing authenticity. Such strategies of unleashing authenticity can be successful in countering dominant narratives that tend to freeze spontaneity and life in the urban environment, and built a dynamic urban culture, that is perhaps, more authentic.

Chapter 1 will discuss the trends that lead to the becoming of the touristic-historic inner city, such as a re-evaluation of heritage and inner cities. It ends by describing the 'disneyfied museum-city', a critical consideration of how the touristic-historic inner city now functions. Chapter 2 then goes deeper into the analysis behind such considerations by discussing commodification, spectacularisation and especially authenticity. Chapter 3 will enrich the authenticity debate with literature outside tourism and heritage studies, such as cultural and humanistic geography and mainly focuses on the relationship between people and environment. Chapter 4 will give a research outline to introduce the empirical part of this research. The cultural strategies of tapis plein and Urban Laboratory in special relation to authenticity and their touristic-historic inner city will be the focus of Chapter 5 and 6. After that follows the conclusion.

1. The touristic-historic inner city

1.1 The changing role of historic inner cities

1.1.1. Introduction

The city seems rediscovered as the centre of contemporary life and the inner city in particular as a centre for leisure, consumption and culture. Within an increased competition for inhabitants, companies and - in the case of inner cities especially - visitors, the urban environment is screened for its cultural quality. For many European inner cities this cultural environmental quality are its historical features. Since mainly the 1960s, those features have become integral in the development of the inner city, where before they were considered as old, useless and standing in the way of development. At that time most historical inner cities were run-down environments, that did not succeed to attract the capital that followed the processes of suburbanisation. However, the destruction of historic quarters happened at the same time as the re-evaluation of the qualities of these places by local residents. This inspired local conservation movements to fight for their heritage and eventually they succeeded in convincing policymakers to conserve historic buildings and eventually entire historic inner city structures. This triggered of a further re-evaluation of historic inner cities as a desirable place to live and to visit and as a centre for recreation. Those inner cities in which the historic resource is so extensive and valued that it became to dominate their morphology and identity, developed as major touristic attractions (Ashworth, 1999). Heritage- and cultural tourism are identified as a growing market, which offers great opportunities for many cities. Within these developments, historic inner cities have developed as touristic-recreational products, which can be managed and exploited.

The developments briefly summarized in the above can be split in the re-evaluation of city life on the one hand and the re-evaluation of heritage on the other, both by consumers and policymakers. The combination of the two resulted in a growing market for heritage- and cultural tourism and the becoming of the 'museum-city'.

1.1.2. Re-evaluation of city life and heritage by consumers

After the suburbanisation of the 50s, 60s and 70s, the inner city was left underused and with a bad image. The rediscovery of the city as a place for culture and leisure can be subscribed to marginal groups such as artists, students, gays, migrants and squatters. They left the suburban ideals of that time behind and rediscovered inner city life as something to enjoy. Because these groups started to colour urban life, a new image emerged of city life as a chaotic but lively phenomena. This attracted a more wealthy population, a new urban lifestyle, mainly consisting of young, service- or middle class professionals, who are largely responsible for the explosion of bars, restaurants and clubs (Zukin, 1998). Slowly, the inner city became a place for culture, leisure and consumption and policymakers invested actively in such an image, in order to attract these wealthy consumers to the inner city.

At the same time a renewed interest in heritage occurred, resulting in a concern for historic buildings in inner cities. While city planners wanted to re-plan the inner city in order for it to fit the modern expectations of development, local residents resisted these plans. Conservation movements fought for the renovation instead of deconstruction of inner cities and their heritage-preserving actions often increased tourism in the area (Urry, 1990).

Gazing on the past is not new, but the scale, diversity and extent of heritage-related phenomena is (Williams, 1998). This renewed interest in a concern for the past is the result of various developments. It is widely believed to be caused by nostalgia - a positively toned

evocation of a lived past in the context of some negative feeling toward the present or impending circumstances (Sharpley, 1995). One of the most striking of these developments contributing to a sense of nostalgia is globalisation. Globalisation contributed to an erosion of a sense of history, place or rootedness (Walsh, 1992). Under these pressures, the local uniqueness and the local identity became more important for many people. This lead to the reassertion of local places, histories and cultures (Williams, 1998). A concern for heritage also seems to have come from a reaction against the architectural expressions of Modernism (Aitchison, MacLeod & Shaw, 2000). Other explanations that contribute to a concern for the past are growing mobility, increasing wealth, increasing education level, and the ageing of people.

But the concern for heritage should also be regarded within an expansion of the leisure industry and the abovementioned new middle class (Walsh [1992], Williams [1998]). Heritage is not just a legacy from the past, it's a contemporary created saleable experience, produced by the interpretation of history (Ashworth, 1993), or in the words of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998, pp. 150), heritage *'is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past'*. It is actively created within strategies of regeneration and to serve a demand. It is therefore defined by the consumer, not by the raw materials that went into its construction.

1.1.3. Re-evaluation of heritage by planners and policy-makers

The care for monumental buildings started in the end of the 19th century. It was concerned with the protection of the individual monument. The monument had intrinsic values which were to be preserved. In the 1960s a new view on heritage and planning emerged, where the wider ensemble (a zone, area, block or even an entire city) became more important than the individual monument. At this time, extrinsic values concerning a useful functioning of the ensemble were added to the intrinsic values of the monument. This continued when in the 1980s the use-value was further stressed. To give the monument a use-value, there is the need of a market. At this point, a new form of heritage planning replaced preservation or conservation and management of the historic city. Heritage planning uses old structures and morphologies for contemporary uses and goals. It is aimed at urban development, not preservation, but uses the existing historic building for this purpose (Ashworth, 1999). Heritage is used to cultivate place-image and attract inward investment: an urban renaissance to improve the environment and quality of life for local inhabitants and visitors. Conservation has thus become closely linked to strategies for regeneration (Aitchison, MacLeod & Shaw, 2000).

Even more recently, the idea of cultural planning added up to this (Bianchini, 1996). The central idea of cultural planning is to put cultural resources – local cultural qualities such as heritage – at the centre of the table of integral policy-making. Cultural resources are seen as having a wider relevance to the economic, social, educational, environmental and symbolic spheres of policy-making. Cultural planning can be considered an ethical corrective to technocratic physical planning.

1.1.4. The inner city as a landscape of consumption

Because of the renewed interest in heritage and inner cities, as well with the consumer as with policymakers and the leisure industries, the inner city became a target for marketing. To attract residents, visitors and businesses, cities market their unique character, often found in the historic qualities of the inner city. The inner city became a tourist-recreational product.

The inner city historically has been the centre of the city, the place where different people come together to produce, consume and interact. Although this still is certainly the case, the role of the inner city has changed in such a way that consumption has become the primary motive for a visit. Within the network society, the inner city is no longer the absolute centre of urban life, but the place to go for shopping or touristic consumption (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2003). Consequently, the city centre belongs to affluent visitors rather than to residents (Fainstein & Gladstone, 1999). Urban culture becomes an exotic object of tourism increasingly mediated through the entertainment industry (Sassen & Roost, 1999). As such, the urban environment is (re)designed for that purpose. The built environment is screened for its image quality, often resulting in a process of heritagisation, to please the consumer's eye. Historical city centres are strictly preserved, not just for their monumental value, but for their economic potential as well.
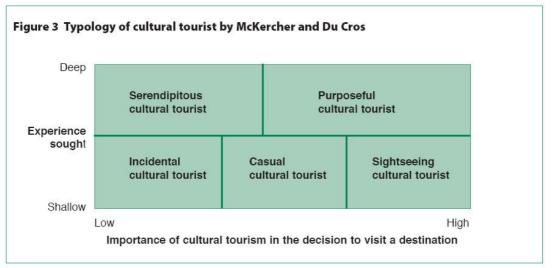
1.2. Tourism in historic inner cities

1.2.1. Cultural tourism

All signals point to a growing interest in cultural and heritage tourism. There are many different definitions of cultural tourism. One broad definition is *'the movements of persons to cultural attractions in cities in countries other than their normal place of residence, with the intension to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs.'* (by ATLAS, in WTO, 2005). The next problem that arises is the countless ways in which culture can be defined. In its broad perspective it not only includes 'traditional culture', such as visiting museums, the performing arts, galleries, cultural heritage, etc., but it also includes the way of life of people living in a certain area, including aspects such as language, beliefs, cuisine, dress, customs, etc. and the products that arise from it (for example architecture, artefacts and the related atmosphere) (WTO, 2005). The blurring of high culture and low culture, the increasing links with leisure and entertainment and the unpredictability of tourist and visitor behaviour make it difficult to extract a certain 'cultural tourist' from the wider city user. One way of (partly) solving this is making a distinction in different types of cultural tourists.

Jansen-Verbeke et al (2000) defined three types of cultural tourists:
1. The tourist with cultural motives (the 'diehard' cultural tourist)
2. The tourist that is open for culture (the new mass cultural tourist)
3. The tourist that uses culture as a change (the indirect cultural tourist)

A more differentiated typology, bases on both culture as motivation and as experience, is offered by McKercher & Du Cros (in WTO, 2005, pp 4):

Figure 3 Typology of cultural tourist by McKercher and Du Cros

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For the *purposeful cultural tourist*, cultural tourism is the primary motive for visiting a destination and the tourist has a very deep cultural experience. The *sightseeing cultural tourist* has culture as a primary motive for visiting a destination, but the experience is less deep. The *serendipitous cultural tourist* is a tourist who does not travel for cultural reasons, but who, after participating, ends up having a deep cultural experience. For the *casual cultural tourist*, culture is a weak motive for travel and the resulting experience is shallow. Finally, the *incidental cultural tourist* does not travel for cultural reasons, but nonetheless participates in some activities and has shallow experiences (McKerches & Du Cros, in WTO, 2005).

In special regard to heritage tourism, it should be noted that the historic environmental setting of an inner city in some cases may actually function more as a decor, than as the primary motivation of or activity at the visit. In that case, it's nevertheless an important element of the visit, because of the choice of this decor for the main activity (e.g. shopping, wandering, etc.) and not another, less attractive decor.

Doing tourism is largely believed to be steered by the 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990). The tourist gaze is the way tourists look at a city ánd are supposed or steered to look at a city. This 'dominant way of looking' is simultaneously the way the city is portrayed (by promotion, travel guides, etc.) – and as a result – the way the city is seen. It's the pre-fixed gaze that tourists use to look at the city as an out-of-the-ordinary experience, in contrast to ordinary everyday work/life (although this separation is dissolving). With this gaze, tourists select signs which they connect to meanings. Thus, when a tourist sees two people kissing in Paris, he or she sees 'Romantic Paris'. Crouch (2002) criticizes the overemphasis on such a pre-fixed gaze, according to him places are lived, played, given anxiety, encountered. This implies that pre-fixed meanings may be disrupted by the way people practice tourism and its spaces.

1.2.2. Sustainable tourism

Those inner cities in which the built heritage is so extensive and valued that it became to dominate their morphology and identity, developed as major touristic attractions. This has lead to important tourism-related problems concerning overcrowding, carrying capacity and sustainability. Overcrowding doesn't only congest streets, but creates pressures on services and can disrupt local lifestyles. Especially small but hugely popular historic towns such as Bruges deal with this problem. Besides such direct problems, frustration and irritation have become a serious concern as well (Orbasli, 2000). Sometimes this even results in organised activity against tourism.

For each place there is a threshold beyond which the urban environment no longer continues to be attractive. Sustainability within tourism is normally defined as supporting the desirable or acceptable changes that tourism brings (Van der Borg, Costa & Gotti, 1996). Carrying capacity can be defined as the combination of the physical capacity and the social tolerance. The importance of social tolerance, *'the capacity of any local population for the painless integration of tourism development into their lives'* (Korça, 1993, in Orbasli, 2000), is usually underestimated, because indicators of a 'critical point' are more focused on tourism-related problems than on the social wellbeing of the local inhabitants and their access to inner city leisure facilities. The disrupting of local lifestyles is conceptualised as negative because it disrupts the 'attractor' – a reason why tourists go there – and thus leads to a decline in demand. The emotional impact of tourism on the everyday life of local (Western) inhabitants has remained largely unexplored within tourism analysis.

Pickard & de Thyse (2001) identify that historic centres are meaningful only if inhabited; they are the expression of the lives of the people who live and work there. Their conclusion on the

sustainable management of historic centres ends with some general principles, among them are: respect community life; improve the quality of life; maintain identity, diversity and vitality; empower community action and responsibility through involvement; define the capacity by which the historic centre can permit change. Timothy & Boyd (2003, pp. 283) also stress that *'it is important to remember that the heritage displayed to tourists is also the heritage of the local people, and it is essential that they feel some degree of attachment to it, have an effective voice in how it is managed and receive some kind of benefit from sharing it with outsiders'.*

1.3. The disneyfied museum-city

Because of the transformation of historical inner cities in tourist-recreational products, they are carefully managed and promoted. Historical elements are put back into the cityscape, to complete the picturesque picture of historic buildings with cobbled stones and 'historic' streetlights. The way that the image-quality of the built environment is screened, polished and regulated resembles to many authors as a process of disneyfication. Hajer & Reijndorp (2003) take Salzburg as the sad future for the European city, perfected for tourist consumption, but designed as a zero-friction space, with little room for real public space.

Because of an increased interest in heritage and the historic quality of the environment, a process of heritagisation or musealisation took place. Heritagisation or musealisation – which are essentially the same – is the process where more and more aspects of the past are re-presented for the present (Ashworth & Kuipers, 2002). More and more of the mundane, everyday things are seen as visitable and are put on display (Burgers [2003], Dicks [2003]). Places become exhibitions of themselves, or put down more critically, *'dying economies stage their own rebirth as displays of what they once were'* (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, pp. 151). This often results in façadism, where parts of the built environment are mere façades (not uncommon even imported from elsewhere), hiding modern department stores and hotels. This all leads to the freezing of space and the stage-set or museum-city.

The boundaries between urban environment and museum are becoming increasingly blurred. According to Orbasli (2000), *'remodelling urban heritage into a stage-set, a themed attraction or an 'experience' for the benefit of the visitor is no different from building a new 'heritage' theme park on the urban fringe, and furthermore it is destroying history, culture and community life'.* In becoming sites for heritage tourism, cities *'are turned into theatrical backdrops devoid of urban quality and historic reality'.* So the question arises 'how much can the urban environment afford to borrow from museums?'. The city is a living, dynamic environment where cultural heritage is only part of a complexity of relationships. As a museum, the city becomes static. This freezing-in-time becomes stifling for users and the local community and restricts and restrains urban growth, a natural dynamism and an inborn urban tension. The city as a living environment must continue to develop and grow (Orbasli, 2000).

Although the actual physical historic thematising and heritagisation is not everywhere as dramatic as sketched above, it should be noted that the *heritagisation of the tourist gaze* is. The way in which the historic inner city is represented and consumed is based on the selection of a set of signs that signify the 'heritage experience'. Heritage in the contemporary inner city is seen as a means to give the city a distinctive identity, a sense of uniqueness. It is therefore caught up in the promotion of the city to attract visitors. The touristic image of historic cities is strictly based on a steady repertoire of heritage – such as a church, parts of the city wall, some façades, a statue and a museum – and the tourist actually expects to see this steady repertoire in the visit (Van Gorp, 2005). This leads to a standardisation of the historic city

experience, where they only differ slightly on the surface. The heritagisation process actually denies the uniqueness and importance of the local history and therefore destroys what it was mobilised for in the first place (Walsh, 1992). Enriching this standard image of the museum-city is not that easy.

As a strong critic on the contemporary representation of the past, Walsh goes as far as saying that heritage actually insults, not only the historian or archaeologist, but also the consumer as well as the local community. Many heritage settings are, at least for him, de-historicized places, which lose any real identity as a place, because of the emphasis on the spectacle for leisure consumption.

2. Authenticity and commodification

2.1 Culture, commodification & spectacularisation

2.1.1. Introduction

To make sense of the 'museum-city' it is important to put the discussion in the wider context of commodification or commoditisation of culture and the notion of authenticity. Although commodification is often seen as the destroyer of authenticity, the discussion is actually much more complex. In fact, to understand the meanings of authenticity it is needed to separate it from the commodification debate, which touches only some parts of it. Authenticity then unfolds as a highly problematic concept with different meanings in different contexts.

2.1.2. A cultural economy of space

In her book 'Culture on display' Bella Dicks (2003) shows how culture has moved outside of the walls of elite institutions and into the new, highly demarcated environments of visitable, consumerist space and its implications for how we experience culture. Places today have become exhibitions of themselves. Touristic-historic inner cities themselves are put on display. The cultural values of places have come to be seen as a place's identity, the possession of which is key to attracting visitors in the 'new cultural economy of visitability' (Dicks, 2003). The cultural dimension – the dimension of taste, emotion, experience, identity or story – has become increasingly important in the planning and design of space (Mommaas, 2001). Especially related to tourism, this results in landscape attraction, seduction and desire (Terkenli, 2002). Cultural meanings are literally written into landscapes, roads and streets, buildings, street furniture, seating, walls, screens, objects and artworks. Culture therefore is put increasingly 'on display', giving it a communicative function, addressing the visitor. Cultural display promises the experience of meaningfulness. However, cultural display is increasingly geared towards the model consumer rather than the model citizen, leaving the question whether this promise of meaningfulness produces – or is designed to produce – a 'wide public understanding' of culture (Dicks, 2003). As tourist sights, contemporary landscapes change and adapt to public preferences, market promotion and new cultural values. *Thus they become, by nature and by function, the most direct, instant and eloquent geographical expressions of the new global cultural economy of space'* (Terkenli, 2002).

2.1.3. Commodification of culture

The commodification of culture is the process whereby culture, people and places are objectified – packaged, imaged and transformed into saleable products - for the purposes of the global market (Meethan [2001], Robinson [2001]). In many cases this is seen as a negative process whereby cultures and places become a superficial subjugate of consumerism and lose their social and political function, and authenticity. This losing of meanings is a strong current within tourism, heritage and cultural studies. However, this notion is increasingly countered by authors who have attacked this dichotomy of the implicit notion of an 'authentic' culture that becomes an 'inauthentic' spectacle, hollow of meaning, to be swallowed by the passive consumer. There is simply much more to it than that. Heritage and culture mean different things to different people, and the consumer is not just a passive recipient, but can be an active agent. But where does this leave the strong and convincing notion of commodification and spectacularisation? I argue that it should not be dismissed. It only tells us the put it in a more complex and wider understanding of how this affects people and places and people's

position towards their's and/or other's culture. Therefore it is needed to have a wider understanding of the process of spectacularisation and (later on) the notion of authenticity.

2.1.4. Spectacularisation

A seemingly growing number of authors are referring to the process of spectacularisation as a central concept to understand the transformation of places, heritage and culture (e.g. Swyngedouw & Kaïka [2003], Vaz & Jacques [2006], Stevens & Dovey [2004], Gotham [2002, 2005]). Unfortunately, discussions on spectacle and spectacularisation uncritically mix different notions of spectacle, a potential error that might also be apparent in the following discussion. Spectacle is often defined as a social or cultural event, usually of temporary nature, attracting a mass audience through its dramatic and sensuous staging. Such a definition can also be expended towards permanently staged sites, such as the historic inner city as a landscape of tourism. A related but different approach to spectacle is offered by Debord's Society of the Spectacle (1983), which conceptualises spectacle as the total occupation of social space and life by consumer culture and mass media that leads to the passivity and entrapment of citizens within that hegemony. For Debord, the spectacle is *capital* to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image.

The cultural revived city should be seen in the context of an increasing competitative environment, with neo-liberal entrepreneurialism governing urban dynamics. Within this market-led urban development, culture turns into a commodity, a spectacle, a set of meanings that can be colonised for economic development. But, according to those authors, the commodity is a phantasmagoric image devoid of substance and meaning. The inevitable fate of the commodity-form within the cycle of production and consumption is to become obsolete. In its hollowed-out existence, the commodity then turns into what it really is, a ruin. *'Modern spectacular urbanisation revels in and is predicated upon perpetual ruination and the subsequent staging of the ruin as a phantasmagoric spectacle'* (Swyngedouw & Kaïka, 2003, pp. 10). As Harvey notices (2000, quoted in Swyngedouw & Kaïka, 2003, pp. 10-11), the commercialisation of the urban experience seems to cultivate nostalgia, produce sanitized collective memories, nurture uncritical aesthetic experiences and absorb future possibilities into a non-conflictual arena that is eternally present. In the words of Swyngedouw & Kaïka, *'the commodified and spectacular museum-city as the heralded booster-strategy to revive urban economies represents nothing else than the universalisering of sedimenting the tumultuous reorderings of history into the ossified ruins of theatrically staged places: time frozen as place, a mere moment of space. (...) The city itself has become part of the spectacuralised commodity'*. Now that historic inner cities are transformed into open-air museums, the city as museum displays the ruins of the spectacular commodity.
The commodification of urbanity has taken unprecedented forms. City marketing and branding has packaged urban cultures as images to sell to potential inhabitants, visitors and businesses. Grounding these thoughts is that through spectacularisation we are becoming stupefied, alienated, passive, participationless consumers of the spectacle, instead of the active producers of the jouissance of urban life (Debord, 1983). In the regulated consumer spaces produced by urban revitalisation it is becoming increasingly difficult, of not impossible, to recapture the spirit of modern life (Swyngedouw & Kaïka, 2003). We are mere spectators on an urban stage set, instead of actors on an urban stage floor (Vaz & Jacques, 2006). This implies, at least for them, a loss of authenticity.

Other authors disagree with defining the commodity-form as a 'phantasmagoric image devoid of substance and meaning'. To them, the way that the consumer makes sense of the

commodity is not as a passive recipient, but as an active producer of meanings (Meethan [2001], Gotham [2002, 2005], Crouch [2002]). Thus, we can carefully plan the museum-city as a staged set, but we cannot determine how people make sense or use of it.

According to Meethan (2001), commodification in tourism can be conceptualised as occurring on two interrelated levels, based on the conceptualisations of space offered by Lefebvre (1991). There is the commodification of representations of space (images and preconceptions presented by the tourism industry in brochures, etc.) and the commodification of the representational space of lived experience. The latter means that the consumer organises their lived experience into more or less coherent narratives at a personal level. This implies that the consumer is an active agent capable of organising experiences into forms of self-identity and exchanging those narratives with others. Thus Meethan (2001, pp. 86) argues that *'the fact that experiences are mediated through forms of commodification, or expressed through the possession of commodities does not diminish them. In fact, this process can be seen as a means to render abstract personal experiences into material forms capable of being recognised as such by others'*. From a similar point of view, Crouch (2002), Gotham (2005) and Edensor & Kothari (2004) tell us that the power to construct and constitute tourist's consumption desires and the meanings that people make from them may be exaggerated; residents and tourists are not simply passive recipients of accepted meanings produced by advertisers and place marketers. Pre-figured meanings may be disrupted by the way people practise tourism and its spaces; consumers are actively involved in the production of meaning and, indeed, produce meanings, some of which are unintended by place promoters. Crouch speaks of a more self-reflexive tourist, or actually 'human subject *doing* tourism', that is less duped than aware, less desperately needing identity than using tourism in the negotiation of identity.

Differing opinions on this matter are often grounded in the amount of trust put in the consumer's capabilities of making sense of commodities and touristic landscapes. This is also linked to the presence or absence of trust in the values of mass culture. Another important difference is the amount of trust in the manifestations of modernity and modern capitalism as being perhaps a true way of life, or merely an alienating, disrupting and dystopian force.

These approaches to spectacularisation and commodification need not to be mutually exclusive, if we can agree on an actual process of spectacularisation reducing the complex and rich ways consumers can make sense of the commodity-form. Commodification then becomes not a destroyer of local culture and place per se, but a danger of reducing the ways in which people make sense of their culture and environment. The centrality within the whole debate of spectacularisation and commodification being either good or bad seems to be withholding a deeper understanding of the transformations of space and culture that are inherent in tourism (Gotham, 2005). Rather than seeing this spectacularisation of local cultures as simply negative or positive, Gotham discusses how tourism is a conflictual and contradictory process that simultaneously disempowers localities and creates new pressures for local autonomy and resistance. Gotham as well as Stevens & Dovey (2004) and Swyngedouw & Kaïka (2003) find that while spectacularisation limits choice and creativity, it also sows the seeds of immanent critique that provide the breeding grounds for reflexive action and opposition.

It is important to open up theory on spectacularisation towards a more complex understanding of the social role of commodification and consumption inherent in how people make sense of everyday life. Equally, more trustful notions of consumer society should not dismiss the passifying effect of the spectacle. The tension between the two should be seen as inherent in an interrelated system, instead of by definition being mutually exclusive. We do not need to choose between consumers being spectators on a stage set, or actors on a stage floor. In fact,

these social positions are in constant flux, we mediate between them. We have an actual choice in which position we prefer, while the spectacular environment of the touristic-historic inner cities is best understood as a possible reducer of that choice. This will be elaborated on further on.

2.2. Authenticity in tourism and heritage studies

2.2.1 Introduction

Authenticity is normally defined as the state of something being true, original or being what people claim it is. This is often an object-related approach to authenticity, in which it is possible to claim the authenticity of the object through expertise. However, as will be made clear, authenticity is increasingly seen not as an intrinsic, objective essence, but as a negociable, constructed value that is assigned to things. Thirdly, authenticity is also related to existentialist philosophy. In this philosophy, the conscious self is seen as coming to terms with being in a material world and with encountering external forces, pressures and influences which are very different from, and other than, itself. Authenticity is the degree to which one is true to one's own personality, spirit, or character, despite these pressures. Authenticity then can be found in a person's *relation* to the world.

The discussion of authenticity in tourism and heritage cannot be productive without a proper guidance in the themes to which authenticity addresses. As mentioned before, authenticity needs not to be seen as only part of a commodification debate. Its applications and meanings differ from one context to another, which ultimately means that *the* definition of authenticity does not exist. At least four interrelated discussions within tourism and heritage studies can be distinguished.
1. Authenticity as a motive for tourism
2. Authenticity as an experience
3. Object-related authenticity
4. Authenticity and commodification (as already touched before)

After reflecting on these four interrelated discussions, a fifth, concluding notion of authenticity could be added, that of 'lived authenticity', which builds the way towards a deeper understanding of the meanings of authenticity outside tourism and heritage studies.

2.2.2. Authenticity as a motive for tourism

Traditionally, *the* motive for tourism is seen as the search of the tourist for authenticity. This theory is based on MacCannell's 'The Tourist' (1973). For him, modern man, living in a modern, alienated society, is motivated by the need to experience authenticity; something that cannot be found in modern society. He seeks to find authenticity elsewhere, in other places and other times. Thus, for MacCannell, the entire phenomenon of tourism hangs on a quest for authenticity and reflects the deficiencies of modern life; the tourist is a model for *modern-man-in-general*. Authenticity is a quality that is perceived to be firmly rooted in a pre-modern life. The tourist becomes a pilgrim for authenticity; museums and heritage are havens of reality and authenticity in the turmoil of modern life. For MacCannell, authenticity can be found in so-called back regions, where tourists can have a look in the 'real life' of others. Unfortunately, these back regions start to perform conform to tourist's expectations. What the tourist finds at that point is not authenticity, but 'staged authenticity'. The production of staged authenticity is a structural consequence of the development of tourism. Thus, in his search for authenticity outside the inauthenticity of modern life, what the tourist actually finds

is staged authenticity, a performed so-called authenticity, actively put on display to satisfy tourist expectations and as a way to self-protect the actual authentic ways of life within the back regions of other cultures.

This line of reasoning is increasingly countered, on the basis of several arguments. On the contrary to the tourist as a pilgrim on the search for authenticity, McKercher (1993, quoted in Sharpley 1995, pp. 194) warns us that it is a mistake to assume that most tourists are anything more than consumers, whose primary goal is the consumption of a tourism experience. McKercher thus finds himself a bit closer to Boorstin's thesis that tourists seem to be satisfied with inauthentic, pseudo-events, which are meaningless systems of illusions – one of the central claims that MacCannell tried to counter. As Sharpley argues, it would be safe to suggest that the great majority of tourists would fall somewhere inbetween the two extremes (Boorstin & MacCannell) in their search for authenticity. However, the so-called post-tourist (Feifer [1985], in/and Urry [1990]) knows and accepts tourism as a game to be played, with no possibility of a single authentic tourist experience, and by doing so, the whole consideration of authenticity plays no part. Also Terkenli (2002) argues that distinctions between authentic and inauthentic are becoming less and less crucial to the tourist experience itself.

On the other hand, the reasoning of the tourist escaping the inauthenticity of modern life is countered. On a shallow level, Sharpley (1995, pp. 195) argues that *'the alienation that results from the condition of modern society is not necessarily recognised or experienced to a similar degree by all members of society. Some are firmly rooted in modernity with minimal sense of alienation, other people may reflect on the meaning of their lives and may experience or be more aware of a sense of alienation from modern society.'* Sharpley concludes that the greater a tourist's alienation from society, the greater will be the emphasis on finding and experiencing authenticity and the stricter will be the rules by which authenticity is judged. Again, we must conclude, that there is no such thing as *the* tourist.

On a deeper level, the whole understanding of modern life as inauthentic and pre-modern, traditional and exotic cultures as the final remnants of authenticity needs to be re-examined (Meethan, 2001). This notion is based on reductionist reasoning and uncritical assumptions of a false dichotomy between modern and pre-modern life, that have seriously hindered a fuller understanding of the cultural processes involved in tourism. The pre-modern, traditional and exotic are conceptualised as collections of self-contained essential characteristics, which are authentic because they are yet untouched by the destructive powers of modernity. One of the most powerful paradoxes of tourism then becomes that the search of authenticity inevitably leads to the destruction of it, by bringing the inauthenticity of modernity to those previously untouched cultures which it seeks. The preservation of such authentic pre-modern, traditional cultures from the onslaught of modernity is actually based upon a western romanticism and may lead to the creation of cultural theme parks, frozen for the nostalgia of western tourists. In the context of the heritage of the European touristic-historic inner cities, the same line of reasoning holds through. We thus need to ask ourselves if we should search for authenticity as an essence stuck in other times and other places. However, it is important to recognise that many people (c.q. tourists) do associate authenticity with previous times and distinct places.

2.2.3. Authenticity as an experience

The search for authenticity and the subsequent staging of culture made the discussion move towards how the tourist experiences authenticity. A first step in that line of reasoning was made by Cohen (1979), who realised that although what is experienced is actually staged

authenticity, the tourist might not know that and still experiences it as being real. He came up with the following diagram which combines MacCannell's staged authenticity with tourist experience:

	Tourists view the experience as real	Tourists view the experience as staged
Real scenes are provided	1. authentic experience	3. denial of authenticity
Staged scenes are provided	2. staged authenticity	4. contrived authenticity

Unfortunately, this very important new insight of authenticity linked to experience did not solve a deep problem inherent in both MacCannell's as Cohen's theories, namely that they are based upon an unquestioned, undisputable, absolute reality or ultimate truth. Both authors did not question what authenticity actually is. Authenticity for them was a primitive concept; some kind of clear, but undefined sense of being true, real, and thus authentic. Poststructuralist thinking attacked this existence of an unquestionable realness and concluded that authenticity is in fact a social construction. Authenticity suddenly opens up as something that is negotiated. After all, who decides what is authentic, and what is not? Why would the opinion of an expert necessarily be the most correct? Since this line of reasoning came to light, the differences between real and fake, and between authentic and staged were severely criticised. Authenticity might in fact be inseparable from experience, and tourists (or people in general) experience authenticity all individually different, based on different aspects, such as personal characteristics (age, sex, education,..), their agenda, personal interests, earlier experiences (e.g. nostalgic connections) and knowledge. How then, can we measure authenticity? McIntosh and Prentice (1999) speak of 'perceived authenticity'. If many tourists experience something as authentic, then it has a higher level of authenticity than when few people do so.

To make it even more complex, Baudrillard (1983, in Waitt, 2000) saw that simulations had become so important, that they obtained a status of being 'hyperreal', where the simulation eventually is more important in the evaluation of authenticity than the original. The blurring of what is real, fake, simulated, hyperreal and finally experienced made claims on authenticity increasingly subjective and relative. When dealing with authenticity, we must always ask whose authenticity, and on what basis or for what purpose it is constructed. Many times however, authenticity is still seen as object-related. Although we already countered this 'essential quality inherent in objects', it will be dealt with in more detail in the next section, especially related to heritage.

2.2.4. Object-related authenticity

As became clear in the discussion of authenticity as an experience, central to the whole discussion is whether or not there actually is an authenticity to be found. Such an absolute reality has been questioned. Authenticity is best conceptualised not as an intrinsic value of the object, but as subscribed to the object; it is a social construction. Theoretically, it therefore is wherever we say it is. This does not necessarily plead for an endless relativism, resulting in a none-existing authenticity, but it does make the discussion much more complex and relative. However, authenticity is still often conceptualised as an intrinsic value of an object (for instance a monument) or as an essential quality of a (pre-modern) cultural system (as dealt with before). This has been referred to as the 'museum-definition' of authenticity, or 'objective authenticity', whereby for instance the provenance of an artefact needs to be established. But when applying such an approach, soon many problems arise. Ashworth

(2000) gives a good outline of the multiplicity of characteristics on which the authenticity of a monument can be judged:

Types of authenticity

Creator	Material	Function	Concept	History	Ensemble	Context
'The hand of the master'	*'The original material'*	*'The original purpose'*	*'The idea of the creator'*	*'The history of the artefact'*	*'The integrity of the whole'*	*'The integrity of the location'*

Although often assumed as a self-explanatory justification for conservation, the authenticity of a monument can be judged upon many different factors. A monument has often undergone so many phases of building, altering and refurbishment that establishing its age and choosing which parts or periods to preserve is a difficult and highly problematic matter. Plus, all preservation is intervention, which to a degree affects the authenticity of the object. Similar to the processes described when discussing the museum-city, Asworth (2000, pp. 13) argues that through preservation *'the building ceases to have a natural life-span and has become to an extent fossilised in time as well as extracted, presumably, from its non-preserved spatial context. An extreme position, not uncommon in the fine arts, is that any artwork has a natural life-span and any interference with the processes of decay denies the authenticity of the artist's creation'*.

The authenticity of the context is also a matter to consider, because many monuments are surrounded by a setting that bears no functional relation to them. Sometimes monuments are even physically moved and reassembled on more desirable locations. How authentic an 'authentic structure' is on a new location, also differs between cultures. Another issue is that the existing stock of preserved buildings is not an accurate reflection of history, but has been and still is influenced by a selective process whereby particular building types, materials, aesthetics (the spectacular will be preferred over the mundane), districts and towns have more chance to survive than others. Authenticity related to claims of an 'accurate reflection of the past' might be more problematic than recognised at first. Ashworth (2000, pp. 15) also argues that *'what is considered to represent the past and thus be worthy of passing on to a future is itself an ephemeral judgement of a present that is choosing which past it wishes to represent'*. Related to tourism, this implies that a past is selected that is attractive to tourists, easy digestible and sanitised from its unappealing features. Monuments sometimes are restored to look 'authentically' old, while in fact they looked new in their early years of existence. On the other hand, many heritage towns and their monuments are cleaned, painted and refurbished into shiny, colourful representations of a past that probably looked a lot less shiny. There is no room for 'authentic' mud, faeces, rats, prostitutes and beggars in contemporary representations of the past.

The logical conclusion is that object-related (and context-related) authenticity is not a very helpful guide to establish what is authentic and when it starts to be not anymore. The focus should switch from the existence of an objective, universal and measurable set of intrinsic criteria to a more useful concept. This implies a shift from the object to the user and especially the *relationship* of the modern user with the conserved past.

2.2.5. Authenticity and commodification

Possibly the strongest line of reasoning concerning authenticity is that commodification leads to the inevitable loss of original meaning and authenticity. However, some authors countered this conceptualisation by stressing a more positive side of commodification for tourism (e.g. Chang, 1997). For instance, the commodification of local costums such as rituals, dances, and

celebrations for tourist purposes does not inevitably lead to a loss of meaning and authenticity, but can also contribute to maintaining and re-asserting local culture and identity. This is a process of 'emergent authenticity' (Cohen, 1988). The meanings of the commodified costumes might change in the process, but change does not per definition render them inauthentic. Believing so as inevitable, is conceptualising culture as a static, fixed entity that needs to be preserved from development, while in fact cultures and meanings are dynamic systems and under permanent development and reconstruction (Meethan, 2001). Old meanings fade and new meanings are created, and commodification for tourism is only one force within these processes (Chang, 1997). The influence of other forces, linked to globalisation and technological innovation probably have much deeper impacts, although Terkenli (2003) seems to disagree. Nevertheless, commodification for tourism does affect local culture and this may, and does, affect perceived notions of authenticity, by experts, local inhabitants and tourists. It is often believed to contribute to a loss of meanings, to result in a shallow interpretation of the original. Again, commodification should not be reduced to be either good or bad, but as a possible danger of reducing meanings within a dynamic, cultural system that is under eternal negotiation

An important realisation concerning authenticity within the tourist industry is that the very notion of authenticity itself is commodified for tourist purposes (Sharpley, 1995). Destinations are represented in a seductive narrative that fits (or tries to fit) tourist's expectations of the area and their desires to experience otherness or paradise. Authenticity is marketed within the prevailing line of reasoning linked to pre-modern, traditional and exotic cultures. For tourists then, *'authenticity is not necessarily determined by gaining a genuine appreciation for another culture, but rather by verifying a marketed representation of it'* (Silver, 1993, in Sharpley, 1995, pp. 205). It is about meeting expectations of pre-designed, seductive narratives, where authenticity becomes a symbolic authenticity (Wang, 1999). These representations in a way become more real than the actual, they become in Baudrillard's terms 'hyper-real'. However, this does not solve a search for authenticity beyond the hyper-real, something more real, more true, genuine and actual than touristic narratives and that does not imply an 'objective' museum-definition. It seems to be a search for the impossible.

A large part of leisure and tourist consumption revolves around myths and fantasies. The creation of such images is essential for those who want to escape the everyday mundane. Although this has always been the case, the falsification of time and place has increased enormously over the past thirty years (Shaw & Williams, 2002). The tourist demand for 'authentic' experiences and the resultant tourism environments result in several different types of distorted pasts, based on invented places (the 'real' location of Dorethy's farm from the Wizard of Oz, or the 'real' home of Santa Claus) and sanitised and idealised pasts (Timothy and Boyd, 2003).

2.2.6. Lived authenticity

As became clear, authenticity is not a clear concept and has different meanings in different contexts. In many ways it is not a very helpful concept in analysing tourism and touristic-historic inner cities, because it's applications are unclear. However, confusion often arises as a result of uncritical and undefined usages of authenticity in the wrong context. A first distinction needs to be made between authenticity of (tourist) *experience* and of the toured *objects*. Secondly, as Wang (1999) argues, there are three main conceptualisations of authenticity: objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity is its museum-usage whereby a toured object can defined as real,

genuine, original and thus authentic and therefore should be experienced as such. Constructive authenticity involves the social construction of something as authentic, a value ascribed to the toured object. In this sense it's much more relative and negotiable. Within tourism, authenticity is often about confirming stereotyped images and expectations and less about experiencing objective authenticity. In this sense, constructive authenticity becomes a symbolic authenticity. Finally, existential authenticity refers to a true, genuine state of being, where one is true to oneself. Tourism can function as temporal escape from 'inauthentic' everyday life, where one cannot always be true to oneself. *'Tourism is thus regarded as a simpler, freer, more spontaneous, more authentic, or less serious, less utilitarian, and romantic, lifestyle which enables people to keep a distance from, or transcend, daily lives'* (Wang, 1999, pp. 360). Within tourism analysis, the analytical power of existential authenticity has yet remained underdeveloped. Each of these conceptualisations of authenticity relate differently to authenticity as a motive for tourism, authenticity in experience, authenticity of objects and representations, authenticity and commodification, etc.

Authenticity within the daily life of people is much more connected to an emotional level, coloured by feelings of connection, remembrance, nostalgia and romance. Such an authenticity has not much to do with an objective, museum-definition of authenticity. It means different things to different people in different contexts. It is a value subscribed to the life, culture and environment that constitute the daily life of people. As recognized by Dovey (1985) and Hall (2007), authenticity is in many ways about connections. As Hall (2007, pp 1140) inspired by Dovey (1985) argues, *'authenticity is derived from the property of connectedness of the individual to the perceived, everyday world and environment, the processes that created it and the consequences of one's engagement with it'*. Such an approach to authenticity is much more related to existential authenticity, something lived and felt, not so much defined and concluded. This perspective is much more useful when dealing with the authenticity related to local inhabitants and their touristic-historic inner cities. A logical conclusion is that local inhabitants might feel disconnected from their living environment, resulting in a loss of authenticity. The next chapter will go deeper into authenticity and discusses its relations to connectedness and the lived-world.

3. Authenticity, connection & lifeworld

3.1 Authenticity, representations of space & representational spaces

3.1.1. Introduction

When analysing authenticity in the context of the touristic-historic inner city, the most important distinction to be made is between first the authenticity of the historic city itself and especially how it is represented, and secondly the authenticity of how people experience, live in and connect to the city and its representations. Following the analytical framework of Lefebvre (1991), this means the distinction between the authenticity of the representations of space and the authenticity of the representational spaces of (a bit simplified) inhabitants and tourists. Lefebvre made an attempt to capture both material and mental space through his notion of spatiality, which is socially produced space. He makes a threefold distinction in his analysis between spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. Spatial practice are the factors that determine the uses of space and their accompanying social formations. The production of tourism spaces within modern society can be seen as such a spatial practice. Representations of space are conceived conceptualisations of space. As Meethan (2001) argues, it is at this level that the production of certain forms of (touristic) narratives which encapsulate selected readings of the environment takes place. It is also at this level that space turns into a spectacle. Representational space is space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols within the spheres of everyday life, hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'. Space that is lived is emotionally embodied, through associated connections and imagination (history, memories, nostalgia). Representational spaces need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness.

3.1.2. Representations of space

The authenticity of representations of space - the production of touristic narratives which encapsulate selected readings of the environment - can easily be identified as inauthentic in many ways, because it is based upon confirming stereotypes, easily digestible narratives, myths and fantasies that result in distorted, sanitised hyper-realities, and is done so by many authors. Authenticity within this context has little to do with producing and consuming true, genuine, real- or correctness. It is a symbolic authenticity, whereby confirmation of desired and projected images signifies authenticity. However, judging the authenticity of such representations of space is primarily done from an objective, expert perspective. Although the tourist might be fooled, the expert knows better and is able to judge such representations of space as being inauthentic. As dealt with before, such judgements are highly problematic and contested. As argued by Dovey (1985, pp. 46) the main problem however arises *'when one insists upon locating authenticity as a condition to be found in the physical world'*. Instead, authenticity should not be seen *'as a condition of things or places, but rather as a condition of connectedness in the relationship between people and their world'*. Representations of space mediate and distort that connection.

3.1.3. Representational spaces

Inspired by Dovey, Hall (2007, pp. 1140) also argues that *'authenticity is derived from the property of connectedness of the individual to the perceived, everyday world and environment, the processes that created it and the consequences of one's engagement with it'*. Authenticity is a condition of integrity in person-environment relationships, a way of being-

in-the-world (Dovey, 1985). This is linked to what Lefebvre (1991) called representational space, space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols. Meethan (2001, pp. 37) argues that *'it is also at this level that struggles over the symbolic construction of space are struggles to objectify meanings, to impose upon, or appropriate from the environment a particular order, a dynamic process of contestation and appropriation through which particular interests are maintained and legitimised.'* Here, authenticity is negotiable, something to produce, capture, fight for. This process is indigenous, i.e. produced or born within (Dovey, 1985). This implies that searching for authenticity in other times and other places is bound to be frustrating and perhaps even destructive. Authentic places and things are born from authentic dwelling practices in everyday life.

The touristic-historic inner city as directly lived by tourists or by local inhabitants is (most probably) a totally different city, especially those inner cities that are highly monofunctional enclaves for tourist consumption. There is a tension between the representational spaces of tourists on the one hand and of local inhabitants on the other. The next logical step is to identify that distorted, sanitised – from an objective point of view 'inauthentic' - spectacular representations of space, as often the case in touristic-historic inner cities and other (touristic) heritage attractions, can and often do lead to a felt, experienced and thus lived inauthenticity when in connection – or perhaps disconnection - to these places. This can be identified as a tension between representations of space and representational space. The dominant narrative of the spectacular representation of tourist space is based on the symbolic economy of tourism and not so much on *local* representational space of giving and deriving meaning from the environment and identity construction; which is in effect often experienced as shallow, passifying, and perhaps inauthentic by local inhabitants (and perhaps tourists). This implies a struggle at the level of lived experience for those whose space of home, or of work, is the space of leisure for others.

To conclude, the tension between representations of space and representational space, in regard to touristic-historic inner cities, is probably bigger when concerning local inhabitants than when concerning tourists. Where tourists experience authenticity as confirming expectations and projections, local inhabitants are more likely to be concerned with the lack of accurateness of the touristic narrative of their daily environment. According to Lefebvre, such a tension between representations of space and representational spaces leads to alienation. As a result, local inhabitants might feel alienated and disconnected from their daily living environment, and thus find such spaces meaningless and inauthentic. Logically, the hypothesis arises that the appropriation of such spaces (as in 'to make one's own'), to recapture or reconnect to them, could work as a process of authentication and make them meaningful again. This would improve the condition of connectedness between person and environment. Thus, it is not so much in the objective inauthenticity of the touristic landscape, as in the felt disconnection from the space where authenticity plays a role. The relationship between people, space and place will now be dealt with in more detail.

3.2. Connections between people, space and place

3.2.1. Introduction

The discussion on how people relate to places is an important one within humanistic and cultural geography and has been influenced by the philosophical traditions of phenomenology and existentialism (Crang, 1998). Phenomenology is the philosophical tradition that takes as its starting point the phenomena of the lived-world of immediate experience, and then seeks to clarify these in a rigorous way by careful observation and description (Relph, 1976). Existentialism is a philosophical movement that claims that individual human beings create

the meanings of their own lives, and that 'being in the world' instead of consciousness is the most ultimate reality. In this philosophy, the conscious self is seen as coming to terms with being in a material world and with encountering external forces, pressures and influences which are very different from, and other than, itself. Authenticity is the degree to which one is true to one's own personality, spirit, or character, despite these pressures. Authenticity then can be found in a person's *relation* to the world.

3.2.2. Space and place

Geographers have been defining and redefining space and place for decades. According to Madanipour (2001, pp. 158), the sheer physical presence of roads, schools, and houses does not render them meaningful. *'It is the collective intentionality, the capacity of humans to assign functions, to symbolise these objects beyond their basic presence that makes them part of social reality'*. Meaning is found in what the objects are *for* (Dovey, 1985). This process of symbolisation in which physical objects are assigned with meaning, says Madanipour, is what separates space from place. *'Whereas space is open and is seen as an abstract expanse, place is a particular part of that expanse which is endowed with meaning by people'* (pp. 158). Although prevailing conceptions of place saw it as something fixed, clear and bounded, it is increasingly recognised as unclear, flexible and personal (Lehtovuori, 2000). According to Massey (in Lehtovuori, 2000, pp. 406), place is *'...constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counterposition to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that "beyond". Places viewed this way are open and porous'*. Place is not so much a container of fixed meanings, but an arena for a battle between different meanings.
Approaches to place have suggested the vital importance of a sense of 'belonging' to human beings, a lived connection that binds people and places together (Crang, 1998). It if often suggested that the meaning of place extends beyond the visible and evident and into the realms of emotions and feeling. Here we find the notion of 'genius loci', the unique spirit of a place, to which we can emotionally connect. The relation between people and places is also conceptualised in the notion of lifeworld, *'the culturally defined spatio-temporal setting or horizon of everyday life'* (Buttimer, 1976, in The Dictionary of Human Geography, 2000, pp. 449), or said differently, the totality of an individual person's direct involvement with the places and environment experienced in ordinary life.

3.2.3. Place and Placelessness

According to Relph (1976, pp. 1), *'to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and know your place'*. Relph's book 'Place and Placelessness' is essentially about this human relation to place and is mostly concerned with the apparent inauthenticity of this relationship. For Relph (pp. 64), whose approach to authenticity comes from Heidegger and existentialism, *'an authentic attitude to place is thus understood to be a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places – not mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be, not following stereotyped conventions. It comes from a full awareness of places for what they are as products of man's intentions and the meaningful settings for human activities, or from a profound and unselfconscious identity with place'*. Such an approach would easily render touristic landscapes and the experience of it inauthentic, because experience of such places is highly mediated and predesigned, and in many ways not genuine and true to the complete complexity of the place. Thus he states that an inauthentic attitude to place is nowhere more clearly than in tourism. The landscapes of

tourism are absurd, synthetic 'other-directed places', which are deliberately directed towards consumers and shamelessly mix history, myth, reality and fantasy. An authentic sense of place is above all that of being inside and belonging to *your* place (again this implies connectedness), but for Relph it is clear that an inauthentic attitude of 'placelessness' is widespread and that inauthenticity is the prevalent mode of existence in industrialised and mass societies. So, instead of an authentic insideness, such landscapes promote an 'existential outsideness'; people do not belong to but are alienated from the place. Following a similar line of reasoning, Walsh (1992) argues that the heritagisation of space denies the idea of historical processes across time and space, through its emphasis on surfaces for spectacular consumption. It denies the uniqueness of place and promotes a distancing of people from places.

As authenticity is closely related to the *connection* between the subject and the perceived, such outsideness and alienation lead to a loss of (existential) authenticity. Although this is a very important insight, especially regarded to how people relate to touristic representations of space, sometimes such a phenomenological approach suggests that there is only one true, or authentic relationship to a place, and other relationships are either imperfect or inauthentic (Crang, 1998). Such a line of reasoning tends to be based on dystopian views of modernity and lost authenticity, just like those authors who see exotic cultures as closed, essential systems where tourism can only bring modernity's inauthenticity. Authenticity soon seems to be in previous times and distinct places, and almost impossibly in the here and now. Dovey (1985) however warns us for such an approach and stresses that authenticity is an indigenous process born in the here and now of everyday life. Authenticity in the here and now, for Relph, lies in the '*direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places*', thus in a deep experience of insideness instead of a shallow consumption of other-designed images. Such an authentic sense of place and sense of belonging can be disrupted by the touristification of the landscape, both for tourists and inhabitants. Terkenli (2002, pp. 231) gives an outline of the processes of touristification in the new cultural economy of space:

Processes	Characteristics	Indicative Trends
Enworldment	Encompassing of all worlds in one	Collapse of geographical barriers and boundaries, fusion of lifeworld spheres and of distinctions between nature and culture. The encompassing of all human faculties in the tourist experience
Unworldment	Dissolution of geographical particularity and landscape identity	Inauthenticity, placelessness, loss of the sense of home; the undoing of landscape geographies as we know them so far. Creation of a-geographical landscape forms and functions
Deworldment	Deconstruction, redefinition, decentring	Commercialization, objectification, aesthetization, Disneyfication, the banalization of culture and society. New sets of rules and trends defying common existing practices and conceptualizations of space. Predominance of the virtual and the staged
Transworldment	Dissemination, communication	Rapid turnover in patterns of tourist landscape demand and supply. Widespread, instantaneous flows of landscape images. Landscape replication, globalization

As Terkenli's outline makes clear, the processes of touristification within the contemporary cultural economy of space largely distort previously known relations to space and place. For inhabitants such touristic environments might feel as colonised by others, as inaccurate representations of what was once theirs, as only designed for consumption with a connected loss of other meanings. They can feel emotionally detached from the place and consciously or unconsciously think of them or relate to them as inauthentic. Although authenticity is important in this context, matters more directly related to *connection* (as became clear of central importance to authenticity) might be of more direct importance. Such matters are discussed below.

3.3. Meaningful places

The discussion on authenticity tends to stay philosophical and not so much down to earth. When it comes down to people making sense of their daily environment - in this context the touristic-historic inner city - other related matters might be more important. As described above, there is a chance that people feel disconnected from touristic landscapes, and this could consciously or unconsciously lead to an experience of inauthenticity. As claimed earlier, to reconnect to these places, to make them meaningful again, to increase one's sense of belonging, could counter such a process and even make them more authentic again. To do that people need to appropriate such spaces, through effective participation (Vaz & Jacques, 2006). It implies engagement, involvement and commitment. Then the space becomes directly lived again by its inhabitants, it becomes dynamic, alive and in motion. Touristic-historic inner cities as spectacular, frozen stage-sets lose a bit of its human nature. Thus, Vaz & Jacques (pp. 253) conclude, *'it is only through an effective participation that the public space may cease to be a stage set and transform into an authentic urban stage floor – a space for exchange, conflict and meeting'*. Here, authenticity arises as a 'lively urban culture', true of its own dynamics, spontaneity, creativity and conflict, something also recognised by Stevens & Dovey (2004), Swyngedouw & Kaïka (2003) and Hajer & Reijndorp (2001). Authenticity as an unselfconscious living process, in direct opposition to the freezing effects of heritagisation for tourist consumption. Authenticity within everyday life, in direct opposition to other times and distinct places.

Such living places thrive on participation, appropriation, accessibility and multilayered meanings. Where in touristic-historic inner cities one dominant meaning (the historic city for tourist consumption) dominates all other, alternative meanings and often even destroys them, in an 'authentically' living city a wide variety of meanings is under constant construction and evolution. Although Gotham (2002, 2005), Stevens & Dovey (2004) and Swyngedouw & Kaïka (2003) all recognise that spectacular places not only passify counternarratives, but also possess cracks that offer opportunities for action and critique, they all agree that such cracks open up possibilities towards a more authentic urban culture. Such a place would be accessible for a wide audience of city users that does not feel easily disconnected by a lack of cultural or financial capital or irritation towards tourist domination. Here a need for a sustainable tourism arises that goes beyond simple notions of carrying capacity and overcrowding, and into the emotional spheres of lived experience, empowerment, accessibility, equity, meeting and mutual benefits. A sustainable tourism that results in the production of what Cartier (2002, pp. 3) calls tourist*ed* environments (as opposed to highly tourist*ified* environments), places *'that represent an array of experiences and goals acted out by diverse people in locales that are subject to tourism but which are also places of historic and integral meaning, where leisure/tourism economies are also local economies, and where people are engaged in diverse aspects of daily life'*.

Touristic-historic inner cities tend to have a closed, other-designed, spectacular meaning that tends to reduce one's connection to it as a passive recipient of meanings (e.g. Relph [1976], Vaz & Jacques [2006]). Although it is increasingly recognised that tourists (or anyone) should not be stereotyped as pure passive consumers of other-directed experiences, but can be and are actively involved in producing meaning within their experience (e.g. Meethan [2001], Crouch [2002]), the spectacular touristic landscape is best conceptualised as a possible reducer of that possibility. Nevertheless, a historic inner city as a rich web of historical processes, complexities and accumulation of human existence is in potential a very multilayered, meaningful place. But for the sake of tourism it is commodified into an easy digestible, stereotyped narrative. This implies a loss of experiential depth. Meaningful places are those *'which belong to many systems of meaning, to many 'languages' and are therefore, 'public' or shared. These are the weak places, open, ephemeral and tangential from several points of reference, but not owned by anyone, bounded and essential'* (Lehtovuori, 2000, pp. 408). This is what Lehtovuori calls the strength of weak places. These are lively places, full of urban processes, change and spaces of opportunities. '*Urban reality does not exist, it happens'* (pp. 414).

3.4. Two strategies of authentication

3.4.1. Introduction

In the previous part, place was defined not just as a fixed container of meanings, but more as a dynamic and open arena for the production of a multiplicity of meanings. This tension between confirming fixity and emergent dynamism is also apparent in relation to authenticity. Inspired by Herngreen's (2002) evaluation of regional identity formation, a difference between confirming and unleashing authenticity is conceptualised. Herngreen's confirming strategies are essentialist notions of what the identity is, stays and why and how it differs from others. Unleashing identity is a pluralistic focus on regional identity as inspiration, constantly renewed through interaction and becoming. Essence and meaning are not found, but *created* through interaction between different people.

In combination with the previously explained notions of place, this leads to a conceptualisation of two strategies of authentication: *confirming* authenticity and *unleashing* authenticity. Both strategies are conceptualised in special regard to the following empirical research on the cultural strategies of tapis plein (Bruges) and Urban Laboratory (Tallinn). Prevailing notions of authenticity seemed not to fit the strategies of those cases, so new insight is needed to be able to make sense of their working and ideology.

3.4.2. Confirming authenticity

Confirming authenticity is related to its application in museums. It is about concluding something as genuine, real, original, truly being what it is claimed to be, and often as such protecting it from change through preservation, putting it in a museum, to freeze it in time. In such a context it often is seen as an intrinsic possession. In many ways it's a conservative approach. In relation to culture it is about seeing culture as a static, fixed essence where people connect to. Something to hold on to in times of change. Something to cherish, preserve and teach to following generations. In relation to heritage and inner cities it is about preserving the authenticity of previous times and to safe it from the destruction through contemporary spatial claims. Confirming authenticity is confirming connections and sticking to them. It implicitly or explicitly involves conceptualising change, alteration, creativity and transformation as inauthentic (Wang, 1999). This is the most general approach to authenticity,

but leaves no room for an increasingly identified emergent authenticity within dynamic cultures where meanings and traditions are under constant construction, where old meanings fade, new meanings arise and in the process new types of authenticity can emerge. This is related to unleashing authenticity.

3.4.3. Unleashing authenticity

A second conceptualisation of authenticity sees culture as a lived, dynamic process, with a constant struggle between a multiplicity of meanings. It acknowledges the possibility of authenticity in the here and now and recognises that if we only stick to confirmed authenticity, we leave no room for authenticity that is still in the making. Traditions are often seen as fixed, but it is important to realise that they must have been invented at some point. They are the result of a dynamic culture, they emerged out of lived practise in everyday life and survived as important folk culture or heritage. If you only hold on to such nostalgic notions of authenticity, if we freeze life and space, we offer no contemporary possibilities for emergent authenticity, the production of new cultural heritage. Authenticity is an indigenous process, it is 'produced within' or generated in everyday life. Unleashing authenticity is such an energizing strategy that opens up new possibilities, new connections. It is not so much about authenticity that can be found in a confirmed, fixed state of being, but closely related to an existential process of becoming (Oakes, 2002). Authenticity is not to be found, it is to be created. It involves creativity, spontaneity and conflict. Unleashing authenticity is producing authenticity, capturing authenticity and living authenticity. To come back to traditions, it is about living the traditions. Not re-enacting fixed routines (mere form) but actually living them and this could involve changing them in the process.

Such unleashing authenticity has a problematic relationship to 'connectedness', because connections are much more easily related to fixity and confirmation. Unleashing authenticity is more a *process of connecting*, building bridges, being actively involved, committed or engaged in the production, unleashing and capturing of energy, creativity and new meanings, rather that the state of being *connected*. Such an approach is close to the abovementioned authenticity of a dynamic urban culture. It also concerns letting go of nostalgic notions of a loss of authenticity in contemporary society and a focus on capturing, producing and creating lively, dynamic urban cultures. This involves active involvement in, participation in and appropriation of the here and now as something we actively produce. In the words of Swyngedouw & Kaïka (2003, pp 17), *'both 'alienation' and 'authenticity' need to be recaptured as potentially empowering and mobilizing concepts and practices. Not as remnants from the past that require reconstitution, but rather as possibilities that dwell in the future and are there for the making. Transcending alienation and making 'authenticity' should be seen as social and political projects, as promises that may and can be realized in the future; modernization as a project of making authenticity, of reaching essence.'*

4. Research design & methodology

The research question is: *'What new, more 'activist' strategies can be distinguished that explore and exploit the authentic qualities of touristic-historic inner cities and how can such strategies be conceptualised and evaluated?'*. The theoretical search for the role of authenticity in making sense of touristic-historic inner cities has been dealt with in the previous section. It became clear that the authenticity debate is highly complex and problematic and although of high importance, it does not seem to be very fruitful in making theoretical sense of touristic-historic inner cities. Authenticity, commodification, culture, consumption and tourism have become intertwined in complex ways, and any attempt to separate them has become increasingly irrelevant and artificial (Mommaas, 1997). However, conceptions of authenticity are still very important in how people make sense of their culture and environment within their daily lives. So a search for how authenticity can be a useful concept in this sense remains as important as ever before. A central distinction has been made between the authenticity of representations of space (the production of touristic narratives which encapsulate selected readings of the environment) and the authenticity of the representational space of (a bit simplified) both tourists and local inhabitants, that is space as how it is directly *lived* within everyday life. In special regard to the two case studies that will be dealt with next, two strategies of authentication within the realm of representational space and lived authenticity have been conceptualised, that of *confirming authenticity* and that of *unleashing authenticity*.

The empirical part of this research will now focus on two activist organisations that are actively involved in exploring and exploiting their cities, and by doing so, consciously or unconsciously are dealing with authenticity and the touristic-historic inner city. A study concerning such a local relationship to authenticity needs insights from outside tourism and heritage literature, into the realm of humanistic and cultural geography. From such a perspective, matters such as sense of place, sense of belonging, place-attachment, detachment, alienation and disconnection appear as closely related to authenticity. Such a lived authenticity is derived from the property of connectedness between people and their world. Here, authenticity is less about objective claims to intrinsic qualities and more about emotions and felt connections.

To enrich the theoretical claims on authenticity, the conscious and unconscious role of authenticity within the ideology and practices of tapis plein (Bruges) and Urban Laboratory (Tallinn) has been researched. In other words, the way in which tapis plein and Urban Laboratory explore and exploit the authentic qualities of their touristic-historic inner cities. Tapis plein is young and creative organisation with an aim to create initiatives that open up the everyday heritage to a wide and changing public, on a contemporary, experimental and complementary way. They are also concerned with the tensions that tourism brings to Bruges and its inhabitants. Urban Laboratory is a new organisation set up by Urban Studies students in Tallinn. Their aim is besides promoting academic approaches to urban issues, to create artistic events, performances and experiments with urban space; alternative action and interference into the city scape. Their work is not focused on heritage and tourism, but they do touch this field as well. Tapis plein was chosen as a case study because of their unusual and experimental approach to dealing with heritage and folk culture in fresh and contemporary ways and their critical opinion on the touristification of Bruges. Urban Laboratory was chosen afterwards because they are also critically and experimentally involved with the touristic-historic inner city of Tallinn, but with a different focus. Their main focus is not how heritage

and folk culture still connects to people in contemporary ways, but rather how people actively or passively relate to the urban environment. This difference could be conceptualised as a more socio-cultural focus by tapis plein and a more spatio-cultural focus by Urban Laboratory.

The research was done through an explorative, though in-depth analysis of (1) what they do, (2) what they try to achieve, (3) what their ideological standpoints are, and (4) how this consciously and unconsciously relates to authenticity. The analysis will focus on how their strategies can be conceptualised and evaluated, based upon the previously offered distinction of confirming and unleashing strategies. The main hypothesis is that the practices of tapis plein and Urban Laboratory are best conceptualised as unleashing authenticity and are much less related to traditional approaches of confirming authenticity. This hypothesis is based upon the claim of both organisations to function as a laboratory for innovation and experimentation within their field of action, and personal reflection upon a quick analysis of their working at first sight. The analysis of their practices and ideology will offer more insight into how such unleashing strategies work in practise and thus into how we can conceptualise and evaluate them.

The research on tapis plein has been done - next to the analysis of their written documents - through several individual and focusgroup interviews, by internet telephone in May and a two-day visit to Bruges in July (2007). Since tapis plein has clear written documents on their organisation and its projects, the interviews were mainly concerned with clarification of the precise functioning of the organisation and its projects and especially concerned with the unwritten ideology that grounds their strategies.
The research on Urban Laboratory has been done through several visits to Tallinn in June (2007), where individual and focusgroup interviews were conducted. Urban Laboratory has no written documents (in English) on their organisation, except a written version of a witnessed oral presentation on their ideology that triggered me to take their case for my research in May. Almost all information on Urban Laboratory that is presented in chapter 6 has been gathered through open and semi-structured interviews. The interviews and the analysis were basically concerned with everything there is to know about the organisation: who they are, what they do, what they try to achieve and how this relates to authenticity.

The findings from both cases were analysed in special regard to how the implicit and explicit relationship to authenticity can be conceptualised and evaluated as strategies of authentication on the basis of the theoretical findings. To achieve this, the strategy of unleashing authenticity has been conceptualised in special regard to these cases, since prevailing notions of authenticity did not seem to catch the spirit of both cases completely.

5. Tapis plein, Bruges

5.1. Introduction to Bruges

Bruges is a medium-sized city (more than 117.000 inhabitants) located in the northwest of Belgium. The historic city centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a major touristic attraction. Bruges was a very important city before the 16th century. From then on it fell behind Antwerp and into decay, famously captured in the novel *Bruges-la-Morte* ('Bruges the dead') by Georges Rodenbach. In the last half of the 19th century, Bruges became one of the world's first tourist destinations attracting wealthy British and French tourists. In the 1970s, Bruges started a large-scale renovation of the historical centre that laid the foundation for Bruges as a major touristic attraction, attracting over three million visitors a year.

Bruges has most of its medieval architecture intact, basically because it played no part in the industrial revolution that was so apparent in Belgium. Construction was mostly in Gothic style, what makes Bruges to this day probably the most Gothic city of Europe. Many buildings after that time were build in a similar style - neo Gothic style – and this makes Bruges look older than many of its buildings actually are. Among the major touristic attractions are the Church of Our Lady, the 13th century Belfry, the Beguinage and the canals.

Inner city of Bruges (by Google Maps)

Nowadays, Bruges seems to be mostly a tourist town, with low cultural dynamics compared to other Belgian cities such as Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels. It also has no universities, which implies that a higher educated youth leaves for those other cities, mostly never to return. An initiative to counter the image of being a picturesque, but a rather boring tourist town was made through designation of Bruges as European Capital of Culture in 2002. Although a successful impulse for Bruges, long-term effects on the cultural climate are considered minimal. Tourism-related problems such as overcrowding are important problems within the city, which even resulted in organised activities against tourism. The 'golden triangle', that part of Bruges that is completely dominated by tourism (designated as such to lower tourism impact in other parts), is almost considered a 'no go area' for local inhabitants. Although local inhabitants are considered mainly to be quite happy about Bruges as it is today, tapis plein would like to see Bruges grow more in the direction of a young and dynamic 21st century city that is proud of its historical features, but does not let that dominate and stifle urban life.

5.2. Introducing Tapis plein

"Almost out of necessity, Bruges started to invent tourism. It was something new, they were pioneers. However, at this moment we are the cliché example of heritage tourism, hollow, standardised, lace, chocolate, etc...It would be a great challenge to be this pioneer again, that Bruges would again be a pioneer in actively reinventing the heritage experience in a context of active and creative citizenship in the city. There is an actual hollowing out of the social tissue, the cultural capital, etc....on the long term, this is not a good evolution. The hollowing-out of the tourism experience is not a danger for tourism probably for the next 40 to 50 years. But if you look deeper into the tissue and functioning of the city and its people, there is definitely a problematic issue here." – Jorijn Neyrinck, tapis plein (2007)

Tapis plein is a young and creative organisation with an aim to create initiatives that open up the everyday heritage and folk culture to a wide and changing public, on a contemporary, experimental and complementary way. In their working, they set no limits to what could be considered heritage and folk culture, although they do have some particular themes that they want to address especially. Their work is based on three main working lines and four main working principles (Tapis plein policy plan, 2006). The three main working lines are:

1. *expertise* – tapis plein wants to develop as an expertise centre for contemporary public display of everyday heritage and folk culture in Flanders.
2. *projects* – building expertise through project-cooperations on heritage presentation
3. *education* – an educative line focused on relating heritage to youth

The four main working principles are:

1. Current and contemporary heritage

The heritage from the 20th century that is the focus of tapis plein, is approached with combining elements to the living environment of the target group. An explicit contextualisation and reflexivity to the contemporary is linked to the themes. The presentation of the heritage is done in contemporary ways. The heritage they deal with is mostly intangible (e.g. traditions, dialects, music, recipes, local distinctive features), or tangible heritage that is more easily found on a person's attic rather than in a museum.

2. Laboratory function for innovation of methods and themes in the field

Tapis plein is a young organisation and as such always searching for new tools to relate the heritage to the audience. Tapis plein wants to function as an experimental lab for contemporary folk culture and heritage. Important elements for the contemporary methods of presentation are the multimedial and interdisciplinary approaches in which also artistic elements are incorporated. Tapis plein also want to function as a lab for pioneering in projects on current and new themes in folk culture and heritage (especially collections, everyday urban culture, alternative heritage tourism and image-culture). Finally, a special focus on working for and with youth is added (as a special, not an only target group).

3. The public realm

Tapis plein wants to make heritage accessible for specific target groups or for large parts of the society. The presentation of the heritage is therefore from a layered vision on the (intercultural) heritage participant. The initiatives build on an active focus and participation

from the audience. The public realm is the main forum where such presentations take place, as a means to come to the audience instead making the audience come to them. The community building aspect of heritage is maximized, but with a focus on individual emancipation and creativity.

4. Complementary
It is investigated every time what know-how is available at the partners in projects to create an enriching cooperation around a theme.

Tapis plein wants to build on these four themes to develop a profile of a meeting point in Flanders for good practices and feedback concerning project-based folk culture and heritage presentation. Tapis plein functions therefore as an expertise centre for new presentation methods focused on new themes in the domain of folk culture and heritage. Project pioneering, project guidance, networking, information and reflection concerning contemporary folk culture and heritage sees tapis plein as their assignment for the 21st century.

5.3. Context and ideology

In these times of globalisation and modernisation, tapis plein wants to address themes concerning heritage, folk culture, everyday life and (local, regional, subcultural,...) identity, because they can contribute to a sense of well-being. Although tapis plein wants to stress local and regional cultural identities, they simultaneously focus on the diversity that signifies contemporary society, not as a problem but as a desirable future. The collective memory together with the individual emancipation and creativity of every citizen are the basis for such an intercultural, sustainable society where continuity and selfrenewal go hand in hand. Starting from this context tapis plein's focus *'is mostly on intangible heritage, not so much on objects and monuments. We focus on living things in the city – traditions, dialects, music, recipes, local distinctive features. Such traditions, even though they are constantly in evolution, are in danger of disappearing because of globalisation. We focus on this on a contemporary, fresh way. The big question is, how can you keep it alive, without making it into folklore? There is no magic answer for this, only successful examples. Traditions should live among the people'* (Jorijn Neyrinck, tapis plein, 2007). Of special interest is also a concern for heritage appreciation and awareness among youth.

5.4. History

Tapis plein was started by four people who in their youth already were involved in heritage, especially on the yearly open monument days. There they organised projects in and with empty monuments, basically to increase youth participation on the open monument days and increase the care for heritage among young people in general. That's where the awareness of and concern for the city of Bruges and its heritage first took shape. The main problem that they identified was that Bruges was everything but a dynamic city; rather too polished, too perfect and too much put on display. There were no possibilities for new initiatives and dynamic, contemporary urban life. All the places for young people to have fun slowly disappeared from the inner city and Bruges was more and more perfected as a tourist open-air museum, where it seemed that local initiatives lost from freezing Bruges as a stage-set. One of the main drivers for setting up tapis plein was to counter these nostalgic and conservative cultural politics, with a focus on heritage as something that should be fresh, lived and

contemporary. Heritage as something that still connects to people, that is still meaningful within their everyday life.

Bruges was cultural capital of Europe in 2002. This was the first time that innovating and contemporary initiatives got a chance in the city. The city of Bruges wanted to expand their image of a touristic-historic art town towards a dynamic, contemporary cultural city. The people of yet-to-become tapis plein also were involved in the programme of cultural capital. Although the cultural capital year did some good to Bruges, the long-term effects on a change of cultural politics are considered to be minimal. The people of tapis plein in spé weren't sure whether or not they wanted to return to and live in Bruges, because other cities such as Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels were much more dynamic and interesting. Instead of following the regular pattern of leaving Bruges for an academic education in one of those cities and never to return, they decided to move back to Bruges and actively contribute to a more dynamic, youthful Bruges. That's when tapis plein was started in 2003, *'a young and dynamic project-house that enters the street, neighbourhood, city with playful and varied initiatives. A spicy collective that surprises you with creative actions in the streetscape'*.

The first years they mainly focused on the city of Bruges, especially on the tourism-related problems in the city concerning the stereotype, picturesque, frozen image of Bruges. After those years their projects moved outside of Bruges, to cover the whole of Flanders. Nowadays tapis plein is an officially acknowledged and subsidised organisation for folk culture in Flanders. Tapis plein works with temporary project-based employees and volunteers, so the formation is under constant change.

Since 2003, tapis plein did many projects ranging from exploring unexplored heritage in Zeebrugge, visualising the intangible heritage of Geluveld, exposing the public functions of the defenseworks of Ieper, realising a travelling exhibition project called UN-TOUCHABLE focused on the UNESCO convention for intangible heritage, and many other things such as expositions, study days, congresses, heritage workshops, etc. This chapter will now focus on the two biggest and most relevant projects of tapis plein, 'B-tours' and 'Stadsportaal' (Cityportal).

5.5 B-tours – Tourism and image creation in Bruges

Driven by their irritation about the shallow image that surrounds Bruges as the perfect idyllic, picturesque tourist town or even open-air museum, where people can escape rushing modernity, wander around in previous times in the 'Venice of the North' and ask tourist guides what time it closes, tapis plein made a large-scale multidimensional project around tourism and image creation in Bruges. With the project they wanted to highlight the downside of being the 'perfect' tourist town, namely that this hollow image of Bruges as an open-air museum actually works self confirming. Bruges, although being perfectly clean, beautiful and safe, at the same time seems to be frozen, boring and quiet. For tapis plein this 'perfect' state of being might not be so perfect after all. The B-tours project confronted Bruges with this touristic, romanticised image that dominates and stifles city-life. Thus they asked the question 'Bruges, how to make your souvenirs last longer?' and came up with two main answers. The first relates to urban culture. Bruges desperately needs marginal spaces, temporalities, insufficiencies, footnotes and alternatives that unleash confrontation and communication. Bruges needs to re-invent itself creatively, where contemporary urban culture can develop again and again. The second is related to the cityscape. The outstanding heritage of Bruges deserves a qualitative, contemporary urban answer. The historic aesthetic quality of Bruges has been transformed into a frozen memory; the disneyfication of the inner city. All alternative functions were removed from the tourist city and public space was given shape as a zero-friction space serving to present the monuments as pictures, instead of giving space to

encounters and creativity. Bruges needs a spatial transformation that reflects on, counters, enriches and challenges its historical features.

B-tours was a very multidimensional project, that started in the summer of 2004 and lasted for about year. Tapis plein transformed an old van into the 'tapis plein tour bus', from which they visited the city and collected all kinds of information concerning tourism and image creation in Bruges. One of those actions was 'museum for a day', an empty exhibition space that travelled around Bruges, where people could exhibit their personal belongings. The project resulted eventually in a three month long 'end-state', consisting of exhibitions, projects, competitions and a book.

The central basis of the final three months was a 'travelshop', a multidimensional exhibition concerning (the history of) tourism and image creation in Bruges, that attracted both tourists (who often thought it was a tourist information centre) and local residents. Another big element of the project was a competition for a new and contemporary souvenir for Bruges ('B-cup'). This project was meant to break through the stereotype list of boring, cliché souvenirs (lace, chocolate, etc.) and to think of alternative souvenirs for Bruges, that just as well represent the city, but in fresh and contemporary ways. Connected to this was that tapis plein themselves also created new postcards and a new souvenir to stimulate new and more representations of the city. *'We even made a postcard that didn't even show Bruges, but a different city. Sometimes tourists aren't even sure where they are, they just come to take some pictures and leave again'* (Ellen Vandenbulcke, tapis plein 2007). Another element was an artistic exhibition around the theme in the Concerthall by Jonge Zwanen (Young Swans), a platform for young artists from Bruges (also initialised by tapis plein). Tapis plein also made a questionnaire from which local inhabitants could measure their 'Bruges-coefficient', their relationship to Bruges (see picture below). *'I love Bruges'* are people that uncritically love Bruges as the perfect picture of itself, as a frozen open-air museum. *'I live in Bruges'* are people that have a healthy critical position to their city but do love it as well. *'I use Bruges'* are people that see the economical benefits of tourism. *'I hate Bruges'* are either old people who basically hate everything or young people who are disappointed by the dullness of the city. The questionnaire gave some interesting results to tapis plein, and the participants were offered a temporary tattoo displaying of the results.

A final large element of the B-tours project was the B-tours book (2005). In the book tapis plein gives their opinion on the matter, as described above and the rest of the book consists of a range of essays that mostly criticize the self-fulfilling prophecy of Bruges as a tourist open-air museum.

The main aim of the project was to actively put their concerns about this one-sided, stereotyped image-creation and its implications for urban life in Bruges on the agenda.
An experimental project to rethink tourism, urbanity and culture in 21st century Bruges, to built bridges between culture and tourism, heritage and the contemporary and hosts and guests. To open up Bruges as more than just a picturesque picture, to discover counternarratives. In theoretical terms, this means discussing the tension between touristic representations of space and the representational spaces of both tourists and inhabitants.

5.6 Stadsportaal (Cityportal) – Creating meetings and encounters for the wide city-user

A more recent project is concerned with creating a centre for meeting and encounter in Bruges. Stedenbeleid (a Flemish initiative on urban policy) asked tapis plein to do a research about creating a new meeting place for youth in Bruges, both theoretically as well as searching for real possibilities in the city centre. Since tapis plein was quite free in how to do the project, the focus quickly shifted to a focus on bringing together any kind of audience, especially residents and visitors. Tourists and local residents seem to be co-existing completely segregated in Bruges, with minimal change on interaction. Local residents basically avoid entering the 'golden triangle', a space almost completely colonised by tourism. Thus, tapis plein sees that although the city is rediscovered as visitable space, the social and creative dynamics that could follow this trend seem be absent. Stadsportaal is about creating a place where both tourists and residents would go, of any kind of age or lifestyle. Therefore it should be an open place that offers possibilities and information for everybody and stimulates both small as well as meaningful encounters.
The written report on Stadsportaal (2007) starts with a theoretical analysis of community, urbanity, citizenship and meeting in contemporary, globalising urban society. They conclude that there is a need for a new public domain, to correct the commercialisation of contemporary citizenship and to create new forms of meeting and encounter, to stimulate creativity and to develop a sustainable urban context where the social and economical go hand in hand.
After that follows a collection of interesting examples that offer inspiration for the development of such a meeting place, from which they conclude that the meeting place should be multifunctional and flexible, attract a mixed audience and provide a mix of social, cultural and leisure functions. From the statistical and spatial analysis of Bruges they conclude that there is a need for non-commercial, covered rest- and meeting places where citizens find surprise, meeting, information and culture. This should be on a location where both residents and visitors cross paths, where tourist space and local cultural and leisure facilities overlap.

The rest of the report is focused on how such an open meeting place should look like, what particular functions it should offer and how it should be organised in order to be successful. The place should have a low threshold to enter and offer basic functions such as seatings, toilets, something to eat and to drink, lockers, internet, as well as cultural and social services and active, participatory and education programmes. This wide-ranging offer could include shops, bars, ateliers, multifunctional spaces, exhibitions, library facilities, etc., that address the visitor as both passive recipients as well as active participants, that stimulates creative dynamics and addresses the visitors' curiosity. All of this under the overlapping theme of 'life

and leisure in the city', with a special focus on meeting between hosts and guests in Bruges. Also, Stadsportaal would exist always in a 'process of becoming' instead of 'a state of being'. The place should actively keep reinventing itself in order to keep fitting the needs of the audience. The pre-study has been accepted and given more subsidy to further investigate the concrete possibilities of the project.

Stadsportaal is a study focused on developing a sustainable urbanity in Bruges that makes the city an interesting, dynamic place to live for residents and offers potential for contemporary meeting, encounter, creative selfrenewal and evolution. This sustainable urbanity addresses the city user not just as consumer but also as active participant, offers stimulating experiences and surprises, connects inhabitants to the wider city user, addresses different levels of engagement and altogether builds towards a communal urban project for 21st century urbanity. Many of such urban qualities as creativity, spontaneity and selfrenewal seem to be stifled in Bruges, as a result of conservative cultural politics aimed at remaining the dominant narrative of Bruges as a quiet, picturesque tourist town. The meeting place that hopefully results from the Stadsportaal pre-study would be a first step towards creating such an urbanity in Bruges, by providing a place that appeals to the wide city-user and encourages ambivalent encounters.

5.7 Conclusion - tapis plein, Bruges & authenticity

Authenticity related to the practices and ideology of tapis plein and Bruges can be summarised in relation to two main steps that they wish to achieve. The first step would be to break through the dominant narrative of Bruges as the perfect, idyllic, picturesque tourist town that at the same time actually seems to be functioning as a frozen memory, a perfect picture of itself with no room for urban dynamics. To break through this self-fulfilling prophecy of seeming to be an open-air museum, by increasing awareness, opening up counternarratives and creating new possibilities and encounters. It is here where authenticity lies and not in maintaining an 'authentic' image of medieval Bruges. In other words, the working of tapis plein opens up cracks in the tourist spectacle and such cracks open up possibilities towards a more authentic urban culture. The second step is then to create a young and dynamic urban culture, where creativity and spontaneity have an actual chance in the city centre and are not banished to more peripheral areas. As said before, tapis plein believes that Bruges desperately needs marginal spaces, temporalities, insufficiencies, footnotes and alternatives that unleash confrontation and communication. Bruges needs to re-invent itself creatively, where contemporary urban culture can develop again and again. For tapis plein, it is here where authenticity lies, in the dynamics of everyday life and culture, and not in perfecting Bruges as a frozen memory.

This aspect of authenticity as something *lived* is one that holds through in the entire working of tapis plein, also outside Bruges. For them, '*authenticity is not about a nostalgic return to how it was in the past. It's about a place that lives, where the local context is still alive. We shouldn't mix up authenticity with nostalgia and history. It's not authentic because it's old. It's authentic when it comes from the people, who live somewhere and give contemporary meanings to such things. It's about diversity in different places. When a place is only a touristic image, it loses its authenticity. Then it becomes a projection. It should be 'from the people' as well*' (Jorijn Neyrinck, tapis plein 2007). Heritage becomes authentic when it belongs and connects to the people. This is connected to a lived authenticity, where traditions that are alive could also change in the process. That would not render them inauthentic, the fact that they are dynamic and alive makes them authentic. When heritage and folk culture is put on display in a museum, it loses its connection to lived culture. The same is true for the entire city of Bruges. Since it is considered to be a city on display, as if being a museum, it

loses the connection to its people. They in return can feel alienated from their living environment that seems to be focused not on its own inhabitants, but on the consuming power of tourists.

The practices of tapis plein are best conceptualised as strategies of unleashing authenticity. Although their themes mainly focus on relating people to heritage and folk culture (as predominantly historical assets), they always do so in contemporary, new and fresh ways. They don't want to confirm identity and authenticity by educating people on their roots. Instead, they relate people to their heritage to increase social dynamics and a sense of well-being. How people appropriate folk culture and heritage should be about unleashing creativity, inspiration and interaction and not about confirming local or regional identities. Although the latter is an important factor within the working of tapis plein, they also stress that they focus on the intercultural heritage participant within an increasingly diverse society. The collective memory together with the individual emancipation and creativity of every citizen are the basis for such an intercultural, sustainable society where continuity and selfrenewal go hand in hand. Authenticity in this context involves active involvement in, participation in and appropriation of the here and now as something we actively produce and in which heritage and folk culture are meaningful to people within their everyday lives. In relation to Bruges, authenticity is found in a touristic-historic inner city that is still meaningful to its local inhabitants, where hosts and guests can co-exist and even have meaningful encounters. A place that is shared and not just colonised by tourism, where the local benefits from tourism and the other way around. A culturally vibrant Bruges that ceases to be a stage-set, and starts to be an authentic, urban stage floor.

6. Urban Laboratory, Tallinn

6.1 Introduction to Tallinn

Tallinn has approximately 400.000 inhabitants and is the capital city of Estonia. The cultural dynamics that this implies makes Tallinn a totally different city than Bruges. However, Tallinn's Old Town is quite similar to the historical centre of Bruges. It is also an UNESCO World Heritage Site and developing as a major touristic attraction.

In the Middle Ages, Tallinn (known as Reval) had a highly strategic position at the crossroads of trades between Western and Northern Europe and Russia and was dominated by different nationalities. Since Estonia was re-established as an independent republic in 1991 and more recently through its accession to the European Union, Tallinn became easily accessible for tourists.

The major attractions are in the two Old Towns, Lower Town and Toompea (Cathedral Hill), although they are commonly referred to as Old Town together. Toompea, located on a limestone hill next to Lower Town, was a separate town from Tallinn until 1878. Among the main touristic attractions are the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Town Hall Square, St Olaf Church and the well preserved town walls and towers.

21st century Tallinn is a lively and dynamic city, but developments other than tourism are taking place outside the boundaries of Old Town. This part of the city developed as a touristic enclave within the wider city. It still has local functions such as schools and office spaces, but is mostly dominated by restaurants and bars focused on tourist consumption. If one enters Old Town it is as walking into previous times, supported by restaurant advertisers in medieval costumes. The image of Tallinn as a picturesque, medieval tourist town is further

Tallinn's Old Town (by Google Maps)

emphasized in the contemporary campaign targeted at becoming European Capital of Culture in 2011 hat holds the slogan 'Everlasting Fairytale'. The image of Tallinn as a perfect, picturesque tourist town keeps growing and related notions of Tallinn as a 'disneyfied open-air museum' grow simultaneously with that. Although local inhabitants still visit Old Town, it is increasingly becoming an external place within the city, a place that you only visit once in a while, as if a tourist. Local bars that still (want to) serve local inhabitants disappear out of sight for tourists, behind closed doors and in cellars, thus figurally and literally becoming 'underground'.

6.2. Introducing Urban Laboratory

'Across the street there is a house that is under heritage protection. It is owned by a Japanese guy who wants to turn it into apartments or at least to modify the current structure. This is impossible because of the heritage-status, so now the building just stands there rotting. It's empty, in many ways meaningless. Nevertheless it has an acknowledged 'cultural status'. The appartmentcomplex that houses Urban Laboratory has no such status. But it has an intriguing history and now it houses various cultural and artistic people and organisations. This building has no cultural status and the owner will remove the inhabitants to refurbish the flats to more expensive apartments.
The sense of place should be acknowledged, the spirit, the genius loci. Even though you can argue that it's always there. A strange, meaningless, dead spirit is also a sense of place.' – Rasmus Kask, Urban Laboratory (2007)

Urban Laboratory (Linnalabor in Estonian) is a young organisation run by three Geography and Urban Studies students in Tallinn. Their aim is besides promoting academic approaches to urban issues, to create artistic events, performances and experiments with urban space; alternative action and interference into the city scape. Their work is not directly focused on heritage, tourism and authenticity, but they do touch this field as well. The organisation is still quite under development; they have no clear aims and themes which they want to address, instead they pick up issues that they encounter on a daily basis in Tallinn that they find interesting and start a project from there. They define their organisation as followed:

'Urban Laboratory –
Is what it does
Creates itself by doing what it does
Is what its members are
Is what it is by the way it works'

Sander Tint and Rasmus Kask started a NGO called Urban Positive in 2006. The NGO officially is there to 'promote human geography'. They started the NGO because they wanted a structure to organise their ideas and activities related to urban issues and the influence they wanted to create. The main goal was *'to see where we could get'*, mainly inspired by al the things they saw that could be done differently. Later on, Regina Viljasaar joined Urban Laboratory. The establishment of the lab as a physical space made their thoughts more concrete. The way they work is about learning, internal development and the process of forming an organisation. The structure needs to remain free and spontaneous. There is not a single, spoken through ideology from which the lab works. The individuals have their own, and the discussions about them are seen as a learning process. So there could even be contradictory standpoints within the organisation, and within the projects. This is not seen as problematic, but as learnful. Urban Laboratory wants to remain independent, free, and with the possibility to be politically incorrect. This issue of being independent from the influence of others is a strong issue within the ideology of the organisation. The lab – the core – is three persons, it's the driving force, but they are not the leaders per se. *'We are the coordinators, the tools, the oil in the projects.'*
The urban issues that they deal with are not structured into specific themes that they address, but could be about anything. Nevertheless, a strong theme within their ideology is that of relating people to their daily lived environment, making them aware of things that are normally taken for granted, opening up alternatives and deeper relations to the environment and thereby increasing the well-being, place-attachment and sense of belonging of the people. Similarly this ideology can be conceptualised as to counter processes of detachment and

alienation by raising awareness and opening up possibilities connect to and actively self-create their daily living environment.

6.3 Research and Activism

The two main pillars that structure the organisation are research and activism. Although they are not two completely separate things, they will be discussed independently. The research part is about promoting academic approaches to urban issues and developing the Lab as an independent expertise centre. One reason for doing so is because they more than often find the urban planning developments of Tallinn unsatisfactory. They want to raise awareness of how the city planning works and open up discussions on doing things differently, and promote more social and critical approaches to urban planning. Another reason is that they are unhappy about the fact that the urban interested people in Estonia are a very closed community where everybody knows each other and where the universities are competing for money and students. They want to be independent from this structure and promote urban issues from a different perspective. Urban Laboratory, as the name implies, wants to function as a laboratory for critical and innovative approaches to urban issues. Furthermore, their personal (combined) library will grow bigger, they want to accommodate foreign students and eventually become a sort of meeting centre for students and professionals concerned with urban issues. One part of developing as an expertise centre will be working as consultants, where now most of their projects are self-initialised and without any money.

The activism part focuses on direct action to open up discussions, giving alternatives and developing more human and critical approaches that in some way or another bring people in better contact with they daily environment, raises awareness and stimulates participation. The main motivation for organising projects is personal interest in the subject and not always a quest for a certain result. Most of the projects are lead by one person of Urban Laboratory and involves people outside the organisation as well. Sometimes the others don't know much about such personalised projects and focus on their own projects. At this point, their activities are best described as 'a hobby, but more than just a hobby', while learning how to set up an organisation. The projects are about personal interests, self-learning, and being involved in social activism. Eventually they would like to earn enough money to finance the projects, thus work as a non-profit organisation with actual money flows.

6.4 Projects

Because of the lack of proffesionalisation and internal organisation, the best way to describe Urban Laboratory is by describing the projects that they do. After a summation of all their projects, the projects that deal with Old Town and tourism and their opinion on this matter in particular will be dealt with in more detail.

Urban Zoo - One of the first projects was trying to improve attachment to the natural environment of Tallinn. Personal observation noticed that parks and other green areas in Tallinn are considered as mere spectacles of passive enjoyment for the citizens and real engagement to them is not taken into account in planning. The project was called Urban Zoo or Zoo of Nature, implying the similarity of looking at nature and plants in the urban environment to gazing at animals in zoos. Besides lending themselves to people as a possibility for passive recreation, parks could serve as an active social space and *locus* of personal emotional attachment, which could be taken into account in the planning process as well. The event itself meant putting up sheets of paper on 160 trees, bushes and smaller plants

containing information about their lifespan, commercial and medicinal use. The goal was to make citizens reflect on the use value of vegetation in the urban settlements and hope that they would come to conclude that it can offer more alternatives for personal activities and attachment than just a pleasant gaze: protection from rain, shade in sunny days, ecological islands for fauna, ingredients for tea or a place to meet with friends.

Urban Agriculture – Another project is related to this theme and is concerned with promoting urban agriculture, promoting nature in the urban environment and with being environmental friendly. Such a movement is growing in Tallinn and Urban Laboratory wants to promote it.

Soviet Blocks - Urban Laboratory tried to improve the aesthetic quality of a motorway in one of Tallinn's (unappealing) Soviet high-rise neighbourhoods. By planting seeds of the Poppy flower next to the motorway they hoped that the area would gain much more colour and because of the spreading nature of the Poppy flower, their action would spread quickly across neighbouring areas. Unfortunately it was a bad year and nothing grew out of the seeds.

Lasnamäe Industrial Area - In one project Urban Laboratory is working together with the City Council, where they give their alternative visions of the redevelopment of the Lasnamäe industrial area. The City Council wanted to redevelop the area as a monofunctional industrial area, but Urban Laboratory claims that this is not sufficient, and instead they focus on how to open up the area as a public space. They see that area as alienated from the wider city user and want to make it a more human friendly and visitable area. Their thoughts are highly welcomed within the redevelopment project.

Childcare - The biggest project Urban Laboratory is involved in, is concerned with the problem that urbanisation in Estonia has brought many families on a small space, but the childcare system is not yet ready to deal with such amounts. Urban Laboratory gives their approach to the problem, with as a major goal to reform the planning process. They claim that just planning how many child care places there should be built before 2012 does not solve the problem. Instead of giving numbers and statistics, they want to develop tools or mechanisms to deal with the problem in certain situations.

Soundscapes – Urban Laboratory works together with a musical sociologist and a media master's students on recording the sounds of the city as a historical archive. The project is driven by pure interest in the subject and the fact that such techniques have not been used in Estonia before. A possible result could be a booklet, a coffeetablebook.

Urban Cookbook for Direct Action – An initiative to develop a database where activist events and recipes for urban intervention are listed. At this point it is an internet blog where people can add and discuss ideas. The aim is to promote grassroots democracy in urban space by providing a list or 'cookbook' for activism.

Urban Stage Blog – Another blog which is in Estonian and not in English, is concerned with Estonian matters. It exists in cooperation with a newspaper and the aim is to publish online stories about all kinds of Estonian (urban) issues.

Squatting – It is not yet certain how this project will take shape, but Urban Laboratory wants to show the role and uses of squatting. An idea for the project is to make it into a reality show where different properties are squatted and then see what will happen and who will be removed from the property.

Sunday City Project – A project aimed at bringing 'play' back into the urban environment. It's about promoting playing games in the city and making people to leave their houses and do something fun outside. On a deeper level, seeing the urban environment as a playground opens up new interpretations of things that otherwise aren't noticed. Some normally unnoticed spots suddenly become possible hiding spots when playing hide and seek. This produces new meanings of and new connections to urban space.

Some other ideas for projects are (1) giving a course in Human Geography for kids (partly as smooth propaganda for their way of thinking), (2) making City Council plans public to those who are concerned and promoting participation in decision-making, (3) organising traditional community events where local community does things together for communal benefit and community building, (4) an evening for urban poetry, (5) a series of seminars on analysing master plans together with a professor and finding hidden agendas and approach implications through discourse analysis, and (6) organise open-air cinema nights with discussion afterwards.

6.5. Old Town and tourism

As became clear, Urban Laboratory focuses on almost any kind of urban affairs, and living in Tallinn this also implies dealing with Old Town and tourism. The main project that relates to this theme is called 'Alternative Mapping of Old Town', a project that is active at this moment of writing. As the name implies, the project is concerned with the making of an alternative map, or even a non-map, as in direct opposition to other-designed touristic, selected readings of the environment. Urban Laboratory asked students to draw personal maps of Old Town, maps that show personal memories, connections to and interpretations of places in Old Town. For instance the location of someone's first kiss. Urban Laboratory gathered the most interesting features of these maps, to combine them on one final map. That map will eventually look like a real tourist map and will be spread around Old Town. One basic assumption was that such a representation of the city is no less real than any other (touristic) representation of it.

Besides personal representations of the city, the map will show exercises or rather ideas that could influence how you practise tourism, such as for instance a Situationist *dérive* ('drifting'), in which you keep walking a fixed routine (e.g. 'keep repeating first right, second left'), basically as a means of getting lost and encountering unexpected places and experiencing the city not just from the fixed tourist routine. The basic aim of such exercises is that maps usually tell you where to go, what to see and what to do. Urban Laboratory wants to stress that it is more important how you do it and most important that you should experience the city on your own and not let the experience be mediated and other-designed. This is, for them, the most authentic experience of a place. Therefore, the map should encourage *self-explorance* and not be a better or alternative map that shows 'the real Tallinn'. In that case the personal (authentic) experience gets distorted and other-designed anyway. Thus, it is rather a non-map than an alternative map, because its main aim is the direct opposite of a normal tourist map, basically *not* telling you where to go, what to see and what to do. The map questions other maps and how maps represent the city and structure your tourist experience. It invites reflection and opens up alternatives and new perspectives. In the words of Urban Laboratory (2007)*, 'Old Town is always represented by someone. You have to do this, this and this in order to really see it. You don't have to! You would be better off if you would stop worrying about getting the 'right' image of Tallinn. Tallinn is what you make of it, the experience that you get of it. Authenticity is what you feel of the city without others telling you*

what it is. Tourism is about constructing the city for someone else, instead of experiencing it yourself. The city always is. When you construct an image it looses some authenticity. Authenticity is not about the real, but about the connection. Connection with some depth. Not just consuming the spectacle, like with wrestling, where you know its fake but you like it anyway. Authenticity is really connecting to things deeply'. – Rasmus Kask

Another project that concerns Old Town and tourism is 'Graffiti in Old Town'. Urban Laboratory wants to make graffiti art works of things that are absent in Old Town, but normally belong there. Things that used to be part of the city, but are missing in a 'plastic city'. *'Such things could for instance be cracks in the walls, bird nests, rats, a broom, a cleaning lady, playing children, a doorbell, an old ragged ball. Marginal things that are being swept out of the plastic city'* (Regina Viljasaar, Urban Laboratory 2007). Such elements stress the lost *use-value* of Old Town as a place where people live, and the remainance of a shallow *gaze-value* for touristic consumption. Through the renovation, Old Town has become a doll house for them, a space that is only there 'on display'. The houses are being renovated and made really beautiful, but at the same time they are stripped of their true atmosphere.

6.6 Conclusion - Urban Laboratory, Tallinn & authenticity

'I had my high school here [Old Town] so I was here everyday. For me it has always been an inconvenient place to be because of the trendy and poshy people. After university I got to know Old Town again, I discovered Old Town again. It's so easy to avoid, to go not straight through it, but around it, like by tram to other people. There are so many noisy people, it's just not a convenient place. But rediscovering it has been really interesting. It's so easy to put Old Town behind you, off the map. You don't need to go there, you get your stuff from other places, you live in another city district. To get the picture of it as a Disneyland is so simple but to destroy that picture is also so simple, just through everyday practice. If I force myself to go to the Old Town, I think it goes away quite easily, this annoying image. Noisy people speaking foreign languages and being drunk and so on. You find your own Old Town again, that's really important. This switching is really easy.' – Sander Tint, Urban Laboratory (2007)

Tallinn's Old Town has become a touristic enclave within the wider city. Through its transformation into tourist space it is put 'on display', which in a way turns it into 'a doll house', a perfect picture of itself. According to Urban Laboratory it changed from a daily place to a festive place for Tallinners. A special place where you go once in a while to meet friends. It is a place that you can easily avoid. There is no need to visit it within the daily life of local people, instead for special occasions. Since it is so easily off the map, a close connection to the place is quickly lost. In a sense, it thus belongs more to tourists than to Tallinners, although this should not be overstressed. Being the capital city of Estonia, Tallinn is a lively and dynamic city and this also affects cultural life in the Old Town. There are bars and clubs that are 'underground', not easily found by or inaccessible for tourists and serving an Estonian public. The leisure facilities also still attract a local audience and there are still other local facilities left such as schools and office spaces.

What the quote above indicates is that a more authentic relation to Old Town that is lost through its transformation into tourist space, can be easily refound through appropriation of the place. The switching between a passive relationship to Old Town and a deeper personal relationship to Old Town might be easier than imagined at first. As already said in the theoretical part, we do not need to choose between consumers being spectators on a stage set, or actors on a stage floor. In fact, these social positions are in constant flux, we mediate

between them. We have an actual choice in which position we prefer, while the spectacular environment of the touristic-historic inner city is best understood as a possible reducer of that choice. Such a position shift often needs a trigger. The practices of urban actors such as Urban Laboratory and tapis plein might function as such, as they are actively involved in relating people to their environment. This then might work as a process of authentication. Old Town would gain a wider use-value, something that is considered to be more authentic by Urban Laboratory than a mere gaze-value. This use-value implies that it becomes more alive, a place that lives through and among its inhabitants and not just through tourist consumption. Again, a lively urban culture appears as something authentic and the lack of it within the 'disneyfied museum-city' as inauthentic.

Another important element of authenticity related to the practices and ideology of Urban Laboratory is closely related to Relph's work on an authentic connection to place, that is *'a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places – not mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be, not following stereotyped conventions. It comes from a full awareness of places for what they are as products of man's intentions and the meaningful settings for human activities, or from a profound and unselfconscious identity with place'*. The fact that tourist experience is often shallow and other-designed renders it in- or less authentic. Urban Laboratory's alternative or non-map is a tool to encourage an unmediated self-explorance as a deeper and more authentic experience of Tallinn. It doesn't matter what that experience of Tallinn consists of, because Tallinn always *is*. Any experience of it is a part of it and anyone telling you what that experience should be, makes it less authentic. The representation of Tallinn as a picturesque, medieval town mediates and distorts such a personal, authentic experience.

The practices of Urban Laboratory often involves opening up alternative meanings, new perspectives, counternarratives and especially new and closer relationships to the urban environment. Such practices can be understood as strategies of unleashing authenticity. The taken-for-grantedness of features in everyday life are questioned, which opens up possibilities for new interpretations, new connections and therefore emergent authenticity. Besides producing new connections, Urban Laboratory is concerned with deeper connections, as they believe that it is there where true authenticity lies. Spectacular touristic representations of the city reduces the possibility for such a deep connection, hence leading to alienation. Authenticity lies in deepening that connection, in producing more meaningful relationships with the urban environment.

Conclusion

This research can be considered an attempt to make sense of the wide range of meanings of authenticity in relation to touristic-historic inner cities, such as those of Bruges and Tallinn. A general theme within that search was to find more authentic realities beyond prevailing notions of authenticity within tourism analysis. A search for authenticity as how it relates to people, consciously or unconsciously, within their daily lives and a search for the authenticity in relation to urban culture within those landscapes of tourism that are increasingly identified as 'disneyfied open-air museums'. This implied a search beyond literature on tourism and into the realm of humanistic and cultural geography.

The research question was *'What new, more 'activist' strategies can be distinguished that explore and exploit the authentic qualities of touristic-historic inner cities and how can such strategies be conceptualised and evaluated?'*. To answer this question, first the role of authenticity in making theoretical sense of touristic-historic cities was dealt with in the first three chapters. It became clear that although authenticity is closely related to commodification and spectacularisation, it needs to be put in a wider perspective to unfold its wide spectrum of meanings in different contexts. Although commodification is often seen as a destroyer of authenticity, the relationship between authenticity and commodification is much more complex. Differing opinions on this matter are often grounded in the amount of trust put in the consumer's capabilities of making sense of commodities and touristic landscapes. This is also linked to the presence or absence of trust in the values of mass culture. Another important difference is the amount of trust in the manifestations of modernity and modern capitalism as being perhaps a true way of life, or merely an alienating, disrupting and dystopian force.

Commodification and spectacularisation are best understood not as destroyers of local culture, but as possible reducers of the possibilities that people have in actively making sense of environment and culture. The spectacular tourist landscape reduces the rich and complex ways in which people can connect to that environment, through the passifying nature of its dominant communication of meanings. The tourist spectacle is based upon stereotypes, clichés and simple narratives of space that address the visitor as a passive recipient of meanings. However, we do not need to choose between consumers being spectators on a stage set or actors on a stage floor. These social positions are in constant flux, we mediate between them. We have an actual choice in which position we prefer, while the spectacular environment of the touristic-historic inner cities is best understood as a possible reducer of that choice.

Authenticity within tourism analysis can be distinguished in at least four interrelated discussions: authenticity as a motive for tourism, authenticity as an experience, object-related authenticity and authenticity and commodification. Within these discussions, three approaches to authenticity can be distinguished: objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity is its museum-usage whereby a toured object can defined as real, genuine, original and thus authentic and therefore should be experienced as such. Constructive authenticity involves the social construction of something as authentic, a value ascribed to the toured object. In this sense it's much more relative and negotiable. Within tourism, authenticity is often about confirming stereotyped images and expectations and less about experiencing objective authenticity. In this sense, constructive authenticity becomes a symbolic authenticity. Finally, existential authenticity refers to a true, genuine state of being, where one is true to oneself within one's relation to the world. Authenticity within the daily life of people is close to such existential authenticity and much more connected to an emotional level, coloured by feelings of connection, remembrance, nostalgia and romance. When analysing authenticity in the relationship of local inhabitants to their touristic-historic

inner cities and in authenticity related to the organisations of tapis plein and Urban Laboratory, it is such an approach that is the most helpful. This is authenticity related to the representational spaces of people, space as how it is directly *lived* and coloured by emotions.

Claims on authenticity in relation to representations of space – touristic narratives of space – are problematic because objective criticisms are focused on the inauthenticity of such representations in relation to the real, authentic physical world. However, as Dovey already argued in 1985, authenticity should not be seen as a condition of things or places (since this leads to problematic and contested claims), but rather as a condition of connectedness in the relationship between people and their world. Tensions between representations of space and representational spaces distort that condition of connectedness.

Two strategies of authentication were conceptualised, that of confirming authenticity and of unleashing authenticity. Confirming authenticity is about conservative claims on established authenticity, on fixity and origin, holding on to that possession and safeguarding it from change. Such an approach implicitly or explicitly involves conceptualising change, alteration, creativity and transformation as inauthentic. This is the most common approach to authenticity, closely related to its museum-usage of establishing objective authenticity of artefacts. A second conceptualisation of authenticity however sees culture as a lived, dynamic process from which authenticity can emerge as indigenous within everyday life. Unleashing authenticity is an energizing strategy that opens up new connections and sees authenticity not as something to be *found*, but as something we *produce*. It has to be captured and fought for through involvement, engagement and appropriation within the creativity and spontaneity of urban life. It is especially this second type of authentication that is important when making sense of these landscapes of tourism, where distinctions between authenticity and inauthenticity have blurred to such a degree that previous approaches authenticity seem increasingly unuseful. Here, authenticity unfolds as a possible tool for capturing and creating new meaningful encounters, connections and activities within touristic environments, instead of a self-destructive search for intrinsic authentic qualities.

The empirical research focused on how authenticity relates to the practices and ideology of two activist organisations in Bruges and Tallinn in order to conceptualise and evaluate such cultural strategies. It is unleashing authenticity that captures the practices and ideology of tapis plein and Urban Laboratory best. Their working is often about opening up new meanings, new connections, alternatives and counternarratives. Their efforts can be described as opening up cracks in the spectacle that offer possibilities for more authentic, lively urban cultures. For both tapis plein and Urban Laboratory as well as several authors, is it precisely there - in urban culture – where authenticity lies, and it is the lack of the dynamics, creativity and conflict inherent in urban culture that is missing in touristic 'open-air museums'. Thus it is there where inauthenticity is found and not in objective claims on the inauthenticity of the space itself and/or its dominant touristic representation. Inauthenticity comes from the self-fulfilling prophecy of functioning as a frozen open-air museum, by restricting the inborn urban dynamics and the emergent authenticity that is indigenous to such culture.

Since authenticity is best conceptualised as the condition of connectedness between people and environment, it is also at the level of a felt disconnection from the tourist space, that authenticity plays an important role in regard to local inhabitants, and not in objective claims on the inauthenticity of the tourist setting. The practices of tapis plein and Urban Laboratory might improve such a connection, because they actively relate people to their daily environments and stimulate active participation, engagement and involvement. Such practices

can trigger a position shift from a passive relationship to culture and environment to a deeper, more meaningful connection. By offering alternative representations of and relations to space, tapis plein and Urban Laboratory might open up places as weak places; places that are open and belong to many systems of meanings. This stimulates the production of what Cartier calls tourist*ed* environments: places *'that represent an array of experiences and goals acted out by diverse people in locales that are subject to tourism but which are also places of historic and integral meaning, where leisure/tourism economies are also local economies, and where people are engaged in diverse aspects of daily life'*. The strategies of unleashing authenticity offered by tapis plein and Urban Laboratory are above all about creating *lived connections* to heritage, folk culture and the urban environment that are meaningful within everyday life.

This leads to the following conceptualisation of unleashing authenticity as a cultural strategy based upon the insights of both the theoretical and empirical exploration:

FOUNDATION
- Such strategies are based upon seeing culture as dynamic, in flux and under eternal negotiation with room for emergent authenticity, instead of seeing culture as a fixed essence that needs to be preserved from change.
- Similarly, a spatial reflection of this assumption implies seeing places as dynamic systems or battlefields for meanings instead of fixed containers of essence.
- This implies that the dynamics, creativity and conflicts that are inherent in urban culture are seen as desirable and true assets of contemporary life.

PRACTICES
- Unleashing strategies involve opening up alternatives, new perspectives, counternarratives and new connections through the production, unleashing and capturing of energy, creativity and new meanings.
- Such practices might produce or recapture deeper connections to heritage, culture and environment through functioning as a facilitator or spark that enables people to switch from a passive to an active position towards heritage, culture and environment.

IMPLICATIONS
- This implies that authenticity is not something to be found, but something that we actively produce within the indigenous processes of everyday life.
- This is a lived authenticity, where the connections it relates to are alive and meaningful within everyday life and are allowed to change in the process.

POTENTIAL
- Such unleashing strategies can be potentially empowering. Authenticity as something we capture and fight for, as possibilities that dwell in the here and now, and in the future. This in contrast to dystopian notions of lost authenticity and the self-destructive search for authenticity in previous times and distinct places.

This implies that such strategies of unleashing authenticity could be evaluated upon the following factors:

- What is the actual effect of such unleashing strategies? Do such strategies in practice actually result in the production of open, 'weak', shared, tourist*ed* and meaningful places or are the results in practice minimal?
- Do such strategies really contribute to recapturing and producing new and/or deeper connections between people, culture and environment or are the results in practice minimal?

- Beyond the question if it actually achieves such results, the question how such results could be measured is highly problematic. Such achievements are vague contributions to people's well-being and sense of belonging while simultaneously emphasising the *lived* and dynamic character of such connections in opposition to confirming strategies. Measuring contributions to such a lived authenticity within dynamic urban cultures would be extremely difficult.
- Evaluating the power of unleashing strategies in contributing to authenticity and connectedness between people, culture and environment should be done in comparison to the power of confirming strategies. Conservative strategies that emphasise clearly defined connections as a form of identity and authenticity confirmation might be more powerful and are more easily graspable, communicated and therefore measurable. The ideology of unleashing strategies is less clear and this could influence the strength of possible achievements.
- However, in relation to countering the felt self-fulfilling prophecy of touristic-historic inner cities as 'disneyfied open-air museums' that tends to freeze life, space and urban dynamics, it are especially such unleashing strategies (and not confirming strategies) that can be successful, even though measuring such achievements would be extremely difficult.
- It is important to realise that both tapis plein and Urban Laboratory do not stress certain measurable results as the main motivation for and evaluation of their strategies. This implies that unleashing strategies that open up new perspectives and offer counternarratives do not necessarily have to lead to certain results beyond that. It is rather about confronting situations, putting them on the agenda and *offering possibilities* for reflection.

Further research is needed first to analyse how local inhabitants relate to their (European or Western) touristic-historic inner cities, and how and why this relationship gets distorted through the processes of touristification. An analysis of this relation through a large number of questionnaires was unfortunately beyond the scope of this research, and although some insight is gathered in how to conceptualise that relationship, the statements that concern this need to be tested empirically to prove their value. Secondly, since this research was mainly explorative on how to conceptualise unleashing strategies of authentication, less could be said about how to effectively evaluate such strategies in terms of actual achievements. Such an analysis remains to be done and needs to be grounded upon more insight in the previously mentioned relationship between local inhabitants and their touristified environment. This also implies further thinking on how to conceptualise connectedness, sense of place and sense of belonging in relation to urban culture and lived authenticity, that especially stresses the importance of such a relationship as something that is in motion instead of fixed. It is such an approach to authenticity that could offer new insights within the lengthy discussion of authenticity, culture and tourism.

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