The tourist-city in transition: Reconstructing local neighborhoods as new urban tourism spaces

An analysis of Airbnb-listings in Berlin

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Agenda

1 Introduction
2 Theory and research questions
3 Methodological approach
4 Empirical results
5 Discussion

Boom of Berlin tourism

- Boom of urban tourism – both at tourist hotspots and in new urban tourism areas
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New Urban Tourism

- City-users (Martinotti 1999) change behavior – off the beaten track and new urban tourism
- Visitors venture into *off the beaten track areas*:
  - “taking part in the city’s everyday life is often central to the tourist experience” (MAITLAND 2008)

Integration:
- Search for authentic experiences + immersion in “local” everyday life (PAPPALDROPO et al. 2010, 2014), i.e., through using Airbnb-accommodations
- De-differentiation (Urry 1995): Blurring boundaries between work/leisure, home/away
- Reciprocal transgression (PAPPALDROPO et al. 2014): Residents behave like tourists + vice versa

Distinction:
- Awareness of own tourism performances (Edensor 1998) + distinction from mass tourists (McCabe 2005; Freytag 2010)

New Urban Tourism: consequences

- Development of *new urban tourism areas* (MAITLAND 2010; FÜLLER/MICHEL 2014) outside the Central Tourist Districts (DE HAMPSHIRE 1981; DUHAINE/ENARDOU 2007) in residential neighborhoods
- Protest and resistance in the tourist city (COLOMAS/BOVY 2017); tourism gentrification (Gravari-Barbas/Guinand 2017)

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Tourist City Model

The tourist city model: A traditional understanding of tourism space
- Model of inter-urban regionalization
- Aim: Explaining prevalent urban morphological structures by respective functions
- Tourist city: “a specialized morphological-functional region within a city”

Spatial patterning of tourism functions
- "primary and secondary resources" (Jansen-Verbeke 1986):
  - Attractions (historic resources)
  - Accommodations
  - Catering

Tourism space – traditional perspective

“Conventional views of tourism destinations” (Sarinen & Kylänen 2011; Framke 2002)
- Destination as a closed territorial entity
- Container for natural & cultural attractions
- … service providers & infrastructure
- … and visitors
- Static understanding of tourism space

“Alternative destination concept” (Sarinen & Kylänen 2011; Framke 2002)
- Destination as a socio-cultural construction
- The result of social practice

Tourism space – constructivist perspective

Destination as a socio-cultural construction:
The (urban) destination is not a pre-existing entity. It is constructed and (re-)produced in social practice (discourse and performativity) (Gregory et al. 2009, p. 691).

Implications for the destination
- Ordinary places
- Not defined by physical attributes
- Destinations only acquire meaning if marked and communicated
- Proliferation of meaning through representations (pictures, postcards, guidebooks, blog posts, souvenirs)
- Temporal dimension, meanings change

Language/pictures/discourse

Constructing places through discourse
- Places have no meanings in nature
- Meanings are constructed through language and discourse; they are attributed to a place
- Meanings are negotiated and renegotiated

“social constructionism refers to the principle that social and cultural phenomena are produced and reproduced through historically and culturally situated interactions of people and human activities in society” (Iwashita 2003, p. 335).

There is nothing ‘natural’ about tourism destinations, because they are (…) constructed (…) to be tourist oriented (Iwashita 2003, p. 335).
Tourism space – constructivist perspective

**Destination as a socio-cultural construction:**
The (urban) destination is not a pre-existing entity. It is constructed and (re-)produced in social practice (discourse and performativity) (Gregory et al. 2009, p. 691).

**Implications for the destination**
- Tourist places not bound to certain attributes nor to images
- Different performances produce different places
- Everyday places can become extraordinary: tourism is no longer the spatio-temporal rupture from ordinary life

**Constructing places through performances**
- Corporeal and social performances of tourists make places ‘touristic’.
- Human bodily engagement: talking, moving, sensing, feeling, touching, ‘doing’
- ‘making sense’ of places

**Constructing tourism space on Airbnb**

**Research questions:**
- How are residential neighborhoods (primarily Reuterkiez) constructed as tourism space in Airbnb listing descriptions?
  - What sights/places to visit are referred to?
  - What facilities are mentioned?
  - How is the neighborhood described?
  - What performances are motivated?

**Aim:**
Analysis of textual representations of Reuterkiez in order to understand how the neighborhood gets a tourist notion.

**Research area: Reuterkiez**

SENATSVERWALTUNG FÜR STADTENTWICKLUNG UND WOHNEN, BERLIN 2016
Data collection:

- Collection of 471 Airbnb-listings located in Reuterkiez
- Analysis of headline, descriptions of neighborhood, house rules
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**Places as carrier of meaning**

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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> "Beautiful apartment is located in the great neighborhood of Neukölln, the most popular area in Berlin" [170]

> "Beautiful flat in a very quiet street right next to famous insider spots like Maybachufer and Weserstraße with many bars, cafes and shopping facilities. May be the best place to discover the city!" [180]

> "Der Stadtteil Kreuzkröll hat sich besonders in den letzten Jahren zu einem angesagten Szeneviertel entwickelt" [181]

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**Everyday places are important**

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**Discussion**

- Streets
  - Weserstraße
  - Pannierstraße
  - Sonnenallee
  - Kottbusser Damm

- Squares
  - Hermannplatz
  - Alexanderplatz
  - Kottbusser Tor

- Neighborhoods/Kiez
  - Neukölln
  - Kreuzberg
  - Kreuzkröll (unofficial)
  - Mitte

- Parks
  - Görlitz Park
  - Hasenheide
  - Tempelhof Feld
  - Spree

- Sights/POI
  - 3
Everyday place: Maybachufer

- Everyday places framed as central elements of the neighborhood being worth visiting
- Particular performances encouraged illustrating how to enact a place
- Knowing "how to behave" enables visitors to participate in everyday life

- "You are living close to the water (...). At Paul-Lincke-Ufer you can relax at the green spaces overlooking the canal" [275] [Author's translation].
- "A lot of parks are close by to rest, chill, enjoy, take a walk or go for jogging" [388].
- Very lively and very chilled at the same time. Chilling with a beer at sunset along the canal is one of the perks of this neighborhood [32].

Turkish market as a sight

- "on top of that there is the famous turkish market twice a week in just a few minutes away and the hippest flea market takes place every second sunday right in front of your doorstep" [117].

Negotiating places

- Reuterkiez is a residential neighborhood and it is not only a party place
  - "We live in a house with a lot of families. It is not particular clairaudient but we would like you to not make a lot of noise in the evenings. That means no parties please. Respect our neighbors" (ID 159).
  - "My neighbors are great so I expect people staying in the apartment to treat them with respect, which includes not partying 24/7 in the flat as there are a lot of families with young kids living in the building" (ID 126).
  - "Respect our neighbours, don't make noise after 10pm" (ID 173).
  - "Friendly neighbours and in a great area" (ID 96).
  - "Respect the neighbours" (ID 251).
How are residential neighborhoods constructed as tourism space in Airbnb listings?

- Referring to places (e.g. Kreuzberg) is important to convey meaning of “what a place is about”
- Hosts reproduce space images but they likewise contribute in the construction of new ones (description of Neukölln as lively, vibrant, hip, upcoming), they participate in the discursive transformation of the neighborhood
- Sights (iconic architecture) are unimportant
- Everyday places (Maybachufer) and everyday facilities (Turkish market) are framed and marked as highlights that must be (multi-sensually) experienced
- Everyday places are enriched and explained through adequate, place specific performances; do what the locals do – go jogging at Maybachufer
- Reuterkiez is heterogeneous space (Edensor 1998), no single function, no single users

Summary: Answering RQs

Theoretical considerations:
- Re-thinking the idea of tourism space in cities (not solely bound to materiality)
- Constructivist perspectives (discourse and performativity) add a “temporal” and an “actor” dimension to the development of tourism space; contribute to the explanation of the development of new urban tourism areas in residential neighborhoods

Future work:
Discourse analysis to identify at what point (temporal dimension) a place gained a touristic notion and to understand who contributes (actors) in the framing and who don’t (power relations, ethnical issues → no Turkish/Arab listing);