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BOOK CHAPTER - Chapter 7 of:

Tourism in European Cities:
The visitor experience of architecture, urban spaces and city attractions

Walking and the tourist experience

John Ebejer

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7.1 The nature of walking

'Passegiare' is a common activity among Italians[1]. The older part of Italian cities grew and developed around this ancient activity. 'Passegiata' literally translates to 'going for a walk' but it has a much richer meaning and includes the idea of strolling for leisure and enjoyment. Pavia[2] describes his own experience of going for a 'passegiata' with a member of his family as follows:

> "We walk for hours. We have no particular destination in mind and we let ourselves get lost in the city. Like two flaneurs, we wander in the labyrinth of the old fabric. As we walk through the narrow streets and plazas, the city lures us even deeper into the core held by its monumental walls, walking far beyond the typical quarter-mile threshold."

O' Mara[3] notes that he has often walked Italian towns and cities and says that he is struck by the wonderful tradition of the 'passeggiata' which he describes as "the sociable, evening stroll along the streets, greeting and chatting with neighbours and friend." Landry[4] describes it as an urban ritual "where you look and are looked at, you have an idle chatter and you check out who you fancy."

For centuries it was through walking that people perceived and understood space. In the last century the increased use of the automobile and mass transportation changed all that and introduced new ways and urban forms to perceive and understand space. Today, in large parts of many cities, walking has become a marginal activity to the extent that the design of urban space discourages walking. Since the middle of the past century cities have been constantly designed and reengineered for motor vehicles. The outcome is often a rational yet generic and soulless built environment lacking spatial identity and a sense of place.

Most tourists will engage in a certain amount of walking during their visit to a city destination. For some it may be a key element of the visit. Exploring on foot is a common visitor pastime in cities and can enhance appreciation of the place and its inhabitants, therefore contributing to their overall satisfaction. The experience of a historic urban area is reliant on walking, or more specifically the ability to move around the streets and piazzas.

Walking may seem to be a mundane activity but there is much more to it. Walking is not simply a means to traverse urban space but also a way of becoming acquainted with the space. People engage their senses when walking in urban places. Physical movement through space, together with sight, enable people to understand places as three-dimensional entities and develop a strong feeling for spatial qualities with "a sense of direction, geometry, perspective and scale."[5]

When visiting an area with several visitor sites, the visitor will inevitably need to move from one site to another. If the sites are in close proximity, then walking is the means to do this. This makes walking an essential element of the tourism activity. Specht[6] claims that tourists walk 10 kilometres per day through urban spaces, spending two thirds of the day in open areas of the city. Tourists can best appreciate the city's aesthetics if they are pedestrians, giving them the possibility to walk through spaces in relaxed and irregular rhythms. [7] Walking is an activity that is intrinsic to sight-seeing.

The movement of a visitor in the urban environment is one of discovery and appreciation; tourists will wander and linger taking in the surroundings rather than seeking the shortest route. In spatial terms, urban tourism is a predominantly external activity. In historic towns, much of the tourist activity takes place in the external realm. The primary attractions are the narrow winding cobbled streets, captured vistas, glimpses through urban fabric, textures created by architectural facades, open squares, piazzas or river fronts.[8] The urban heritage exemplifies "the human scale, individuality, care and craftsmanship, richness and diversity that are lacking in the

modern plastic, machine-made city with its repetitive components and large-scale projects." [9] A hierarchy of the street patterns and open spaces combine to create an attraction that visitors can enjoy. An added attraction of many historic areas is the fact that they continue to be lived in. It is the 'life' within that is as much the attraction as the physical qualities of the setting[10]. The visitor arrives and moves through the external space. In larger historic areas, it is possible for a day visitor to spend an entire visit in the external domain.

Wunderlich[11] describes walking as an essential mode of experiencing urban space but distinguishes between 'discursive walking' and 'purposive walking', with the former being spontaneous and characterized by varying pace and rhythm. Walkers "consciously explore the landscape while sensorially experiencing it." [12] In discursive walking people are well aware of the external environment and participate in it. Discursive walking is a participatory mode of walking during which the walker half-consciously visually explores the surroundings while sensorially experiencing them through sight, sound and sometimes even smell. In contrast, in 'purposive walking', getting there is more important than being there, with the walker taking little note of the surroundings. These observations are relevant to our understanding of the tourism experience because 'discursive walking' is inevitably the mode of walking which tourists adopt and that allows them to use their senses to be aware of and explore their surroundings.

The concept of experiencing space through movement is mirrored by Sinha and Sharma[13] who argue that by means of design interventions a site can be interpreted so that movement is not just for reaching a destination but also for experiencing the landscape through all the senses; engaging the mind and leading to a complete- rather than fragmented- image. Staiff [14] observes that when walking through a heritage landscape, the viewer is a mobile subject who is seeing the place in constant motion. He notes that: "Movement means constant changes of perception and perspective, constant changes to me in relation to the material, …. changes in mood and tone, shadow and light, textures, colours, smells, air movement and sounds."

Beyond sight-seeing, motion through urban space provides another layer to the experience of the city. The physical sensations associated with traversing a path and avoiding obstacles can widen the sensory experience.[15] The tourist has to walk around and explore to become aware and experience the mundane elements of the city. In research on Valletta[16] interesting observations were made on how tourists engage with stepped streets. Respondents noted that

walking up or down these streets is a different experience to walking on level ground. It involves greater exertion and, in a sense, also greater interactivity between the tourist and the steps, as one has to watch where to place one's foot. Stepped streets signify steep slopes and steep slopes signify vistas down the street. In walking up and down the steps the tourist is doing two things; namely watching their step and looking at the surroundings. The latter entails observing interesting features in the surrounding streetscapes (balconies, architectural detail, doors, windows and so on). It also involves observing the vistas up and down the street and noting how the views change at different levels. Even if the exertion is greater the increased interactivity of this kind of walking enhances the experience and makes it more enjoyable.

Apart from visiting paid visitor attractions, in a city destination a tourist will spend time walking and exploring in historic areas in streets, squares and also in city parks. In a tourism context discursive walking as described by Wunderlich[17] could also be termed as leisure walking. Apart from the spontaneity and the varying walking rhythm, in leisure walking there is the specific intent of engaging in walking for relaxation and/or relieve stress. In leisure walking some of the time might also be spent sitting on public seating in urban spaces; if nothing lese then at least to rest their feet. In many cities, locations on high ground from where pleasant views can be enjoyed are often popular with tourists. The views could be across a river, over parts of the city or of open countryside. Taking photos is often part of the leisure walking of the tourist; often stopping to take a photo of anything that they consider visually pleasing. For some the photo is not just a reminder of the physical aspect of the place but also of the feelings felt during the experience.

Occasionally tourists stop for coffee or for lunch. Often it is not just about the drink or food but more about the ambience and surroundings. In a Mediterranean climate it is enjoyable to have a drink outside in pleasant weather, especially if it is an area dedicated to pedestrians. Having sea views or views of pleasant scenery makes it even more enjoyable. Consuming local food or drink gives the tourist a better feel of the local character and therefore generally enhances the experience. For outside tables and chairs people often engage in another activity namely that of people watching. When in a city centre, it is not uncommon for tourists to spend some time shopping, even if this would be ancillary to the sight-seeing.

The distinction between 'leisure walking' and other activities is sometimes blurred. For example: the tourist may decide to walk from the accommodation to the paid visitor attraction

but to do so in a leisurely manner and enjoying the street atmosphere or the urban heritage along the way.

There are many factors that will influence the time a visitor spends in leisure walking; some relating to the visitor and others relating to the destination. It can be safely said, however, that virtually all leisure tourists to a city destination will spend some time walking in the urban spaces. This time is an important component of the visitor's experience of the city. It is reasonable to assume that the time spent in this manner is probably two or three hours per day, possibly more. This is a significant amount of time. In spite of this, the relationship between walkable urban space and tourism has received little attention in tourism literature.

In a similar manner to historic areas, walking is an essential part of the visit to historic monuments or archaeological sites that are sprawled over a larger area. Examples that come to mind are the Acropolis of Athens in Greece (Figure 6.1), Pompeii near Naples in Italy and Edinburgh Castle in Scotland. Visitors are engaged with the site being viewed and experienced. They actively seek things that interest them either because they are visually different or because of the site's narrative. The visitor explores a site and seeks enjoyment from the act of exploration and eventual discovery. Moving around, and hence walking, is intrinsic in the visitor's experience. For some there is also a sense of adventure in discovering things that the tourist has never seen before.

<figure 7.1 near here>.

7.2 Tourist motivations and walking

Tourist motivation is related to human needs in that the satisfying of human needs can be a motive for tourist behaviour. Human nature involves a set of universal basic needs with differences between these needs on an individual level leading to the uniqueness of personality.[18] In his work on the psychology of tourism Ross[19] identified those needs that may be applicable to tourist behaviour. Out of twelve needs identified by Ross there are three needs that can be considered particularly relevant to walking in a historic context.[20]
(1) 'Cognizance' is described as "To explore. To ask questions. To satisfy curiosity. To look, listen, inspect. To read and seek knowledge." The experience of a tourist in an urban environment involves wandering, lingering and taking in the surroundings resulting in

exploration and discovery. With exploration comes mystery: the promise for further information. Pursuing 'mystery' leads to discovery which involves the acquisition of new information. In a historic area the 'cognizance' motive is the one most likely to be sought and satisfied because the built heritage provides ample scope for the tourist to explore, seek knowledge and satisfy curiosity. The information and meanings offered by urban heritage provide opportunities for the visualisation of the past to aid in the enjoyment of the narrative.

The element of surprise impinges on the tourist experience more than is generally acknowledged in academic literature. Suvantola [21] describes his delight when, after a couple of hours of strenuous walking along a creek, he came across a waterfall that cascaded into a pool. This "spontaneous encounter" came to him and his travel companions as a total surprise. He points out that the "most intense aesthetic experience of nature" is likely to catch one by surprise. He compares this experience with another where his group was told that they would be visiting three waterfalls along a road. They went to the waterfalls one after the other by car. The intensity of their experience was nowhere near the intensity of the one they had when they accidentally found the waterfall.

The act of exploration is about seeking out things that are largely unknown to the explorer. Referring to heritage trails Hayes and Macleod[22] note how visitors are "….. invited to 'explore' and to 'discover' for themselves: personally to find surprises or 'hidden' worlds ...…" When, in the act of exploration, something new or different is discovered there inevitably is surprise, even if limited. In some instances the surprise will be more significant and this will give rise to a more intense and enjoyable experience.

(2) Linked to cognizance there is 'achievement'; described as "To overcome obstacles. To exercise power. To strive to do something difficult as well and as quickly as possible." This refers to exploration and the satisfaction derived from discovering something that is different or unfamiliar. The discovery is in itself an achievement. In a built heritage context the 'discovery' could be an unusual feature or building or an interesting narrative linked to a site. There are numerous elements that are different or unfamiliar to most tourists and therefore a tourist walking in a historic area will have ample opportunity to satisfy any 'achievement' motive he or she may have.

(3) The third is 'play; described as "to relax, amuse oneself, seek diversion and entertainment. To have fun, to play games. To laugh, joke and be merry. To avoid serious tension." The

experience of urban space is one of relaxation and feelings of peace and quiet. Tourism is also a means of getting away from the daily routine, including being in surroundings that are not the daily norm and thus allowing the person not to be pressurised or stressed. I would argue that, in a historic area, the 'play' motive is relevant but possibly to a lesser degree as the built heritage provides the context, rather than the object, of 'play'. Some tourists enjoy walking in a historic context without necessarily referring to the meaning offered by the heritage. It is a context where they can relax and 'avoid serious tension'.

Specific needs are more important to some than to others. Although each need is unique, there are commonalities. A behaviours may meet more than one need. To use a tourism example: walking around and exploring could meet the need of 'cognizance' (in the satisfaction of curiosity) as well as that of 'achievement' (in the satisfaction of discovering something new).

7.3 Walking the city

Many associate tourism activity with the visitation of attractions but there is more to it than that. Even if not expressed explicitly, many tourists seek to get to know the city they are visiting. O' Mara[23] makes the compelling argument that the best way to get to know a city is by walking:

> "Walking a city is the best way to get to know it. You can't get to know the mood of a place, its energy and pace, when you're driving or being driven around. On foot you are directly in touch with city life in all its dirt and glory: the smells, the sights, the thrum of footsteps on pavements, shoulders jostling for position and placement, the street lights, the snatches of conversation."

Before the advent of the car in the early years of the 20th century walkability was an essential feature of cities. Everyone depended on ready access by foot or slow-moving carts for access to jobs and the marketplace. The density of people and dwellings was relatively high as everything had to be connected by a continuous pedestrian network. Cities of the middle ages typically packed all necessities of urban living into an area of two or three square kilometres. The same can be said of cities of the 19th century as most workers did not have access to horse drawn carriages or streetcars. As from the 1920s every development in transport technology brought with it a negative impact on the pedestrian environment.[24] The walkable city was no more due to high speed transport and the quest for efficiency. Streets were designed to facilitate

the fast movements of cars often thereby creating hazardous conditions for pedestrians and imposing barriers to their free movement.

In far too many cities walkability is something of an afterthought as managing vehicle flow is prioritised. O'Mara[25] argues that city planners seem to conceive people as being contained in boxes: moving boxes (cars) and static boxes (buildings). Walkability is reduced to transition zones between these boxes. People spend most of the time in cars, buses, trains and buildings and relatively little time with the air and natural light on their faces. Some cities are awkward, uncomfortable, exhausting and even dangerous to the walker.

The term 'walkability' is a useful descriptor on how we can walk around in a city. Comparisons of walkability between cities can be made by means of a 'walkability index'. Hall and Ram[26] refer to walkability as "a multi-dimensional concept that can be broadly defined as the extent to which an environment, usually the built environment, enables walking and is pedestrian friendly". An alternative and more detailed definition is offered by Southworth.[27] He describes walkability in cities as the "extent to which the built environment supports and encourages walking by providing for pedestrian comfort and safety, connecting people with varied destinations within a reasonable amount of time and effort, and offering visual interest in journeys throughout the network". Walking is facilitated by the presence of certain attributes such as connectivity, linkage with other transport modes, safety, quality of hard and soft landscaping, width of pathway and visual interest. A highly walkable environment is one that encourages people to walk by means of a well-connected path network that provides access to everyday places people want to go to. It is safe and comfortable for people of all ages and different levels of mobility. The pedestrian network links seamlessly with modes of public transport such as buses, light rail and trains.

Walking paths should not only support walking for utilitarian purposes, such as shopping or the journey to work, but also provide for pleasure, recreation and health. Walkability is not just about practicalities and physical ease of movement, but incorporates the idea of pleasure.[28] Walking is made more enjoyable if the pathways offer varied visual experiences. A walk that is pleasurable and offers changing scenes and social encounters is more likely to be repeated than one that is boring or unpleasant.[29]

Providing an appropriate level of walkability is a challenge for many city authorities as they try to balance the demands of various users and uses of public space. Urban spaces are

shaped by two professional disciplines in particular; urban design and transport planning. Urban design is primarily concerned with the visual and experiential qualities of spaces and normally falls with the remit of architecture. The latter is concerned with people mobility and the ease with which they can move from one place to another, especially within cities. It deals with different modes of transport including rail, trams, buses, lorries and cars. Walking and cycling are also modes of transport and therefore fall within the remit of transport planning. The layout of roads and pedestrian routes within cities are designed by transport planners. Over the past century, in many countries across the world, these two disciplines have evolved along different tracks with urban design focusing on the experiential qualities of the built environment whereas transport planning focusing on functionality and efficiency, particularly for the motorist.[30] This was less so in some European countries. As from the 1980s and 1990s many European cities invested in better public transport system (particularly buses and light rail). This facilitated the creation of urban spaces that are more amenable to pedestrians.

As a mode of transport walking has limitations of distance and speed as well as exposure to inclement weather. It has, however, numerous advantages. Cities should be made more walkable as this will derive many benefits to residents and to visitors. Encouraging walking and cycling reduces the pressure on the infrastructure of other transport modes. Walking and cycling are environmentally-friendly as they do not involve the consumption of carbon fuels. They do not pollute the air and noise emissions are minimal. Most cities have adopted policies that stress the importance of public transport and pedestrian and cyclist mobility, partly in response to the problems of overcrowded road networks which are struggling to cope with rising car ownership.

More than a purely utilitarian mode of travel to work, school or the store, walking can have both a social and recreational value. It is socially equitable as it is available to the majority of the population, irrespective of age and financial means. The children, elderly and the poor suffer disproportionately from living in cities that are oriented towards car travel. The reason is that they are most dependent on other forms of transport.[31] Population of walkable cities are more likely to have better physical and mental health. Among the health benefits of walking are improved cardio-vascular circulation, reduced stress, better weight control and improved mental alertness. Walking is the most accessible and affordable way to get exercise and having a walkable city is the best way to encourage residents to walk and engage in other forms of light exercise. Whatever the travel, everyone is a pedestrian at some point because walking is part of

every trip. The need to enhance walkability is even greater in central areas of cities and areas that are close to public transport stops and car parks.

The concept of walkability and catering for pedestrian needs is frequently linked to broader sustainability goals embracing ideas of liveability, active mobility, accessibility and efficiency of public transport and reduction of private car use. A city authorities' effort to make streets more walkable is normally intended for locals as part of an overall strategy to make the city more liveable. Even if not directly intended for tourism, efforts to improve walkability will also greatly benefit tourism. Some cities have been very successful in this as their streets and urban spaces "have a porous and fluid quality that makes walking around them a joy." [32]

Earlier on in this chapter we discussed how walking is an essential element of the tourism activity as visitors to a city destination are likely to spend significant time walking from one interesting site to the next or simply exploring. It therefore comes as no surprise that the most successful tourism destinations are those that offer ample opportunities for walking. Walkable places are often considered as attractive for locals, visitors and tourists alike. Two examples that come to mind are the Southbank and Bankside in London (Case Study WK1) and Ramba de Mar in Barcelona. Walkability makes a city destination attractive and concurrently extensive areas dedicated to pedestrians enables the city destination to better cope with the numbers of tourists that will visit. In this context it is surprising that relatively little has been written on walkability's contribution to tourism.[33]

Case Study WK1: Bankside and the Millennium Bridge, London

The Bankside on the River Thames is an attractive length of riverside promenade stretching about two kilometres from Westminster Bridge to the Millennium Bridge and beyond. The Thames has been a recreational resource for centuries but, up until the middle of the twentieth century, industrialisation and the water transport of goods took precedence over leisure activities.[34] The regeneration of the Bankside took place over decades with major developments and attractions being created at different points in time. The Royal Festival Hall was inaugurated in 1951 and then renovated in 2007 as part of the overall regeneration of the area. In 2000 there were two important additions; the London Eye and the Millennium Bridge.[35] In terms of walking the latter is a vital addition as it connects the

Bankside, with all its various attractions, to the major tourist attraction of St. Paul's Cathedral. The bridge has an innovative steel suspension design, in part to enhance the experience of walking across the river. The bridge's alignment is such that pedestrians on the bridge will get a view in the distance of St Paul's Cathedral south façade framed by the bridge supports. On the opposite side of the river pedestrians can enjoy views of Tate Modern, Bankside and the various buildings and features alongside the riverside promenade. The bridge opened in 2000 with 160,000 people visiting over the first weekend. It was however closed soon after as pedestrians were experiencing a swaying motion that was causing discomfort and unease.[36] It reopened in 2002 after modifications to stop the swaying. Its closure made it very controversial with accusations of waste of public funds. As it turned out, however, the intense public debate made the bridge more widely known something that contributed to its popularity in subsequent years.

<Figure 7.2 near here>.

There are also several interesting features and activities that are of interest to the visitor including views across the river and from Millennium Bridge, sand sculptures at the water's edge, buskers, cafés, restaurants and a small shopping arcade.

The Bankside is a tourist space that illustrates the attractiveness of walking as an activity for visitors and locals. The riverside walk is part of a longer walk that connects two major tourist foci the Big Ben/Houses of Parliament to the west and St. Paul's Cathedral to the east; the latter being reached after crossing the pedestrian Millennium Bridge. Along Southbank and Bankside, there are several places of interest and attractions (London Aquarium, London Eye, Jubilee Park, the Royal Festival Hall, the National Theatre and Tate Modern). In spite of these various high profile attractions research[37] shows that the most popular activity amongst visitors was going for a stroll, followed by visiting a restaurant, café or pub. According to Maitland and Newman,[38] walking is key to the way visitors

explore and perceive the area. The presence of a large number of local people and workers making use of the area makes Bankside seem less touristy than other major tourist spaces in the city.

The success of the area is attributable to a number of factors. Walking aside, there is a multitude of reasons why people would want to go to the area. There are residences, offices, major theatres, visitor attractions and catering establishments. More crucially, however, the underground makes any part of central London easily reachable by large numbers of people living or staying in London. Using public transport, Southbank and Bankside can be reached by millions of people easily, cheaply and in a relatively short period of time. A third factor is the attractiveness of the area gives good reason to people to come for a stroll along the River Thames.

Cities are large and complex entities comprising of a mix of districts of greater or lesser appeal for tourists. Apart from the availability of visitor attractions, the extent of walkability of a city area will influence its overall appeal to tourists. According to one study[39] the key predictors of tourist walking decisions are safety, comfort, environmental quality and potential for activity and exploration. On any particular day of a tourist's visit at a destination, where to walk and the extent of walking is determined by a range of variables such as weather, time of day, duration of stay, age, physical fitness, interests, gender, travelling companions and personality.

There is a distinction to be made between walking on an organised itinerary or tour (with a guide or using a mobile) and wandering the streets at random. The latter involves greater risks of getting lost or not finding anything interesting but it can also provide greater satisfaction in terms of the surprise of 'discovering' something different that the wandering tourist would have never seen before.

Cities and towns across Europe are home to a wide range of walking trails that are focused on heritage. They are a vital resource for urban recreation for both locals and tourists. There are several types of urban heritage trails but the most common are self-directed interpretive walking tours which thematically link places of historical and cultural interest.[40] Brochures, maps, podcasts and on-street signage enable the tourist to follow the trail though the historic area by providing information, interpretation and promotion. More often than not urban trails are associated with a particular theme. The theme could be a particular period of the town's history

or places that are associated with a famous resident's life. Other examples of themes are an architectural style, an ethnic neighbourhood, nationalistic heritage and public art.

An appropriate theme for a walled town is the defensive fortifications and the historic narratives associated with them, including possibly past attempts to invade the city. Town walls may be capable of being walked upon. A walk along the town fortifications provides a flexible product that can be enjoyed at the pace and duration determined by the visitor with the possibility of joining or leaving the fortification walk at any point.[41] The elevated walkway often offers spectacular outward views of the surrounding countryside and seascape, as well as inward views of the town itself. Fortified towns are generally small and walking along the surrounding fortifications allows for the "gem city to be observed and experienced holistically". [42] Depending on width and other factors, an extensive circular walkway on the town walls can be created which Ashworth and Bruce[43] describe as "an almost ideal tourist experience". Chapter 4 discusses fort and fortifications as visitor attractions.

Trails are also provided at heritage sites and visitor attractions that are sprawled over a large area. Examples include archaeological sites, historical parks, outdoor museums and heritage gardens. Most outdoor heritage sites have some sort of planned route that leads visitors from one location to the next. Trails are useful management tools as they facilitate interpretation, guide visitors away from the more sensitive parts of the site, facilitate access for people with mobility difficulties and provide vistas and photo opportunities at various points of the property.[44]

The experience of a historic area is not limited to walking and exploring. It is normal for a tourist to visit at least one museum or a cultural attraction, normally against payment. The number of such visits is dependent on a range of factors including the background and aptitudes of the visitor and the cultural orientation of the city being visited. Many cities have rivers running though their central areas. Boat trips offer tourists the opportunity to view the main sights from a different perspective with the added advantage of sitting comfortably and being provided with the information. The closeness to water enhances the experience. After a lot of walking tourists need to rest their feet and therefore they will also spend time sitting normally in a quiet place in a garden or in a busier place within a pedestrian area.

7.4 Pedestrian areas in city centres

Pedestrian streets are a common feature in the commercial and historic centres of cities across Europe. The configuration and extent of pedestrian areas in a city centre are dependent on many factors including street layout, street widths, access by public and private transport, land uses and city governance. In its simplest form, a pedestrian area consists of a single street with several side streets. Alternatively it could be two or more streets that interconnect with each other, often through a square, to form a continuous and longer lineal street. In almost all cases the ground floors of buildings provide a continuous frontage of lifestyle and fashion shops, department stores, cafés, restaurants and banks. City centre pedestrian areas often include important civic and religious buildings such as city halls, churches and museums - some of which would also be of significance in the city's history. It is not uncommon for part of the pedestrian area to be dedicated to an open market that operates weekly or sometimes daily.

Pedestrianised streets are key to improve the environmental quality for pedestrians and making communities more liveable, particularly when they are well designed, managed and strategically connected to networks of public transport, pedestrian paths and bike routes. Pedestrian schemes must be carefully planned to be successful and achieve the desired quality. They must be attractive to pedestrians; allowing for the discovery and appreciation of the environment as well as be inviting. In pedestrian streets appropriate street furniture is used like, for example, seating, trees, art works, fountains, benches, paving and other features - features which make the town centre's streets a more sociable space.

During the 1950s, pedestrianisation in Europe was small-scale and was at most limited to a single street. There were many urban planners who were calling for more streets to be pedestrianised but they were opposed by hard-core traffic engineers who were concerned that areas without cars would enter into a downward cycle of lack of investment and deterioration.[45] By the late sixties there were rising concerns that the urban environment and urban life were increasingly being dominated by the car. It seemed that modern life meant that cars had to be allowed everywhere and that cities had to provide for them with more and more space being dedicated to moving and parked cars.

Attitudes to pedestrian streets and to motorisation changed when a new style of pedestrianisation was demonstrated in Munich in 1972. Extensive pedestrianisation of the city centre was one of the projects linked to the 1972 Olympics. The move was resisted by some transport experts who argued that the area was so large that pedestrians would feel isolated in

unfriendly streets and thus stay away. The opposite happened. Munich's newly pedestrianised streets turned out to be hugely successful with an impressive increase in the number of people visiting the city centre to shop and for other purposes. Munich's success encouraged other cities in Germany and across Europe to implement larger pedestrianised areas in their commercial centres.[46]

An erroneous view is that the creation of pedestrian streets simply involves the exclusion of cars. The right approach to pedestrianisation is that it should be part of an overall transport strategy for the area which considers other modes of transport; particularly vehicle traffic and public transport provision in and around the area to be pedestrianised. In many cities the extension of the network of pedestrian streets is accompanied by significant investments in the public transport infrastructure, most notably light rail. Public transport provides access to the heart of the city.[47] Other measures could include traffic calming in secondary roads, establishment of cycle routes, the availability and provision of off-street parking and the introduction of park and ride services. Normally cycling is allowed in pedestrian areas, except where pedestrian numbers are high as the mixing of crowds and cyclists may result in a pedestrian being hit by a bicycle. A downside of extensive pedestrianisation in city centres is the reduced access to residences. Another disadvantage is the increased demand for car parking at the immediate periphery of the pedestrianized zone, thus making car parking more problematic for residents. In commercial streets arrangements are made for the servicing of shops with delivery and service vehicles being allowed in at specified times, normally before 10 am.

The larger the pedestrian area the greater the need for the pedestrianisation scheme to be part of a comprehensive transport strategy. A large-scale pedestrian area is not possible unless there is an effective public transport system that allows easy access to the pedestrian area to as many people as possible. Large scale pedestrianisation with poor public transport access will decrease, rather than increase, activity within the town centre. When an urban area is being pedestrianised public transport will need to be reorganized to have stops as close as possible to pedestrian streets. There may be situations where public transport vehicles are allowed to pass through the pedestrian areas. With light rail this can be an effective way of retaining good access to the city centre and thus enhancing its commercial viability.

Most European cities of a population between five hundred thousand and one million have public transport systems based on tram or light rail, backed up with a bus network.[48] Many of

the tram systems were first established in the latter years of the 19th century or the early years of the twentieth century. Light rail is a more recent transport technology that has been introduced by some European cities in the last few decades. Larger cities have developed underground metro systems: the larger the city the more extensive the metro.

Apart from public transport, the city centre has to be made easily accessible to users of private cars. This is best achieved by locating multi-storey car parks strategically with easy access by car from the main road network and, concurrently, easy access on foot to the pedestrian streets. Apart from being expensive, finding suitable sites for multi-storey car parks is difficult in most cities so an alternative approach would be the provision of a park and ride service with the surface car parks being at the periphery of the city.

For environmental reason it is good practice for city authorities to encourage people to use public transport rather than their private cars to access the city centre. This can be achieved through an appropriate pricing mechanism for public transport and parking. It is not uncommon for city centre car parking to be prohibitively expensive.

Whenever a new pedestrianisation scheme is proposed more often than not retailers are opposed because of concerns of loss of trade. Experience shows that retail activity will benefit from pedestrianisation.[49] Generally pedestrianisation increases the number of pedestrians. More pedestrians, however, does not necessarily mean higher turnover for all shops. Shops that are less attractive, smaller or located at the periphery of the pedestrian area may lose out.

The closure of some streets to traffic in the city centre will bring about changes to the traffic circulation that will inevitably impact traffic roads in the surrounding area. Traffic that previously used the city centre road is shifted to other streets. Careful planning is therefore required for a road to be permanently closed to traffic including detailed traffic studies. Many cities across Europe were fortunate to have embarked, in the 1960s and later years, on a programme of building ring roads to ease the increasing traffic congestion in city centres. This eventually made it easier to pedestrianise city centre streets as the main flow of traffic was already passing through arterial roads away from the city centre.[50] For cities without good ring roads to city centres pedestrianisation was more difficult as this required measures to decrease traffic volumes in and around the city centre, usually by means of financial disincentives coupled with major investments in public transport infrastructure.

Much of the above discussion refers to pedestrian areas in city centres. In most city centres pedestrian streets are the main shopping streets of the city. Such streets are usually crowded with shoppers, window shoppers, tourists and other people of all ages and from all walks of life. Some may be just passing through while others are there to shop, to stroll, to observe, to eat or to recreate themselves. Sitting areas, public art, street performers, outdoor cafés make pedestrian shopping streets lively, attractive and enjoyable.[51] The absence of cars and other vehicles makes them safe. During special celebrations and events such as the Christmas season and weekly market days, pedestrian shopping streets are particularly busy and vibrant.

An interesting intervention in a shopping street in Rotterdam's city centre illustrates the importance of creating continuous shopping spaces within the cityscape. Two concentrations of retail areas were separated by a busy traffic road; creating the inconvenience for shoppers to wait at the traffic lights to cross from one retail area to the other. The solution to this was the excavation of an underpass below the traffic road. The underpass and the gentle ramps leading to it are lined with shops and are well lit.[52] Walkers are barely aware that they are at one level below street level. This was a new retail complex nicknamed the 'Koopgoot', or 'shopping trench'.[53] Completed in 1993, this intervention joined two popular retail areas into one. It created a lively shopping area dominated by people and without cars.

Although pedestrian streets are normally associated with a retail function, there are many different types of pedestrian areas depending on the uses (residential, shopping/ commercial) and on the historic/cultural value of the area. There are also streets where the pedestrian is given priority even if limited access for cars is allowed. These are referred to as pedestrian priority streets.

Street furniture and lighting is an integral part of urban space design and of pedestrianised streets. In historic areas, rather than try to re-create an 'authentic' that never existed, the design should seek to cater for contemporary urban life while respecting the historic context. The choice and use of surface material are also important. In new urban developments concrete paving blocks are often used. In a historic context the use of cobblestone is more appropriate and in keeping with the context. Cobbled streets may, however, be problematic for people with mobility difficulties so innovative solutions are required to cater for different levels of mobility.

Pedestrian streets are relevant to tourism for a number of reasons. They provide the context within which the tourism activity takes place. For example: in historic areas pedestrian

streets enable visitors to view the various historic buildings and features without the nuisance and reduced safety of passing traffic. If the main visitor attractions are in the city centre it is more pleasant to walk from one attraction to another along pedestrian streets. A pedestrianised city centre can be an attraction in its own right as visitors enjoy the activity and the buzz that is created by the urban activity within them. Many city centres have rivers or water canals running through them or are facing directly onto harbours. The pedestrianisation of the waterfront provides an attractive urban environment because of the outward views over water - an environment that is made lively and sociable with the presence of cafés, bars and restaurants (Figure 7.3).

<Figure 7.3 near here>.

Whether moving traffic or parked cars, the car is often seen to be intrusive in a historic context. Pedestrianisation is often associated with urban renewal and conservation of historic areas as it creates an atmosphere that is more amenable to the historic context. Moreover it allows people to appreciate the historic buildings surrounding the space. This was the case in Merchants Street in Valletta, Malta. The street includes some of the finest historic architecture in Valletta but this could not be appreciated by Maltese and tourists because almost the entire width of the street was taken up by parked cars and moving traffic. Pedestrians were relegated to narrow footpaths on either side and even those were sometimes partially blocked by parked cars. All that changed when the street was pedestrianised in 2007. Another vital advantage of pedestrianised spaces in historic areas is the removal of a major source of pollution and hence historic buildings are better protected. A mix of rainwater and pollution significantly increases the rate of deterioration of stonework of historic facades.

For decades the trend across Europe has been to create pedestrian areas in town and city centres. For centres that were already pedestrianised the trend was to extend them further and create urban spaces with more and more spaces dedicated to pedestrians.

There are different ways how pedestrian-oriented urban spaces can come into being. The first and most obvious are those spaces to which access by vehicles is physically not possible because they are too narrow or because they are steeply sloped or stepped. The second is when physical obstructions are made to prevent cars from entering the space. This would necessitate careful traffic planning to ensure that the diverted traffic will not create problems elsewhere.

The provision of multistorey car parks is recommended to compensate for the on-street parking that would be lost. More crucially there needs to be efficient public transport so that this will be a viable alternative to the use of the car. A third approach is to create a public space out of reclaimed land from the sea. In protected waters, this could take the form of timber decking. On more exposed coastlines, a harder more durable land mass would have to be created. A fourth approach would be the conversion of abandoned or derelict land into a public space or garden. This could be part of a wider regeneration programme of a disadvantaged area of the city. A fifth approach is for the grounds of an existing structure or facility to be opened to the public without charge. This could be under-utilised land near a church, a monastery, a stately home or a fortified landscape. Allowing free public access would come at a cost for security and maintenance. On the other hand, such spaces are more likely to be of interest to tourists and would therefore generally enhance the tourist attractiveness of an area. It could also be a means for better tourism management for the relief of pressures on nearby tourist hotspots. Case Study WK2 illustrates some of these different approaches to creating spaces for pedestrians.

Case Study WK2: Walkable urban spaces in Barcelona

The historic districts of El Raval, Barri Gòtic, Ciutat Vella and La Ribera in Barcelona provide an extensive network of streets and piazzas that are predominantly for the use of pedestrians. This network did not come about by chance but with consistent urban policies in favour of public transport and the pedestrian over the private vehicle. Public transport is efficient and reliable across the city including in the historic cores. On-street parking is minimal and only against payment. A few streets in these areas carry traffic but the volume is low.

From a tourism perspective this makes these districts more interesting and enjoyable to walk and explore. In Barcelona it is not just the tourist hotspots that are enjoyable (such as La Rambla and Plaça Reial) but also those in the more residential areas (such as La Rambla del Raval and Plaça de Vicenc Martorell). Some streets are pedestrian only because their width does not permit traffic. Others are wider and could allow traffic and parking but instead have been dedicated to pedestrians. In some cases facilities for residents are provided such as children's playgrounds and enclosed spaces for dogs.

Pedestrian oriented spaces were also created in other parts of the city. There are the monumental Plaça de Carles Buïgas and Plaça de les Cascades leading up to Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. The area is extensive with several interesting features and adjoining buildings. This allowed the designers to create urban spaces that is amenable for leisure and relaxation. The same can be said for nearby Plaça d' Europa in the Olympic sports complex. Another example of a pedestrian only urban space is the road, Av. Gaudi, connecting two important cultural and tourism sites; la Sagrada Família and the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau. Barcelona also has its own sandy beach at La Barceloneta and alongside it is a promenade stretching several kilometres long.

A clever intervention was the creation of Rambla de Mar; a pedestrian walkway across the entrance to a yacht marina connecting the city centre waterfront (at the end of La Rambla) to a major shopping complex at Plaça de l'Odissea. The walkway is approximately 200 metres long and is made of timber decking. What used to be sea space for boats was converted into a space for people. At pre-determined times a short stretch of decking swings open to allow yachts to enter or exit the yacht marina within. Attractive design and the connection of two major foci of activity makes this space busy with pedestrians. Plaça de l'Ictineo is another interesting space along the city centre waterfront. This is a small park whose layout and attractive design maximizes its leisure potential.

This extensive network of pedestrian-oriented spaces came about because of a consistent commitment by the city authorities over several decades. These various initiatives cannot be seen in isolation but should be considered in a wider context of urban and cultural regeneration. The Olympic Games of 1992 in particular were an opportunity for the city to invest in public spaces and also to rebrand itself.

Barcelona offers a diversity of walkable urban spaces. Some are small and intimate. Others are monumental. Some are in a historic context while others are surrounded by modern development. Some are in an urbanised context. Others look out over the harbour or open sea. Still others are characterised by greenery.

The diversity of walkable urban spaces is part of the attraction of the city. Barcelona's pedestrian-oriented urban policy has provided many benefits to pedestrians and hence also to the tourists. The likely objective of the authorities was to create a city that is more liveable for its people but, in so doing, they have also created a city that is more enjoyable to walk and more enjoyable for the tourist. Barcelona's success as a tourism destination goes beyond its many outstanding visitor attractions. Its success is intricately linked to the extensive availability of attractive walkable urban spaces.

<Figure 7.4 near here>.

7.5 Photography and the tourist experience

A practice closely associated with the tourism activity is the taking of photos. In urban areas that are of historic or architectural interest it is not uncommon for tourists to stop and take a photos of the buildings or scenes that are in front of them. Documenting justifies and even glorifies the trip.[54] For some tourists taking photos constitutes a major focus of activity to the extent that it becomes an integral and vital part of their tourist experience. [55]

Up to the end of the 1990s the practice of photography in tourism was very different from what it is today. Film cameras necessitated the printing of photos for them to be viewed. This was done at a cost so the number of photos taken during a holiday would be relatively few. Since then there have been three distinct, yet closely interrelated, technological developments that transformed photo taking and sharing. First was the introduction of digital cameras. These are cheaper, easier to use and more portable, therefore making them more accessible to a wider market.[56] It is relatively easy for anyone with no technical skills to take photos and place them on social networks and other sites. With digital cameras the tourist is not concerned that they will incur a cost with every photo taken because the cost of 'wasted' shots is nil. This allows the tourist to experiment in taking photos and also to take shots of objects and views which may be considered as unremarkable and commonplace. The subject matter of tourist photography has been extended. Although traditional tourist photos persist, we are now witnessing photographic practices where "ordinary scenes or banal moments" are turned into "something noticeable, and thus something recordable." [57]

The second development was the use of the internet to share digital photos. With the increased popularity of social media it is now common practice for people to share their photos with friends and family; including photos of their visits to places away from home. The third change was the integration of cameras into mobile phones. Whereas at one time the camera was the iconic accessory of the tourist, today many carry cameras all the time in the form of the smartphone. This also made it easier than previously for people to share photos on social media or through other means.

Digital photography brought about a change in the way that people use photos. There has been a shift from using pictures for purposes of memory and commemoration towards using photos as a form of identity formation and to affirm individual identities and personal bonds. Van Dijck [58] notes how taking photos has shifted "from family to individual use, from memory tools to communication devices, and from sharing (memory) objects to sharing experiences." Youngsters share experiences as opposed to sharing memories. The changing nature of photography and its use on the internet and other personal communication devices has changed not only people's photographic practices but also ways of experiencing place.[59]

The act of photographing makes the observer more keenly aware of the physical surroundings. While preparing the photographer will glance at and observe the various items which make up the overall scene. The photographer may stroll around to establish the best location from where to capture the scene and the various elements which compose it. Lee[60] describes it as "the practice of being attentive to a series of temporal and spatial moments in the locale and trying to make sense of and interpret a subject." In addition, these practices "can induce a curiosity for the memories of the locale and the people who have lived there." In the context of a visitor to a heritage area these photographic practices become all the more relevant. The act of 'finding' interesting features and views to photograph is one of 'discovery' which, for many visitors, is an important and fun part of the tourist experience.

Photography is a medium for framing the extraordinary experience; structuring the experience as well as structuring the narratives of experience. Andersson Cederholm [61] provides an interesting framework for better comprehension of the practice of photography. This is based on three analytic themes. The first, framing the unique, refers to the taking of a picture of those motifs which are regarded as typical for a place in accordance to norms and conventions as to what one should photo when on holiday. Everybody knows what the Eiffel Tower looks like, but

when in Paris one feels almost compelled to take a photo of it. Similarly many visitors to Copenhagen make it a point to go to Langelinie promenade to see the Little Mermaid, a bronze sculpture displayed on a rock by the waterside. The statue is highly symbolic of Copenhagen. Taking and sharing a photo next to the mermaid is the tourists' way of telling friends and relatives that they have visited Copenhagen (Figure 7.5). At peak times, the shoreline next to the mermaid is so crowded that it is difficult for anyone to take a photo 'alone' with the mermaid.

<Figure 7.5 near here>.

The second, framing the local scene, refers to the search for authenticity and the attempt to 'the search for intimacy with the locals'. A tension between 'intimacy' and the touristic consumption of places develops. The third theme is catching the moment. In taking the photo, the tourist seeks to "freeze and frame the experience." [62] There is an inherent contradiction in this kind of consumption. With the camera as a tool the tourist consumes the experience while, at the same time, seeking to preserve it. The freezing of the moment through the photo is an act that is directed to the future.

The transformation of photo taking and photo sharing is also relevant to tourism in that communicating experiences with the help of photographs is increasingly becoming an integral part of tourist photography.[63] Photography is in a sense a "form of symbolic capture" [64] whereby the tourist captures the image of a place with the intention of viewing, appreciating and sharing it at a later time. Similarly, Andersson Cederholm [65] notes that a traveller is "a collector of experiences, which means that the homecoming rituals of photo shows and story telling, is an important part of the travelling experiences."

Traditional snapshots are taken at well-known tourist sites and photogenic landmarks for the commemoration of their 'having-been-there'. Tourists often seek out particular views that are considered 'photogenic' or 'iconic' and reproduce them in their photographs. Sometimes tourist discourse gives an impression that certain attractions simply must be seen. Taking photos of the attractions is proof that this has been done. Photography is a form of documentation that a pursued purpose has been achieved. The purpose may be to be involved in a different culture, to experience an uplifting attraction, to view an inspirational landscape or to be socially engaged with a travelling group.[66]

Lee [67] argues that people are now more inclined to capture moments and places which previously used to be disregarded "such as those moments that are banal but personally intriguing, those events that people experience accidentally or instantaneously on a site, or those routine places where people don't usually carry cameras." Photography is a means for recording sights that may seem mundane but are in some way is meaningful to the viewer.

Haldrup and Larsen [68] suggest a motive for tourist photography based more on social activities than the desire to consume places. According to this view tourism is merely the stage for framing personal stories revolving around social relations, particularly among the photographer's accompanying family, which can later be told and re-told through the medium of the photo album or slideshow. Andersson Cederholm [69] notes that, just as it is for birthdays, graduations and other special occasions, photography is "a tool for framing the extraordinary event of travelling." For trips involving above-normal expenses, the capture and sharing of experiences by means of photography is also a means of justifying the expense of the trip.[70]

People's perception of places, as well as the photo-taking practices at the tourist sites, is shaped by the image projected by mass media and tour marketers. In turn, the photos taken at the tourist sites perpetuate the iconic images of the places.[71]

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