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Affect theory and the attractivity of destinations

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to examine how affect theory might offer a complementary explanation and thus deepen understanding of the ability of destinations to continue to attract tourists (or not). The study is based on over twenty years of qualitative analysis and observation of Monaco and Tahiti and its Islands. These are well-recognized tourism destinations but they display very different levels of attractivity. Knowledge acquired from studying other destinations has also been relied on to reveal how even non-representational social processes actively influence tourist performance and hence the future of destinations. This theoretical turn to affect theory has been inspired by the call to add emotions, affects and senses for a more critical examination of tourism practices.

Introduction

> It is only after you have come to know the surface of things . . . that you can venture to seek what is underneath. But the surface of things is inexhaustible.
>
> [Italo Calvino, *Mr. Palomar*]

This critical work searches for answers beyond the surface of how entrepreneurs believe they can, on their own, just through a few actions, generate an atmosphere favorable to increased consumption (Gray, 2002; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Steinberg, 2005). Contemporary critical social science theories have recently renewed their approaches to the body, to emotions and to affect, as witnessed in the efforts to follow the research paths opened by Foucault, Deleuze, or Bourdieu. These have reintroduced notions of corporeality into social critique and have called for sharper sensitivity to the role of emotion

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as a way of knowing. It builds on feminist critiques of rationality and master-narratives. This article responds to the turn to critical work in tourism research, and especially to this introduction of theories of emotion and affect (Blackman, 2012; Brennan, 2004; Clough, 2007; Hemmings, 2005; Wetherell, 2012), to probe beyond superficial appearances in order to examine how attractivity develops and is maintained in tourist destinations. The effort here is not to introduce more relative notions in tourism research but to bring to the surface some of the not 'completely rational' aspects, or some of the underlying layers, of tourism reality.

Work on affect encompasses insights of many disciplines such as geography, gender studies, sociology and anthropology, to take knowledge beyond its present visual textual and linguistic bounds. The recent turn to affect and emotion theory has placed affect at the heart of the analysis of social rapports, including in tourism destinations. It is recognized that corporeal reactions have to be considered together with other elements like culture or economics when examining social behavior such as how tourists decide whether they will return to a destination. The effort here is not so much to build a case for a turn to affect as the explanation but rather to illuminate how it may help formulate a more complete understanding of the elements that influence the kinds of experiences that are created in destinations and thus determine the destinations' attractiveness in a positive or a negative way. This approach offers a different supplementary way of understanding the fortunes of tourist destinations.

In this article, tourism is defined as encounters which generally involve engagement, relations, and/or negotiations. Encounters are often brief because tourism is defined as restless movement, passage, and flows but they always involve the use of more senses (as well as the emotions such engagement provokes) than just gazing by what seem like automata. Encounters require embodied subjects, in opposition to bodiless anonymity, for long the main characteristic of 'tourists' (Johnston, 2001; Jokinen & Veijola, 1997; Veijola & Valtonen, 2007). This notion of embodied (or corporeal and emotional) performative engagement produces more nuanced understandings of tourists' experiences and allows one to look at the role of all participants in the co-creation of behaviors and practices in 'tourist zones': encounters are not given, but produced by the experience of the agents involved (Bondi & Davidson, 2003; Haraway, 2003). Local residents, tourism entrepreneurs and service workers, together with tourists are responsible for affect vibes generated in tourism spaces.

Two contrasted and contrasting destinations will illustrate this work: their size, their geography, their political regime, and the people who live in each but also their touristic fortunes are divergent. Monaco, a minuscule urban area, is an island of prosperity along the Mediterranean coast; the other one is Tahiti and its islands (the tourism brand name of French Polynesia), a group of 118 islands in the Eastern Pacific, covering an area equal to the whole of Europe. Both are well known at diverse scales, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, yet have very different numbers of visitors. One continues to successfully attract them (5 million per year to Monaco), the other struggles tremendously even though other Pacific island destinations have seen numbers of international arrivals increase over the same years (220,000 visitors to Tahiti at the peak in 2005, steadily down to under 160,000 in 2011; Institut, 2012). Tahiti does not seek to become a mass tourism destination but it did want to attract about 300,000 tourists by 2015 (Mission d'Evaluation et de Prospective, 2000).

The methodology used in my research is both qualitative and reflexive. A qualitative methodology enables one to uncover subjective meanings that complete our understanding of the social world, which is defined out of personal and cultural experiences, not just through statistics (Bryman, 2012; Jennings, 2011; Walliman, 2011). I do not presume to speak for the residents of Tahiti and Monaco but I bear witness on issues that concern them. Qualitative methodology requires reflexivity about, amongst other factors, one's positionality, to ensure that one presents research results in the most unbiased way possible. Bias exists in all forms of research, so quantitative methods do not necessarily provide more robust and rigorous results. Qualitative methodology dictates clear ways that ensure the rigor and robustness of data collection and analysis.

The data used are the fruit of yearly visits of 2–6 weeks (with some lasting several months) over the past few decades to both destinations which enable(d) me to keep informed of happenings in Tahiti and Monaco. During these sojourns I collected interviews of residents, tourists and of political as well as tourism officials and I observed practices on numerous occasions by local authorities, by tourism agents, by tourists and by residents to capture the atmosphere in both places. The results of this research have been recorded in a number of publications. This research project originally aimed to

analyze the validity of tourism as a tool of economic development. It was only after many intersubjective encounters with different stakeholders and after reading publications, some of which are cited in sections "Defining affect Theory" and "Affect in tourism", below, that I discerned that affect could be one of the threads in the process of developing (or not) the attractivity of a destination.

Authors agree that affect shapes how one experiences places (as described in sections "Defining affect Theory" and "Affect in tourism"; Anderson, 2009; Duff, 2010) so it is hypothesized that different kinds of affect must be at play to make these two locations divergent in how well they attract tourists. I also analyzed local publications and documents as well as academic print. After familiarizing myself with the data, I ordered it through coding to discover the main ideas that were developed by participants during the interviews in particular but also in relation with documents that made up the secondary data together with my knowledge of the issues. Documents were analyzed to reveal context, attitudes and values and to understand local actions and relations. Words expressing these ideas during interviews or in documents were underlined to facilitate coding and categorization into themes (Altinay & Paraskevas 2008; Fairclough, 2013). I then linked these concepts with the existing theoretical literature on affect and emotions.

The article starts with an attempt to define affect theory for the purpose of this research by describing how affect circulates and constructs our social world and the spaces it diffuses through; then by examining the non-representational status of affect, which has kept the notion mostly invisible to many scholars until recently; and finally by discussing how social and economic power determines to some extent the capacity to affect. In section "Affect in tourism" the article discusses how affect needs to be introduced to understand the role of social interaction in tourism and its consequences on destination attractivity. Section "Affect as a positive force" explains how affect, as an important force for social connections, provides cohesion and pleasure through association within tourism spaces, as in Monaco, reinforcing the attractivity of those destinations. Section "Negative affect(s) or abjection" demonstrates how some destinations, like Tahiti, can provoke negative affective diffusion that seems to translate into loss of attractivity.

Affect Theory as a potential explanation of the attractivity of tourism destinations

Defining Affect Theory

There is no general agreement on a definitive definition of affect. I will thus use the works of different authors to circumscribe what affect theory might provide to understand how and whether attractivity of tourist destinations develops. Affect here is used not as just a personal attribute as in individual desire to move others in the expectation of causing reactions that are affective. Affect here, rather, is a line of force, a capacity to act, though, to some extent, it is derived from that original desire (e.g. Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Spinoza, 1997—1678). Spinoza described society as relational in which emotion (an active state) creates "modifications of the body, whereby the active power of the social body is increased or diminished, aided or constrained" (1997—1678, Definition III). Affect as a social relation constitutes action potential. It corresponds to Bhaskar's idea of underlying non-representable mechanisms (in Platenkamp & Botterill, 2013, p. 119). The concepts used in this article demonstrate how collectives of bodies create social relations and social understanding through "feelings in common" (Ahmed, 2004), a mechanism that gives social interactions an affective dimension. They also create places (such as destinations) as affect diffuses through space.

Affect circulates between agents but also through space and constructs our social world and the spaces it diffuses through

Authors (Deleuze, 1995; Ettlinger, 2006) have confirmed affect as a relational force: affect is what circulates to link humans into social bodies. It can describe a relation to the physical, to the other people present, or even to the self. As individuals seek recognition, even validation of their existence by others, sociality requires cooperation so we have developed "motivation to share emotions, attention, intentions, information" (Boyd, 2009, p. 53). Social relationality implies affect. Congregating bodies, hence, express affective qualities that create a certain atmosphere (Brennan, 2004; Böhme,

2006; Thrift, 2008). Atmosphere has also been used interchangeably with ambience. In this presentation, atmosphere(s) signify bodies affecting other bodies and the spaces in which they perform. Dufrenne (1973) adds that we cannot ignore the feeling aroused by the affect that a group diffuses and not just if the affect is negative.

Though recent, attention to affect is not new as demonstrated in the work of Spinoza who took pains to show how affect is a form of social bond. He re-conceptualized relations between individuals, fluctuating between acting and being acted upon. For Spinoza we apprehend other bodies through direct bodily awareness. More recently, feminist scholars have rekindled interest in how social relations occur through bodies and their interactions. Participants in a performative relationship need to be considered as intertwined agencies which mutually construct each other rather than act upon each other from outside (Barad, 2003; Haraway, 2003). Bodies share but also seek encounters with other bodies through their senses. They nudge, through affect, the 'feeling' capacity of these other bodies. Bodies are moved by forces that they in turn mold to construct their connections and co-create the social world they inhabit, not just in familiar surroundings.

Beings are corporeal, that is why it is important to understand that the body does not dissociate an interior and an exterior as it extends readily beyond its surface (the skin). This extension enables the flow of affect. Latour confirms that the body is a crucial transmitter and receiver of energies: "to have a body is to learn to be affected, meaning 'effectuated', moved, put into motion, by other entities, human or non-human" (Latour, 2004, p. 205). Human bodies also have an intersubjective capacity, the ability to become centered on other bodies as each body seeks not just to mimic others but to be recognized and its existence validated by others. Latour thus speaks of gatherings in which we learn to inhabit the world. This life-world marked by mutual recognition serves as a shared background that enables communication to take place. Some authors have described affect as an 'interface' between bodies or between bodies and the spaces they traverse, as they create a social corpus.

Geographers have focused their interest in emotions and affect as composite relations of meanings shared through space: "emotion adheres to and shapes selves differently in certain times and contexts" (Thrift, 2008, p. 188). Affect diffuses not just from individuals (singly or in groups) to others. Affect occurs in all spaces occupied by bodies (Clough, 2010; McCormack, 2003; Thrift, 2004, 2008). Duff (2010) confirms that the "affective experience of place making" does enrich places and augments the feeling of belonging. It is not just a minor intellectual concern. Certain spaces are more prone to produce specific kinds of emotions than others: as a result of particular configurations of social scripts, the performance of the actors present, and the 'staging' of that space (Irvine, 2007). The emotional and the social are knit together in spatial constructions. Emergence and diffusion of affect create qualitative difference to the experience of a place or space. Tourists then are affected by place even if the stay is temporary.

Böhme (2006) insists on the spatiality of atmospheres created by affect both in how it diffuses, however indefinite or unstable; and how it surrounds or envelopes individuals or groups. Affect thus plays a major role in how our social imaginaries are constituted, also because of the interactions that occur between place, identity and values (Davidson & Milligan, 2004; Davidson, Smith, Bondi, & Probyn, 2008). As bodies weave temporary social relations and use and occupy spaces, they also create places. Social spaces (including tourism ones and the encounters that take place there) are always emergent; their reality comes about through the action of social agents. Places in turn are shaped by the multitude of practices and encounters experienced there (Thrift, 2004). Transmission of affect then becomes one of their properties. Places in and of themselves can evoke certain emotions, engender familiarity and belonging or repulse.

Affect, a non-representational emotion

Affect is beyond the senses that can be signified and is not consciously directed by actors upon others. Brennan (2004) defines affect as the non-representational physiological shifts that are experienced during an encounter. Reason can only serve and obey affect because reason cannot account for it as a connection exists even if it cannot be detected. Decoding affective effects and their intensities cannot be predetermined; it would seem that people cannot be manipulated to receive or transmit. Brennan adds that affect cannot easily be captured via spectacular-theatrical theories of representation. Manifestations of affect tend to be rather unpredictable too, since it is almost impossible to describe how they circulate. Affective diffusion is very difficult to control because it

can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. Affect, in other words, has been difficult to detect because it is a non-representable sense. Affect is a form of socialization that is always interpersonal, a form of unconscious communication (Bondi, 2013; Eliot, 1952, chap. 3; Pile, 2010).

How we perceive an experience is linked to memories. The immediate response recalls myriad details of past experiences. Memory, affect, experience, all influence how one reacts to the surrounding atmosphere which remains invisible and untranslatable; nonetheless something is communicated. What determines people's behavior such as reaction to an ambience, whether as individuals or a community, may require new ways to measure them, possibly borrowed from other fields, since they do not fit traditional forms of recording and explanation (Throsby, 2003). Our powers of representation are limited and our thoughts fall short of our senses and feelings. Because events cannot be fully represented, no justification can claim to have a complete understanding of the event but it does not mean the event did not exist. Tourists who were requested to record immediate reactions to their experiences felt it almost impossible to translate their sensations into words (Lee, 2000).

Text, obtained from interviews and other methods of research, makes up most of the data used in research, but the world expresses itself in numerous ways that cannot always be grasped with language. Scientists also insist that senses interact, that they can never be considered in isolation. Ylönen asserts that knowledge can "emerge as flashes" recorded by our senses, not necessarily as "logical-rational knowledge" (Ylönen, 2003, p. 565) that can be readily narrated. Humans can communicate easily and understand complex events even without the use of words (Boyd, 2009). Relying only on the textual enables one to forget the varied registers of emotion and corporeal performance of others and it can lead to missing or misinterpreting the dynamics of crowds and their actions (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). The aim of using affect theory in this article is to offer an appreciation of happenings that have not been textually registered but that might well govern actions.

Affect and social power

The affective capacities of any given atmosphere are signified unequally as bodies belong to socialized subjects (e.g. gendered, racialized, sexualized, etc.) who respond to social norms as "the hardness of social facts rests partly on social agreement" (Hastrup, 2004, p. 234). The social group one belongs to influences (sometimes even determines) people's attitudes or reactions before the start of the encounter ballet. Affect cannot influence others in a universal manner. Bodies affect or are affected differently depending on their location in the power grid. Different bodies command varied capacities to respond (Tolia-Kelly, 2006). Some also depend more on others' affective strategies. Active and mobile bodies face, because of their power, different kinds of opportunities to visit destinations or to perform once there. Power hierarchies still determine how different bodies can master identities, encounters and social space. 'Power geometries' remain embedded in the way we relate to others including in tourism (d'Hauteserre, 2006, 2009).

Most societies tend to demonstrate different kinds of socialized cultural expectations about emotion and thus affect. Personal idiosyncrasies in sensing remain contoured by the culturally determined form of sensory order: "culture tunes our neurons" asserts Howes (2005, p. 21). Cultural formation molds perception together with biology and/or psychology and/or personal circumstances (Sacks, 2005; Voestermand & Verheggen, 2013). Social and cultural practices determine senses and the way people experience and use them. They also exemplify the complex interplay of unpredictable and uneven effects, leading to often competing affective responses. Affect engenders collective atmospheres through social and cultural registers which determine particular and distinct(ive) tourism geographies. It is thus important to recognize that moving between cultural settings (travelling) can exacerbate emotional dynamics in unpredictable ways. Such knowledge is essential to understand the role of human interactions in constructing place and identity in tourism, a kind of "belonging to a situation" (Thrift, 2008, p. 216).

Affect in tourism

Attention is now directed at how affect might be experienced in tourism destinations even though affect is not read the way emotions can be deciphered and expressed. Theories of affect challenge the

assumption that affect is entirely private and is projected onto others from within individuals for personal benefit. As it emerges and diffuses, an atmosphere must be apprehended, so it is then reworked as experience. Responsiveness and openness to an affective atmosphere involve an interweaving of the personal with the social. The tourism experience is a product of the economy, in which resources take the form of an energy that circulates to create feelings and desires. The goal of economic acts or events is to excite as much intensity as possible on bodies by tugging at or awakening feelings and desires through the senses, a form of affect. Most tourism experiences occur in the company of others. Tourists congregate in destinations in which they often cross paths with other tourists and locals and in which "affective engagement captures the emergent force... that transforms space into place" (Duff, 2010), a form of energy that thus arouses affect by/for the place visited. It is difficult to reach individuals to inflect their affect but they might be pushed by the ambience created by group formations.

Emotions and affect, as different modalities of feeling in the body, thus circulate in and shape our lives through tourism experiences. They work in often complex collaborative (but not always positive) partnerships. The collective identity of tourists is, most of all, an emotion, a positive affect towards the other performers on the tourism stage. It is important not to underestimate the pleasurable dimensions of collective action. Travel and holidays are key moments. Expectations are high and often emotional. These sensations lead to the creation of diverse affective atmospheres which determine how the destination will be experienced (Duff, 2010). Tourists and locals (but also suppliers who are not always locals) are conjointly engaged as active participants in the choreography of the tourist experience and the affect it might diffuse. The emergence and diffusion of affect do create some qualitative difference to the experience of a place or space as emphasized by Stoller (1989) because they awaken the senses. Affect also combines with other sensory elements to define atmospheres and the spaces/places they link bodies to. To move to, and within, a destination, hence, means being affected by the place and its other occupants. Tourists then are affected by place even if the stay is temporary.

The tourist experience, of the environment and of the other persons and things which inhabit that environment, is produced by how senses have been aroused and how they shape the experience lived in destinations (Duff, 2010). Protean Strategies (2012) and a Loughborough study (Ashe, 2012) both underline the important role of emotions in decision-making by tourists. Their studies demonstrate the strong link between the perception that tourists' emotional needs will be fulfilled and the decision to make the reservation. Such fulfilment will lead to positive affect while discrepancy between those emotions and the reality at the destination would lead tourists to diffuse negative affect. Collective affective processes can be quite intense even if they cannot be translated into words because they are communicated by arousing a feeling. Affect is beyond the senses that can be signified so that its role has remained unrecognized in tourism especially since it is not consciously directed by actors upon others. In sections three and four, the examples chosen should demonstrate how affect from all different participants in the tourism experience can create positive or negative attractivity.

Affect as a positive force

Though Monaco lies along the Mediterranean coast, celebrated by Stendahl (1838), it boasts only one very artificial beach protected by a net from unwanted invasions from the sea (including jelly-fish). Most of its rocky landscapes plunge to the sea or have been thoroughly urbanized to the edge of the water. These challenge attractive destination development. The Principality has built other attractions for tourists, the most famous being its Casino. But are they truly responsible for its attractivity? Affect as a social experience provokes a complex interplay of often competing responses to circumstances as they exist in a given destination; subjects who are affected align themselves "with and against" (Ahmed, 2004). When affect is registered as positive, it enables the body to gain power and thus become joyful. Enjoyment is embodied and inherently social; enjoyment though can be thorny, even treacherous, and foster illusions. Joy, excitement, frustration and other emotions affect anticipation of the journey and how the destination will be experienced. One might speculate on the interplay of experience and memory and the role of affect on that memory. This section will discuss some examples of positive affect demonstrated in Monaco.

For tourists, in fact, the encounter and thus their response to affect begin at home, when viewing images (TV commercials, documentaries, postcards, brochures) that engage visceral sensibility (Ashe, 2012; Walters, Sparks, & Herington, 2012). Promotional media seek an 'affective' reaction to inform decision-making by consumers. Film and literature too shape how people think about a landscape and the effect is usually emotive (Smaill, 2010; Weik von Mossner, 2013). Film tourism encourages such resonance by providing guides to the locations where each scene in a movie was recorded, reminding the reader of the emotions aroused when watching the movie or reading the original novel. No movie has been shot in Monaco but its Casino and the aura of the Principality have been diffused in many films (e.g. some James Bond films). Movie stars frequent the reigning Princes and attend important public events (Best of Monaco, 1999–2012; personal observation). Monaco emphasizes the riches of the multi-faceted Principality, its undeniable expertise and the prevailing climate of safety. These have supported its continued economic growth including in its tourism sector (Best of Monaco, 2014).

Tourist encounters can be an opportunity for positive relations of affect, a connection between strangers, a momentary feeling of unity. Affect does force people into some social relational configuration even if it cannot determine its nature. Do/can encounters between tourists and between tourists and locals, be constructed to engender trust and liking rather than indifference, fear or even hostility? Familiarity and sense of safety which are so important in emotional stability are most unsettled when confronted with unfamiliar landscapes, ideas or situations (Svasek & Skrbis, 2007). Emotions are more than reactions to these (un)familiar situations; emotions have been primed by evolution to ensure our survival as a species (Boyd, 2009); they are constitutive of how we experience unknown spaces and incorporate them as familiar or reject them as abject as discussed in section "Affect circulates between agents but also through space and constructs our social world and the spaces it diffuses through". When tourists reach the location in real life they hope to revisit the emotions aroused by images from the destination. Tourists wish to be recognized and their experience validated in the destination, they want to feel welcomed. This can only come through the vibes communicated by and with the locals who represent, even if only temporarily, their social community.

Monaco, since the 1860s, has always catered to the elite. The actions of the reigning Princes in Monaco have ensured the financial wherewithal of the Principality since it was left with one twentieth of its territory, following the 1861 treaty with France that guaranteed its sovereignty. It concluded that taxing the few residents left would not ensure financial independence, so it searched for other sources of revenue (Decaux, 1997). Since one such source was 'tourism', the Principality sought to influence the 'atmosphere' it presents to visitors and residents alike. Not all residents are citizens of Monaco. Most non-citizen residents are wealthy foreigners (Best of Monaco, 2014). Tourists, visitors and residents manage to occupy or use many sites where they can mingle, rarely knowledgeable of the identity of those they encounter but generally aware of the potential of running into some celebrity or for celebrities to bump unexpectedly into each other or to meet real fans (participant observation). Neighborhoods are socially mixed because construction can only occur when space frees up. Most developers dare not turn down any specific location. At the same time, some of the empty spaces can be pre-empted for social housing, even if right next to luxury housing (Best of Monaco, 2004, 2010; Livre Blanc, 1999).

In Monaco, to avoid negative reactions to the display of wealth, and abjection for the place by wealthy tourists, the Principality has set up a network of cameras that have rendered it the safest area in France and probably in Europe. Negative affect from less fortunate tourists is 'controlled' by a very present police force too. Shopping in Monaco is practiced by tourists since residents are few (40,000). Tourists and visitors (those who do not stay overnight) number in the millions so the quality of the welcome could be less decisive, yet it is affective enough to keep them returning. The quality of affect of locals has also been taken into account: residents of Monaco have priority for jobs available on the territory and for housing; they are protected during their most senior years (Best of Monaco, 2004, 2010; Livre Blanc, 1999); most are proud of the Principality's independent status (it is recognized as a country by the United Nations) and of the Principality's ability to act at the international level (Best of Monaco, 2012). Their Prince hobnobs with other heads of state, even those of large and powerful countries, and other celebrities (Best of Monaco, 2000–2014). Residents also approve their Prince's insistence on the greening of the Principality (d'Hauteserre, 2005a) and the safeguard of the marine eco-systems of the Mediterranean, practiced since Albert I's reign (Monaco Economie, 2007).

Monaco could have just become another site along the Mediterranean coast abandoned by tourists for more interesting shores (Williams, 2009). Many Europeans have chosen to travel to more remote destinations as the Mediterranean coast became a haven for hordes of workers from the rest of Europe in July and August. Intensive collective processes of affect are powerful motivators for people used to crowded urban living conditions in Northern Europe. They are ready to share performance space along the Mediterranean (participant observation). The Principality, in opposition to, and despite the degradation of, many destinations along the Mediterranean, has continuously constructed its superior attractivity (or a positive affective ambience) by designing activities sought by the titled and the wealthy: Formula 1 racing and Rallies, international level circus acts and competitions, a symphony orchestra and a ballet company, a major football club, to name a few (d'Hauteserre, 2001, in press).

Monaco offers tourists the glitz and glamour it advertises through multiple glossy magazines published by the Principality and elsewhere. Its public relations also maintain the presence of the Prince and of Monaco in international news. The Principality is a place that attracts gazing not just at its landscapes, which one comes to with expectations such as enriching one's travel experience. Landscapes remain 'sites for the imagination' that provoke affective responses. Most tourists come to gaze and even gawk at dignitaries, celebrities, aristocrats and their paraphernalia, in particular cars. Attending a Formula 1 race in Monaco, for example, engenders a rare moment of communion with others, an instant of inclusion, contributing to the diffusion of positive affect amongst the group and for the destination (participant observation). The Principality often organizes events or activities on its water front where tourists and visitors mix as they stroll and exchange indiscernible affect with locals (participant observation). Reciprocal positive affects seem to circulate between tourists, visitors, locals and the wealthy.

Negative affect(s) or abjection

The island of Tahiti offers beautiful vistas of colorful lagoons that contrast with the dark blue ocean and green landscapes along variegated mountain slopes, advantages for tourism growth. Tahiti has few beaches: large ones are of black sand, decried for burning the delicate soles of tourists. Tahiti and its Islands offer the 'original tropical paradise' with bountiful vegetation and beautiful *vahines* (Indigenous women whose sexual prohibitions would be as thin as the material of their clothing) but have done little to update and to render their image more attractive than in Bougainville or Captain Cook's time (Air Tahiti Magazine; interviews of tourism officials, 2012; Maume, 2008; Reva Tahiti (1998–2013). Is that why so few actually visit today? Or is something else happening? This section attempts to explain the diminishing numbers of tourists to Tahiti, which seems to be the result of profound but unexpressed dislike for the destination, developed during the stay, i.e. tourists seem to respond to negative affect or even abjection diffused in the destination (see section "Affect in tourism"). Places that offer no memorable recollection and no feeling of personal enrichment will transmit negative affect (Duff, 2010). The resulting atmosphere may be one of dislike or even hostility or in extreme cases lead to abjection.

For Kristeva, and as used in this paper, the abject means disruption to the known order. The abject transgresses borders, it is in between and ambiguous: it is not necessarily dirt or a lack of cleanliness or unhealthy conditions that cause abjection but the possibility that one's identity (or the identity of the group that one has associated with), because it has not been recognized and validated, might be jeopardized together with the existing order, social, sexual or other that one is familiar with (Kristeva, 1982). In daily life one maps out what counts as proper and improper, clean and unclean, possible and impossible. The abject is repressed because it threatens the proper order of life that subjective identity construction relies on (Kristeva, 1982). The abject has a dual life: it both repels and pleasures. Its threat derives from its promise of unwanted outcomes that one can fall into through just an instant of weakness and hesitation. The destination might offer unwelcome temptations or displays, or travel there and within might have been difficult so that one would not consider returning there. It is however rare to find destinations that are considered truly abject.

The human need to feel socially integrated, wherever humans are, means that the destination and its residents must also satisfy the expectations and emotions born from the individual imagery created

by tourists before leaving home (see section "Affect as a positive force", paragraphs 2 and 7). When tourists reach the location in real life they hope to revisit those emotions. The destination has to provide, according to Steiner and Reisinger (2006), some form of "existential authenticity" that tourists can be affected by and respond to with their own. Existential authenticity is linked to personal identity and activated when tourists are having a good time. Tourists are more open then because they are free from the constraints of their public roles and the grind of everyday living. However, it has been recognized that evolution has developed in humans an almost innate ability to recognize cheating; it also has "motivated us to punish it" (Boyd 2009, p. 61). In Tahiti, the reality is far from a tropical paradise peopled with gentle welcoming 'primitive' locals that its promotion promises globally (Dossier, 2000; Fayaud, 2011; Maume, 2008; Reva Tahiti, 2013). Tourists would then react negatively to being cheated, diffusing abjection.

Tahiti missed the opportunity to define itself as an exotic destination of luxury (rather than of non-existent primitivism): it should have linked the cultivation of the rare but beautifully different black pearl to its name. Instead its tourism development has been appropriated by outside investors, busy taking advantage of fiscal incentives for construction. As investors speculate on their future sale they leave the buildings to be managed by a few international hotel companies. The government of Tahiti has allowed the black pearl to lose value together with that of its destination brand (DIXIT, 2012; Fenua Economie, 2008; Tahiti Pacifique Magazine, 2010). The black pearl is now cultivated in many other places, just as tourists visit other tropical islands (d'Hauteserre, 2005b). The poor quality of welcome in stores or market stalls in Tahiti seems hardly worth mentioning but it leaves negative traces as shoppers try to persist. Husserl reminds us that even if that lived experience were to be forgotten because it cannot always be recorded in words, "it in no way disappears without a trace" (Husserl, 1972, p. 122). Shopping is an integral part of the tourist performance, if only to support future aestheticized narratives of the experience. Americans expect embracing affect from retailers since 'the customer is always right' in their country. Vendors need to cajole potential customers or they will turn to resort boutiques or do without souvenirs, reducing their affect for the destination.

Tourists who have responded to surveys (Institut de la Statistique de Polynésie française, 2001) have indicated that the welcoming attitude of the residents of Tahiti and its Islands was a plus but it is apparently insufficient to overcome their response to negative affect. They remark that locals in Tahiti do not seem to care for their environment which is littered with plastic bags (decorating trees and fences), drink cans, and half torn garbage bags spilling their contents, often right in front of their owners' property (interviews of tourists and of residents; personal observation). They also hardly seem to seek encounters as they whizz by on their scooters, or sit in air-conditioned cars in long traffic lines four times a day (participant observation; Tahiti Pacifique, 2011). Polynesians themselves hardly frequent tourism spaces as access is often restricted by 'security' employees of the multiple star resorts, unless residents of the islands are willing to pay the high price of drinks and meals offered by the hotels. Tourists who stay in resort accommodation in Tahiti are rarely encouraged to exit those air-conditioned spaces except in specially appointed buses, organized by those who manage the hotels. Linguistic boundaries are maintained by tourists in relation to hosts, while hosts must work at overcoming them, at least to the extent of understanding tourist requests (personal observation).

Tahiti and its Islands would provide tourists exclusiveness and relative solitude considering its remoteness (the Marquesas are an archipelago that is furthest from any major land area) and the small size of its resident population (270,000; Institut de la Statistique de Polynésie française, 2008) as well as the small number of tourists. Tahiti and its Islands have always recognized this element and sought 'yield' over 'volume': most of its hotels are four stars and above resorts, capitalizing on pristine lagoons, outstanding landscapes and a tropical location (participant observation; Maume, 2008; Reva Tahiti, 2013). Tourists in Tahiti recall valleys lush with tropical vegetation as well as the powerful perfume of flowers that evoke them (d'Hauteserre, 2008). The majority of its population is of Polynesian origin, with some Chinese, providing 'primitiveness' and 'exoticism'. Tahiti, unfortunately, is also an expensive destination for geo-political reasons. Tourism operators use this fact to charge high rates, in spite of numerous financial and fiscal incentives to reduce the cost of hotel construction (DIXIT, 2011; Mission d'Evaluation et de Prospective, 2000). However, service lags way behind this aspiration for luxury: the reduced number of employees can provide only minimal service. Polynesians, also, are hospitable but not subservient (d'Hauteserre, 2008).

Tourism experiences have become positional goods, especially those in 'exotic' or remote destinations. Tourists and hosts too respond to a more or less well-known social plot (see section "Affect and social power"). Tourism is a symbolic system used to communicate social status. Holidays are constructed to achieve this social differentiation and the ability to accumulate cultural capital from travel experience (Mowforth & Munt, 2009). Tahiti and its Islands long evoked sexual license with consenting *vahine*s. Local residents of Tahiti feel rejected by the tourism industry, except when they present dance shows, as visitors seem enthralled by the spectacle. Tahiti at the same time became the palimpsest of 'tropical paradise destinations' (d'Hauteserre, 2005b, 2009), where tourists show little interest or concern for the dignity of the local cultural and social milieu or for everyday life. Only 4.3% of tourists appreciated the local ambience (Institut, 2001). Most tourists' engagements with local 'others' are when locals serve their needs, diffusing a negative affect.

In turn, local residents are hardly encouraged to demonstrate fondness for tourists. Training for excellence in service hardly exists. Salaries in the hospitality sector in Tahiti and its Islands are low, sometimes even lower than the minimum wage. The wealth that tourists display (though often unwittingly) attracts even petty theft. Hotel managers do not always maintain all the equipment that tourists are promised (Fenua-Economie, 2009; participant observation). These elements would seem to diffuse negative affect, especially towards tourists. Tourists themselves, already feeling cheated by the modern lifestyle of the locals, would register or absorb no recognition or validation affect from their visit to Tahiti. In fact, tourism return business in Tahiti and its Islands has never reached 10% even though 62.9% of tourists asserted they would certainly return (Institut, 2001). Tourism, in places like Tahiti, needs to consider fostering a positively vibrant affect if it wants to increase the number of return tourists: it is less costly to count on returnees who spread positive word of mouth than to promote oneself to ever new markets.

Conclusion

The theory of affect has been proposed to explain why some attractions, even globally known ones, do not always have sufficient appeal to entice return tourist dollars or the appeal has been stifled, while others keep on attracting them. Affect is a feeling that diffuses between individuals and within groups of people. Affect matters because it is linked to some of our basic emotions: we need recognition from others to construct our identities and this recognition comes from our ability to move others (Boyd, 2009; Reddy, 2012). Tourist destinations offer many opportunities for visitors to be affected. Tourists, in their quest for social capital, will form some kind of collective identity as they perform in a destination. The atmosphere, the kind of ambience that is communicated to tourists and locals through affect(s), is registered by all stakeholders. It is also generated by them as their bodies resonate with its diffusion, as a response, for example, to a 'vibrant atmosphere'. In Monaco such vibrancy was enhanced because the destination seems to go beyond its promotion in positive ways. Bodies experience affective responses even if they are not able to consciously describe or explain them, because as noted early on by Spinoza, all bodies can be affected by others.

Affect does have an energetic dimension that "can enhance or deplete" (Brennan, 2004, p. 6) and which cannot be ignored by tourism promoters even though much of it cannot be controlled. It can be an important but non conscious aspect of a positive desire to return to a certain destination. Though not consciously recorded or noted, it seems to influence the appeal of the destination. Affective relations are complex, active and often only partial: multiple but scattered and random, distributed sporadically, not in regular patterns but still interfering, connecting, influencing. Affective atmospheres, at least positive ones, according to Anderson (2009) provide the resources necessary to perform in a destination so one can compose a positive narrative of one's experiential authenticity and enhanced self-identity upon return. Responding to negative affect the power in the body diminishes and is recorded as sadness (Deleuze, 1995), reducing the desire to return to where it occurred. Affect thus is not always or necessarily positive.

Reactions to and the general atmosphere of destinations can be better understood if their embodied sensual and emotional origin is accepted: residents refuse to cooperate or tourists fail to return because of personal experiences of rejection, or of misalignment of their experience with their

sociality, often not directly conscious ones. Negative affect from indifferent or flattened spaces translates as fragments hardly worth recollecting because of an absence of feeling of personal enrichment (Casey 2001). Some destinations do not offer the ambience or the setting that their promotion promised, as in Tahiti (Tahiti Pacifique, 2012, p. 10) even though residents might not know what has been promoted. Other elements can augment this negative pulse. Negative affect tends to stick as effectively as positive affect. Affect might have little influence over tourists who consider a destination for the first time since there will have been no opportunity to 'touch' them prior to arrival. Affect is, however, influential in determining return visits. Tahiti and its Islands could turn to Monaco as a model in the promotion of a positive affective atmosphere.

Accounting for affective relations is only tentative since they exist as practice but escape capture with words. Positive claims might seem uncertain, but uncertainty indicates a more open way to knowledge, an increase in the scope of inquiry, in opposition to repetitious lists of factors, some of which one can do little about, such as the distance of Tahiti from main outbound markets. Such lists can also bar novel ways/areas of inquiry as they create domains of exclusion. Understanding the existence and power of affect can help devise ways of facilitating or fostering positive expressions of affect to neutralize or counteract negative ones. One interesting avenue of inquiry would be the biological and evolutionary basis of emotions and hence of affect and their exact place in human physiology, in particular the role of 'mirror neurons' (Boyd, 2009), as such research might provide a stronger basis for the influence of affect on the attractivity of destinations. The study of affect, or using affect theory, should also advance pre/non-discursive dimensions of experience since affect diffusion is not directly perceptible.

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