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Co-performing tourism places: The “Pink Night” festival

Massimo Giovanardi, Andrea Lucarelli, Patrick L'Espoir Decosta *

School of Business, Stockholm University, Kräftriket 3A, SE-10691 Stockholm, Sweden

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ABSTRACT

This paper adopts an ecological perspective to analyze the practices and processes inherent in encounters between residents and tourists. The study contributes to the literature on performance and performativity, seen as a novel theoretical approach in tourism studies, by proposing the concept of performative field, which enables a holistic and ecological consideration of the performances and relationships in tourism. This is in contrast with the binary logic emerging from the available studies, where confrontation between “hosts” and “guests” as two well-distinguished performative forces appears to be the norm. The study draws on non-representational theories and illustrates its arguments through an investigation of the “Pink Night” (*La Notte Rosa*), an annual festival staged along the Romagna coastal region – a most renowned Italian mass-tourism destination.

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Introduction

As an activity that requires its participants to travel to places and move within and through these places, tourism represents a key force that contributes to forging complex interrelationships between people and places. In an increasingly interconnected world, stakeholders in the tourism industry compete to entice a variety of tourists along their routes by consistently “co-opting” them into the processes through which tourism places are produced, consumed, and reproduced. One such process involves performance and performativity, concepts that have already been embraced in tourism research (e.g., Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, & Urry, 2004; Coleman & Crang, 2002; Edensor 2000; Edensor 2001; Quinn, 2007) and which Cohen and Cohen (2012) identified as a perspective with far-reaching implications and the potential for further study.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +46 8 6747447; fax: +46 8 6747440.

E-mail addresses: massimo.giovanardi@fek.su.se (M. Giovanardi), alu@fek.su.se (A. Lucarelli), pld@fek.su.se (P. L'Espoir Decosta).

The aforementioned studies have the credibility to challenge the “sedentarism” that characterizes places as normal, stable, and with clearly set meanings, and treats as abnormal characteristics that emphasize distance, change, and placelessness (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 208). Accordingly, tourism places should not be viewed as “fixed cartographically coordinated space[s]” (Coleman & Crang, 2002, p. 11) through which tourists pass and simply move around. Rather, they should be seen as “places in play” (Sheller & Urry, 2004, p. 1). The implication is that the performances of different types of actors, such as tourists, residents, tourism workers, commuters and “city users” (Martinotti, 1993) continuously shape and re-shape these places as dynamic expressive constructs and actions.

This paper adopts an ecological perspective (Tsoukas & Dooley, 2011) to analyze the practices and processes inherent in encounters between residents and tourists. The ecological perspective embraces complexity by reinstating the interactive role of the environment in the creation of a connection between places and people (Sands, 2001), and acknowledges performance as emergent, non-linear and immanent. This novel approach diverges from the prevalent emerging trend in empirical studies of performance and performativity, which refers to a performative arena that is molded by a reductionist binary logic of “action/reaction” in which confrontation between “hosts” and “guests” appears to be the norm (Edensor, 2001; Mordue, 2005; Quinn, 2007). Drawing from Allsopp’s (2000) qualms regarding performance, this study suggests that an ecological perspective to the co-performing of “hosts” and “guests” represents a fresh approach that properly elucidates the complex systems of “host-guest interactions” (Sheller & Urry, 2004, p. 6) that dynamically create tourism places and make them “happen”. Subsequently, the same spirit of ecological fit and natural derivation is applied to an analysis of the “Pink Night”, an annual festival staged along the Romagna coastal region – a renowned mass-tourism destination in Italy.

Co-Performing Tourism Places

Within tourism studies, Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical view of everyday life has persisted as a root metaphor (Turner, cited in Chaney, 2002, p. 195), beginning with MacCannel’s (1976) contribution to the field. However, it is only in the last decade that the metaphors of performance and performativity have attracted a certain amount of attention and momentum in tourism studies with respect to the articulation of self-identity (Hyde & Olesen, 2011; Noy, 2008) and particularly to the construction of places. Thus, to Coleman and Crang (2002, p. 10) “tourism as an activity implies a series of performances within places” that are not static containers filled with fixed surroundings (ibid.), but are continuously created and transformed by performances (see also Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Sheller & Urry, 2004). Therefore, these practices cannot be separated from the places that surround them, as long as “. . . many different mobilities inform tourism, shape the places where tourism is performed, and drive the making and unmaking of tourist destinations” (Sheller & Urry, 2004, p. 1). The latter are subsequently not only the outcome of the performance that arises from “mobilities of people” (ibid.) and others but also of the human emotions and atmospheres emanating from the place and interactions therein.

Authors who embrace this performance-centered approach ascribe pivotal importance to relationality and encounters, where *relationality* refers to and includes open-ended interactions through which entities emerge out of the environment’s constituent parts and come into being (Dillon in Tsoukas & Dooley, 2011, p. 732). Indeed, these two factors are deemed to be crucial engines in the ongoing [re]production of tourism places that are deemed “complex systems of diverse intersecting mobilities” (Sheller & Urry, 2004, p. 6). Nonetheless, such authors and their empirical studies have offered only a partial explanation of this complexity. Their studies tend to approach performativity in tourism places with a mere examination resulting from binary dichotomies, thereby neglecting a holistic approach that should include a “processual” perspective. This would recognize not only the significance of environment but also the crucial role of human agency (Steward, 1972).

Furthermore, the then “Newtonian style” of thinking that underlay these studies relies upon splitting and isolating characteristics of the phenomenon of tourism place creation rather than connecting and contextualizing it (Tsoukas & Dooley, 2011, p. 730), as evidenced by two categories of limitation inherent in the “Newtonian style”. The first, which Quinn also identifies (2007, p. 460), is the tendency

to problematize the issue of performativity in tourism places by focusing primarily on tourists (Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Sheller & Urry, 2004). Although these studies acknowledge that both hosts and guests actively engage in performing tourism places, and that destinations stem from their encounters, they discount the deeper significance of interdependences between hosts and guests. For example, though Bærenholdt et al. (2004) recognize the importance of the various types of performances of hosts and guests in the dynamism of places, they nevertheless ascribe greater potency to performances “[but] especially by ‘guests’” (2004, p. 150). Similarly, to Sheller and Urry (2004) “places [...] depend on what gets bodily performed within them by ‘hosts’ and especially by various kinds of ‘guest’” (p. 205).

The second category of limitation relates to studies that consider the intersection between performances of tourists and locals within a frame of conflict (Eade, 2002; Edensor 2001; Mordue, 2005) and opposition (Quinn, 2007), thus offering only a limited account of the possible outcomes of these encounters. Indeed, the emerging view is characterized by a performative arena molded by a mechanistic logic of “action/reaction” in which conflict and opposition between “hosts” and “guests” appear to be the norm. A recurrent argument is the notion of “local resistance”, which can be traced to Nash's (1977) and Greenwood's (1977) classic works on power asymmetry. Eade (2002), for example, describes the performances enacted by locals in London's East End as a reaction to the “commodification of their backstage” (p. 139) by tourists, as performative clashes that deter future tourists from visiting the area.

Edensor (2000) intensively investigates these encounters. His work presents a Foucauldian setting of “dramas” dominated by more and/or less rigid regimes of stage management that he respectively defines as “enclavic” and “heterogeneous” spaces. The intertwining of practices by hosts and guests are specifically considered with regard to the presence of “key workers” (Edensor, 2001, p. 69–71) capable of regulating and scripting the tourist experience in specific ways. Mordue (2005) illustrates a similar scenario defined by power dynamics. He acknowledges that hosts and guests “can interchange and co-act, albeit often unwittingly” (ibid., p. 195), but this interplay occurs as long as they simultaneously assume the roles of “Foucauldian targets or agents” (ibidem). Quinn (2007) focuses on the residents' performances as practices that are creatively enacted in response to the presence of tourists in Venice. However, she explores the relationship between the performances of hosts and guests only according to the effects that tourists exert on the locals, thus supporting the concept of tourism as a performative arena ruled by the action/reaction logic that this study seeks to challenge. The challenge of further developing a relational understanding of performativity within tourism resonates with suggestions articulated by cultural geographers who underline the inter-relational and inter-subjective character of performances. Thus, in their investigation of car-boot sales, Gregson and Rose (2000) sought to “examine the social relations of performances and the relationality of their spaces [...] where the distinction between ‘actor’ and ‘audience’ is displaced, fuzzy” (2000: 442). Similarly, Crouch (2003) acknowledged the importance of the inter-subjective character of performance in his study on caravanners and gardeners, recognizing that performers influenced each other while moving and gesturing across space (1950). Desmond (1999) extends the relationality of performance in the realm of non-human agency in her study of how the performance of whales is mediated within their theatrical staging of their performance (Cloke & Perkins, 2005).

Tucker's (2002) work on the tourist village of Goreme (Turkey) provides a more nuanced approach to performances between hosts and guests. She describes how tourism businesses and professionals seek to create a particular view of Goreme by presenting the place as a type of “Bedrock”, the town inhabited by the *Flintstones* characters from the classic animated television series. Tucker's ethnographic work reveals that the interactions between tourists and villagers occur within a context of play in which “hosts” choose to present themselves and their village as a fictional comic place within which the performance of the place is carried out together with the tourists (ibid., p. 153). The implication in Tucker's work is that play and games are insightful concepts that serve to clarify the interactions between performances of guests and hosts. Indeed, it is through play and games that the local population could divert the representations placed upon them by official tourism discourses. In that sense, Tucker remains faithful to the frame of conflict and opposition.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that Tucker's study, like most studies dealing with performativity in tourism, tends to neglect the role of the “body” of both tourists and residents. This limitation has

resulted in a partial decorporalization of performance that is sometimes mirrored in the application of methods of inquiry that are not appropriate to capture the movement and the sensoriality inherent in performing bodies. Following Allsopp's (2000) qualms about the notion of performance, this study seeks to overcome the above-mentioned shortcomings by conceptualizing tourism performances within a wider set of interdependencies and connections among environmental and social factors. The “ecological style” (Toulmin, 1980) adopted here challenges the reductionist approach inherent in a dualistic Newtonian world view by embracing all manifestations of complexity, such as non-linearity, emergence, and becoming (Tsoukas & Dooley, 2011). Accordingly, this paper adopts Allsopp's (2000: p. 4) view of performance as part of an inclusive ecology that recognizes the interdependence and interrelations between the elements that constitute a place and that are “in play”.

This inquiry into the interactions between hosts and guests during the Pink Night festival uses “inclusive ecology” as an analytical approach to demonstrate how these relations are “in play.” In so doing, the study seeks to elaborate upon a more holistic relational reading of performativity in tourism study by challenging the unidirectional binary logic of action/reaction between hosts and guests that underlies similar studies to date. This study seeks to acknowledge the “power of the body” in tourism research, thus responding to the call of Crouch and Desforges (2003), and to re-focus it on the realm of performance-centered studies within tourism research as an “unavoidable medium through which we are involved in the world” (Obrador Pons, 2003, p. 48).

The Romagna Riviera

To more clearly illustrate how tourism places emerge as a result of co-performance, this paper relies on an in-depth study of a particular festival: the Pink Night of the Italian Romagna Riviera. This coastal area is located in the Emilia-Romagna Region, and its territory belongs to four neighboring Provinces: Ferrara, Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena and Rimini, extending from Comacchio to Cattolica in the south (see Fig. 1). The region is situated on the east coast of the Italian peninsula and overlooks the Adriatic Sea. It began to gain international recognition at the end of the 18th century when European

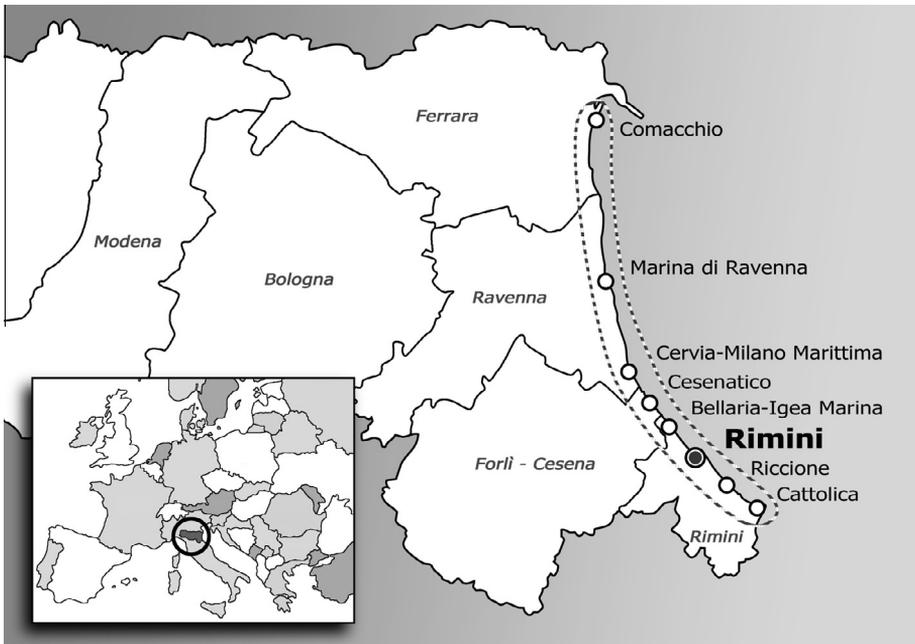


Fig. 1. The Romagna Riviera, Italy.

kings and aristocrats chose it as their sunbathing resort. Rimini – the Riviera's epicenter and now a city with 150,000 inhabitants – was nicknamed "The Ostend of Italy." The number of hotels in Rimini increased significantly in the period between the two World Wars, attracting middle class tourists and giving shape to the first specialized tourism district in Italy (Battilani & Fauri, 2009). Despite the presence of a remarkable Roman and Renaissance heritage (Tiberius Bridge, Arch of Augustus and Leon Battista Alberti's Malatesta Temple), Rimini's success as a destination was based primarily on seaside tourism.

After WWII, the establishment of the so-called "Rimini Model" (Conti & Perrelli, 2004), based primarily on mass tourism and the creation of small and medium enterprises to serve them, propelled the area from a leisure location for elites into a seaside destination for the masses. Since then, Rimini has become one of the most renowned tourism regions in Europe (Rossini, 2004). Despite the crisis of the seaside resort-based economy in the late 1970s and the simultaneous strengthening of the industrial sector in the hinterland (Battilani & Fauri, 2009), the coastal area of the Romagna Riviera has remained one of the most visited tourism destinations in Italy, with 4,977,560 arrivals and 28,479,348 overnight guests in 2011 (ISTAT, 2013). Moreover, during the seaside season (from about May to September), the population of the area increases several fold as second-home owners flock to the seaside, turning it into a conurbation connected to the sea by 110 kilometers of crowded beaches and bustling sea resorts. The *bagni* (bathhouses) are the most iconic and characteristic tourist facilities on the beaches; they serve the needs of tourists and simultaneously function as recreational centers for local residents to escape their daily work routines (Battilani & Fauri, 2009).

Bad publicity following the eutrophication of the Adriatic Sea and the subsequent growth of algae between the 1980s and 1990s created significant challenges for local administrators and the tourism sector (Becheri, 1991). Yet the existence of a leisure district developed in the 1970s and a renewed interest in conference tourism and theme parks enabled Rimini and the Riviera to maintain their status within the tourism market (Battilani & Fauri, 2009). In particular, the expansion of the entertainment infrastructure (discos, nightclubs etc.) in the 1980s turned Rimini into a unique resort within the Mediterranean region and it came to be known as the "trendy disco capital of Italy" (Battilani, 2009, p. 113).

One of the primary features of the Romagna Riviera's tourism sector is the presence of hundreds of small-to-middle-sized enterprises, many of which are family-run. By 2011, the five coastal towns located in the Province of Rimini had over 2,000 hotels and guesthouses (Province of Rimini, 2011), a considerable percentage of which had been passed from one generation to the next since their establishment (Battilani & Fauri, 2009). Hoteliers in Romagna have been able to develop a so-called "culture of hospitality" dating back to the inter-war period. Indeed, tourists and hoteliers alike frequently came from the urban middle classes. In this context, the hotel trade had yet to become a profession and was instead based on shared informal skills and social standing. This implies shared social norms of behavior and lifestyle, which impacted the provision of services required by the hotel guests (*ibidem*).

The Pink Night festival

In order to sustain its development and economic well-being, the tourism department of the province of Rimini launched a tourism marketing initiative in 2006 known as the Pink Night festival (*La Notte Rosa*). The aim was to reaffirm the Riviera's leadership "in the world of nightlife and fun" (promotional brochure). In particular, the event was conceived as "the eve of the summer's New Year," a big "party" celebrated on the first weekend of July during which the 110 kilometers of coastline of "the entire Riviera turns pink" (promotional brochure). Promoters interpreted pink as "the color of relationships and hospitality" with a "feminine connotation" (promotional brochure). The organizers explain that the festival was designed as a sort of response to the traditional format of White Night or *nuit blanche* (Jiwa, Coca-Stefaniak, Blackwell, & Rahman, 2009) which employs white as the main thematic color.

In the marketing and tourism studies literature, the color pink frequently refers to the purchasing power of lesbians and gay men (Hughes, 2006, p. 2). Expressions such as "pink dollar," "pink pound" and "pink travel economy" have been used to categorize them as a discrete consumer group within the tourism market (Pritchard, Morgan, Sedgely, & Jenkins, 1998; Pritchard, Morgan, Sedgely, Khan, &

Jenkins, 2000). In this study, the Pink Night has no such gay connotation. In the Romagna Riviera, the Pink Night is an event characterized by street performances, firework exhibitions, light installations and concerts by renowned headliners. These represent the “official” part of the celebration and are the result of a complex actor-network comprised of public bodies and private organizations involved in the event. In addition to these attractions, a number of supporting “unofficial” initiatives are organized by private contributors who hire musicians and performers, organize pink dinners and *vernissages* (opening parties), decorate shop windows, and prepare pink street furniture. Moreover, people dress themselves in pink clothing and display a variety of pink accessories. These unofficial attractions constitute a key element of the celebration, enabling both locals and tourists to easily contribute in an original and highly personal manner. As explained by organizers in the promotional brochure, “everybody has a part to play” in the festival, which purports to redeem a declining region through an ethical rebalance of its image.

Events and festivals do not only influence the development of tourist places (García, 2004; Getz, 2007; Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007); they also represent culturally and socially meaningful phenomena (Derret, 2003; Giovanardi, 2011; Schuster, 2001). In this study, the Pink Night festival is a valuable source of revenue – two million people participated in the 2011 festivities, which generated proceeds of approximately US\$ 260,000,000 (APT, 2011). Moreover, the festival aptly expresses and displays the “spirit of the Romagna Riviera and its culture of hospitality” offering a unique context in which to examine the role of performance by both hosts and guests in the creation of the tourism place.

Study Methods

This study includes a thorough examination of the Pink Night festival by means of the first-person accounts of two of the researchers who immersed themselves in the event, together with the performative chronicle of participants. This process adopts an emic approach that relies on the visceral emergence from cultural fundamentals (Gao, Zhang & L'Espresso Decosta, 2012) in the performative construction within the place. In that sense, the overall inquiry comes close to a form of “at-home ethnography” (Alvesson, 2009), also considered an “insider-ethnography” as defined by Brannick and Coghlan (2007, p. 59) in “their defense of [researchers] being ‘native’” in organizations and communities. By acknowledging the “insider” position of two researchers within the various aspects of the place and event, this study takes a dual approach recognized in social sciences as epistemic and methodological reflexivity (Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Johnson & Duberley, 2003). Indeed, the authors struggled to exclude their own opinions and observations; i.e., to focus on a methodological reflexivity, but they nonetheless became conscious on occasion of their “incipient... relativism” (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 179) “[so as] to admit their tacit knowledge conditioned their account, that thus reveals their epistemic reflexivity” (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). This is often termed the “reflexive self-examination” view regarding the significance of underwriting scientific knowledge (Bourdieu, 1990, p.197).

One expression of the researchers’ positionality in conducting research is found in the use of the pronoun “we” to reflect the chronicle constructed over a four-day period of participant observation carried out within the socio-cultural setting of festive Rimini between June 30, 2011 and July 3, 2011. Being native to the region that was the target of the research, the researchers were able to access areas about which they possessed extensive knowledge. They traveled through some of the sea towns animated by the open-air event (Cesenatico, Bellaria Igea Marina, Rimini, Riccione) and observed and interacted with people (participants, shop owners, artists etc.). They collected meaningful insights during the first night of the celebration, which enjoys peak attendance and participation due the availability of a wider range of attractions than on the following days. The ensuing interactions and processes in-situ are revealed in elaborate descriptions of performative practices and discourses central to understanding how participants behave and enact during the event.

An ongoing analysis involving constant revisiting of the emerging theory with concrete observations and experiences resonates with the theoretical sampling strategy of the grounded theory method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach was rendered possible even in the later phases of data revisit and coding confirmation by the third researcher, who acted as a sounding board. Thus, by relying on constructs of “everyday life”, “performativity”, “practice”, and “embodiment”, this study deciphers the complexity of the Pink Night experience by adopting a perspective to performativity that

emphasizes the flow of practice in everyday life as inherently embodied and contextual. These constructs resonate with some of the main tenets of non-representational theories (i.e. Cadman, 2009; Nash, 2000; Thrift, 1997; Thrift, 2000). They also constitute an emerging geographical mode of thought, which is not “concerned with representation and meaning, but with the performative ‘presentations’, ‘showings’, and ‘manifestations’ of the everyday life” (Thrift, 1997, pp. 126–127). Non-representational theories focus mainly on “forms of experience and movement that are not only or never cognitive” (Nash, 2000, p. 655). Thus, the subsequent combination emanating from the four analytical constructs serves as an analytical tool for practices that cannot be easily verbalized by tourists, tourism workers or residents.

Co-Performing the Wait

Our journey into the Pink Night begins on Thursday, June 30, 2011, the night before the official start of the event, in the towns of Cesenatico, Bellaria-Igea Marina, and Rimini as they prepare for the festivities. To fully grasp the participatory public representation in the Pink Night requires a detailed examination of the wait and preparation practices undertaken by the actors. Thus, “bodies-in-waiting” are in fact actively engaged in the enactment of a whole kaleidoscope of different everyday practices and forms (Bisell, 2007, p. 278). The decorations for the main attractions were the prerogative of “authorized” performers (Edensor, 2001, p. 69) such as in Cesenatico, where city employees worked to illuminate the landmark skyscraper of the town in pink. On the other hand, most of the ritual preparations for the festival are easily accessible to tourists, who can also take part in shaping them along with the local population. One example is the frenetic activity that took place in the shops and bazaars, where residents and tourists alike rummaged through baskets and racks to find pink items to buy. T-shirts, eyeglasses, balloons, and pink hats replaced the usual suntan lotion, beach toys, and postcards. For the shop owner of Pakistani origin who has lived in Italy for several years, the Pink Night is a tantalizing business opportunity, and she and her family actively engage in the festival by stocking pink memorabilia for participants.

Similarly, to a Romanian family who recently moved to Italy, the Pink Night has become a family tradition of participative frenzy as “my daughter is looking for a pink wig for tomorrow night, and . . . maybe there’s something nice here for me too!” The implied social inclusiveness becomes a pretext to perform, as “everyone wears pink. . . and we want to do the same. . .”. Tourists also want to be well-prepared for the event, as exemplified by two vacationers from Bologna parading their pink cockades in Riccione before the official launch of the festival. In their opinion, it would be impossible to fully experience the Pink Night without engaging in elaborate preparations that would match everyone’s expectations. The similarity between the Pink Night and “Carnivals” – a traditional festival, generally in Catholic societies that includes masquerading and symbolizes an escape from everyday life – is immediately apparent. In essence, the color pink functions as a core unifying element, as well as a competitive representation among the local population and tourists. In one interaction between a local employee and a tourist at a campsite in Rimini, the significance of preparation around the color became apparent when the employee became upset because no Pink Night poster was available on the site. To this employee, such failure in the preparation of the festival hindered the full participation of tourists:

I don’t like this because I could be more helpful if I could also hand them the materials. I care about these things. . . for one thing, because as soon as I get off work I’m also going to go out and enjoy myself. (Fabio, age 27)

The dedication displayed by this employee transcends what could be characterized as a mere transaction between a customer and a tourism worker. It reflects the extent to which the employee embodies the spirit of the festival to co-opt the tourist in a common performance that blurs the distinction between tourism and everyday life (Rojek, 2005). The aim is for “fellow adventurers” to share a common experience of participation and enjoyment whereby tourists and residents mutually enrich and diversify their experiences. For instance, when a female tourist from outside of Cesenatico displayed perfect knowledge of the area in suggesting to a local woman some locations that would be more suitable for observing the fireworks display scheduled for the following day, the tourist plays the role of host by inviting the local to be part of the co-celebration:

... the terrace up at San Clemente, above Riccione, is breathtaking. . . But if not. . .if you don't want to take the car up there. . .some of my friends have an apartment here in the skyscraper, halfway up, we're going there. Why don't you and your husband come join us?" (Statement by a female tourist observed on the main square of Cesenatico).

The intention to co-participate and co-perform was further substantiated in an incident that was observed at a newsstand on Friday morning in Bellaria Igea-Marina. Along the main road, which was decorated with pink banners, a long line of elderly people, mothers with children and youngsters was waiting to buy the *Resto del Carlino*, a local newspaper that was giving away a pink shirt with the Pink Night logo in that day's special edition of the paper. The line was composed of both locals and tourists, as evidenced by David (a local) and Bruno (visiting from Brescia) who were eagerly waiting to "get the pink shirt to wear for the evening." Included in the event of waiting is the sharing of the preparation, where tourists also choreograph the locals in spontaneous collaborative interactions. This was highlighted in an account by the owner of a bathhouse in Cesenatico, who spoke with amusement about how one of his customers, a tourist, had brought some pink items for the celebration. "He asked me to wear them, so I indulged him. . . I got dressed up all in pink. Then he wanted to take some photos of me dressed like that!"

Co-Performing a "Pink Ocean"

Our participation in the Pink Night festival began when we headed south toward Rimini, the epicenter of the festival. We traveled by car, on bicycles, and frequently on foot. These modes of travel allowed us to traverse a "pink ocean" that extended without interruption from the beaches of Comacchio to those of Cattolica. This pink ocean consisted of both people and the decorations and attractions arranged by both "official" and "spontaneous" organizers (lights, flags, fireworks, and "pink" menus at restaurants). Indeed, we observed that all of the participants were showing off their pink accoutrement to contribute to the "pink ocean". They were essentially spontaneous performers, embodying the spirit of the festival through the items they selected and displayed with varying degrees of creativity and personalization – from a simple hat and shirt gifted by the local newspaper, to the collar of a dog to the sexy sequined bikinis worn, without cover-up, by a few young women.

The festival enabled mobilities of both locals and tourists to become the place where they "co-performed" the event. It was therefore not surprising to spot automobile license plates from both inside and outside the Romagna Riviera to include Forli, Milano, Florence and Germany. They were decorated with trinkets as modest as a pink bow or embellishments as ornate a bride's car for a wedding. The other expression of mobility, using bicycles, was exemplified by the image of two teenagers who were tying together unbranded and local hotel bicycles. This suggests the actors not only shared the particular moment of accessing the main venue but also that they would likely participate in the event together through the end of the night.

In Rimini, it is difficult for natives and tourists to take little-known shortcuts to avoid heavy traffic congestion during the summer season. The landscape therefore serves as a constraint on the mobility of both tourists and residents. A closer examination of the area reveals that the coast is lined with bath houses on one side of the road where the festival takes place, with urban development on the opposite side, thereby orienting the movement and limiting the overflow of the festivities. Place thus becomes the point of "convergence" (Anderson, 2012) and the festival becomes its embodiment. This illustration supports Crouch and Malm's (2003) understanding of landscape as "never ontologically given but developed through practices" (p. 255) and occurring in an ongoing "[...] process of dwelling" (Ingold in Crouch & Malm, 2003, p. 254). Together with the display of interactions in the performances, the place allows for the emergence of organizational and functional spaces that find legitimacy not only during the Pink Night festival but also in everyday life. It is therefore difficult to ascertain Foucauldian motives for confrontation or control between rigid categories of "hosts" and "guests" within the performance of the festival, without prior and due consideration to the significance of the landscape.

When the sweaty, pink-clad crowd converged towards the Federico Fellini square where a concert by a famous Italian singer-songwriter, Francesco De Gregori, was underway, the scene recalled the dreamy atmosphere of the films by the celebrated Rimini-born Italian director after whom the square

is named. Hats, sweatshirts, wigs, and accessories created the pink ocean within which the profane and the ordinary blended into the performance of one experience of dreams and realities, as a tribute and celebration to the “quasi-surreality” of the Felliniesque. The show and its ensuing organization of the venue cast the participants in the role of an audience. However, with the embodiment of the spirit of the festival and the constraint of the surroundings, they embraced the concomitant role of festival performers within the celebration to immerse themselves in a more complex and “diffused pink stage”.

From our vantage point within the crowd we were able to observe that parents who were enjoying the concert simultaneously displayed with pride their children who were dressed in flashy pink costumes. These children were performing for the cameras of other participants who could capture their smiles in a shower of camera flashes. These particular moments are vivid depictions of the coalescence of the kaleidoscopic variety of what Goffman (1959) identified as “back stages” and “front stages” where participants in their various roles, such as residents, tourists, and tourism workers, co-perform the Pink Night. The micro-shows unfolding at the concert venue reinforce this study’s contention that elements within the environment of the festival are constantly “in play”.

Co-performance within the festival did not preclude an element of playful competition amongst the participants. Indeed, competitive displays (Filippucci, 2002) frequently surface during co-performance. Several participants adorned with the most exotic or flamboyant regalia would “fight” for the opportunity to display themselves at the center of the micro-shows. The sum of all such micro-shows and the movement involved in the competitive displays reinforced the diffuse nature of the stage and the pink masquerade that is characteristic of the event. The “ballistic” of the photographic lens in an attempt to capture the flows of displays, actions and ever-changing cast of characters underscores the significance of such playful competitions. We observed an example of the “fight” to capture a moving display when a rickshaw driver stopped at the request of some young women with northern Italian accents so that they could take a group photograph with a little girl dressed in pink posed on the front seat of the rickshaw.

Playing in a Playful Pink Carnival

The competitive display underlying the festival is characteristic of carnivals (Filippucci, 2002). The carnival is a useful concept to describe the performative arena of the Pink Night, as it is an occasion on which participants crave to be noticed or even praised for the creativity and opulence of their displays. Equally meaningful, but at a more abstract level, is the concept of “play” inherent within the carnival construct where reality and fiction interplay through the participants, who may be residents (or not) but who at the same time appear “. . . as a character inserted in a sort of secondary fiction with the [following] main elements, regarding both costume and gestures” (Piette, 1992, p. 43). Play is associated here with its social meanings, as tourists may not only be “playful” and “childlike” (Crouch, Aronsson, & Wahlstrom, 2001; Dann, 1989), but can also perform together with residents through play (Tucker, 2002). It takes its everyday meaning from its power to transform the mundane such that even its briefest examination reveals its relevance for our discussion of the importance of performance (Radley, 1995).

Performing within the micro-stage allows the participants to downplay the attributes that are not relevant to the performance; for example, those indicating their provenance as hosts or guests, while simultaneously and emphatically displaying the attributes defining the fictional character that is being acted out during the celebration. This imaginative comedy binds together all of the participants within the place, thereby allowing for the emergence of an organic co-performance. Such recognition rejects the binary logic of action/reaction that involves different types of actors continuously performing in response to each other. Thus, play becomes the interface that unites the performances of all of the various actors who shape the tourism stages within what Goffman (1974) characterizes as “frame;” i.e., where performance reveals both subjective involvement and an objective landscape, which acts as organic prop for the performance.

A live concert after the midnight fireworks provides evidence of this type of interplay. A group of young women participating in a bachelorette party (a ritualistic script that exaggerates pre-matrimonial everyday life and presages a future role) had come to the Riviera in the springtime during the Pink

Night to imbue an already special celebration with a unique cachet. Instead of the customary white head accoutrement, the future bride wore a pink veil and pink bunny ears, while her guests displayed pink cockades and pink T-shirts printed with an invitation for everyone to celebrate and drink with them (see Fig. 2).

We came from Tuscany, near Pisa, just for the Pink Night. . . so we could celebrate her bachelorette party in kind of a special way. We also came here two years ago for the Pink Night. We like it because it's a way to have fun outside, in the street, instead of closed up inside.

Aside from acting as participants in the live concert, which by then was approaching its end, the bachelorette party was also enacting another level of play where the girls became involved with other participants in playful scripts of jokes and teases. This situation provided a new micro-stage of proto-plasmic performance where an evolving frame of activity and liminal identity continuously reflected the co-orchestration of the play (see Fig. 3). This became increasingly obvious when a group of young men who were tourists from Monza interacted with the bachelorettes. The interactions were



Fig. 2. A fluid moment of the “sizing up game” between the males and for the attention of the Tuscan girls.

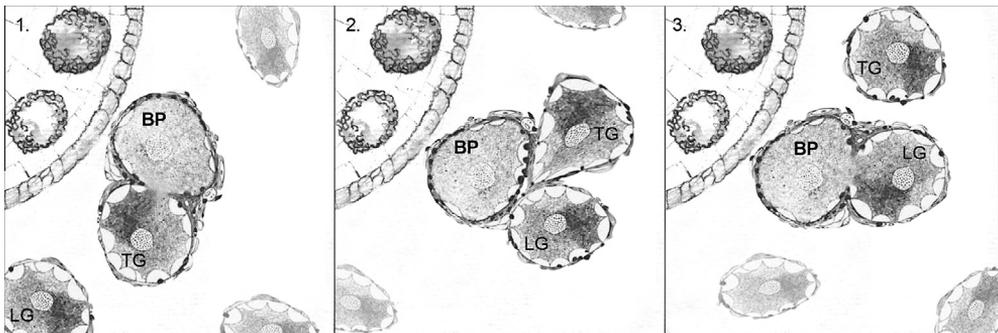


Fig. 3. The “protoplasmic” encounters of the bachelorette party (BP) with tourist males (TG) and local males (LG).

characterized by a series of performances, which we describe as “charm offensives”, in a campaign of flattery that blurred the line between true intentions and fiction and in an atmosphere heavy with sexual innuendos. These interactions were typical of what could be deemed “weekend” rituals on the Romagna Riviera for bachelorette parties by both tourists and locals. What makes them noteworthy is the jocular atmosphere of the Pink Night celebration, which acts as a potent facilitator of performance. In that sense, what we observed during the Pink Night approaches Filippucci’s description of Carnival in that it “celebrates leisure as a state of body and mind that flows from ‘within’ people towards others [...]” (Filippucci, 2002, p. 86).

The movement of these participants was continuous, reflecting the fluid changes of roles within the flow of the crowd “in-between points and stages through which tourists move in” (Scarles, 2010, p. 906). Soon the young male tourists from Monza appeared to lose interest, not necessarily in their acting but in their actual physical movement, which drove them away from the girls. However, the micro-stage assumed a new contour molded by an incoming group of young local males wearing pink T-shirts. Their mingling with the Tuscan girls occurred within a fleeting moment of competitive display with the outgoing group from Monza. The fluidity of the moment and place could explain the apparent spirit of fair play within which the “sizing up game” between the males occurred. They, too, seem interested in meeting the Tuscan girls as they circled them.

When a group of journalists interacted with the women to interview them, the focus of the camera lens drove the group of women and the group of local men together in a united front to the exclusion of the suitors from Monza. By giving a group interview, the co-participants moved beyond mere cursory encounter to prolong the co-performance in time. Indeed, nested within the interview session was the simultaneous performance at a micro level when one of the men was coaxing the women for a phone number. The intention of the performance transcends the spatial to encompass the temporal with the suggestion that co-performance could extend beyond just that night. Co-performing the festival within the place entails the conjugation of different bodies in expressions of ongoing relations with the event, such that this embodiment reduces the “dualistic divide between subject and object, by folding the two into each other” (Thrift, cited in Cohen & Cohen, 2012, p. 2193).

When a mobile DJ station on a pink rickshaw moved along the street, followed by a group of young men on bicycles “revved up” by the driving rhythm of the music, bodies constantly touched each other in a *peloton* of joint representation that gradually swelled up along the sinuous street with joining revelers. This reinforces Obrador Pons’ (2003; p. 57), “multiple corporeal and sensual practices” as “fundamental” to understanding the tourism experience. A collective practice linked with the consumption of alcoholic beverages, such as the *pedalata alcolica* (a pub-crawl on bicycles) during the festival, illustrates what Cohen and Cohen (2012, p. 2193) refer to as “visceral aspects of embodiment”. So too is the pervasive combination of alcohol and sweat odors that we experienced as the *peloton* approached us and ultimately engulfed us into the moving body. The Pink Festival is thus enacted through sight, touch, sound and smell.

We encountered the same spirit of play framed by intoxication, enjoyment and camaraderie in a group of young tourists and locals near Fellini square who were singing exuberantly while embracing each other in euphoria and vertigo: “Tonight we’re all messing around together” said Rossi, referring to a group of his contemporaries who usually travel to the same beach bath house in Riccione every year. The Pink Night becomes a pretext for extending and embracing this group spirit. This camaraderie of co-performers finds a more salient meaning during the Pink Night than at any other time of the year, when immediately after the event, tourists, locals, and back-stage workers work together to remove rubbish from the grounds. Indeed, on our way back home, we noticed that at the “Villa Rosa” campground in Bellaria, the manager and employees were just finishing cleaning the area with the help of tourists.

Towards a “Performative Field” Within Tourism: Theorizing an Inclusive Ecology

This study proposes a theoretical interpretation and elaboration of tourism experiences and place, which Cohen and Cohen (2012; p.2183) referred to as a radical perspective to performativity. This theoretical framework enabled a holistic and ecological consideration of the performances and relationships in tourism, which Allsopp (2000) calls “inclusive ecology”. It implies a shift from the binary logic

and “atomistic” approach that views tourism places as being created through the contraposition between the well-distinguished performative forces of “hosts” and “guests,” to a “protoplasmic” approach in their relationships and performances. Drawing on Sterling’s (2010; p. 22) application of the performative field in his research on Japanese appropriations of Rasta culture, this study advocates for a concept of a performative field within tourism, which would then recognize “complex spaces whose coherence as such is critically effected in performance”.

In this study, performance “represents a definitive mode in which the commonalities – and often the complex differences – between participants are worked through” (ibidem) during the Pink Night. The concept of a performative field within tourism views the tourism place as constantly crossed by a potential to perform that emerges from the convergence of mundane practices and actions. When approaching tourism as a performative field, static categories of actors, such as “tourist” and “resident” become dynamic, with varying and emerging relations to each other. The Pink Night activates an impulse that increases the intensity of the performative features and relations that characterize the Romagna Riviera, giving rise to a dynamic that Roach (cited in Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000, p. 421) describes as a “condensational event”. The souvenir shops, the promenade, the Federico Fellini square, the sea, the concert stage, the peloton, and the camping ground provided a gravitational pull on all the actors that induced them co-perform a pink “vortex”, a “kind of spatially-induced carnival” (ibidem).

With the performative arena of the Pink Night acting as a coalescing “chorale”, it became impossible to distinguish between the performances of residents and tourists. Indeed, they are not individual performances, but comprise an ecologic über-performance of the festival. From such an “inclusive ecologic” perspective, this study posits that tourism places emerge as tourism performative fields.

Performances by actors with seemingly disparate roles, such as “hosts” and “guests”, cannot be separated from the context within which they are located (Allsopp, 2000; p.2) so as to produce co-performance based on the production and reproduction of the tourism place. A place of *tourism*, such as the Romagna Riviera, is more than merely a place for tourists. It emerges from the playful co-performance that is not necessarily based on confrontation and opposition, as earlier studies have suggested (Eade, 2002; Edensor, 2001; Mordue, 2005; Quinn, 2007). As a performative arena, the Pink Night contributes to an understanding of the tourism place as increasingly fluid, and “implicated within complex networks by which hosts, guests, buildings, objects, and machines are contingently brought together to produce certain performances in certain places at certain times” (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 214).

Conclusion

In the Pink Night festival, all actors involved engage in a playful celebration through an “inclusive ecology” (Allsopp, 2000) of “protoplasmic” encounters. The method of participant observation within the celebration of the Pink Night highlights the fact that residents, tourists, and tourism workers co-perform to shape, reproduce and coalesce with the place. The Romagna coastal area is thereby transformed into a pink ocean of protoplasmic movement and becomes the point of convergence of bodies.

The study revealed a mode of “radical performativity” in response to the call by Cohen and Cohen (2012, p. 2184) for further studies on the implications of the performativity perspective, but also corporealized co-performance by re-introducing the body into the mobile practices of the tourism experience. In that sense, this paper augments the scholarship on the embodiment of the tourism experience through the senses (see, e.g., Obrador Pons, 2003), and proposes a methodological fit through both reflexive performance and the theoretical frame of inclusive ecology. This study engages in the emergence of the tourism place through co-performance and therefore lies in stark contrast to existing studies (for example Rakić & Chambers, 2012) that merely consider the consumption of place as constructed by a tandem made of “tourists and locals” (p. 1629).

By applying the meanings and implications of performance as embedded in the contextual ecology of relationships (Allsopp, 2000) such that landscape moves from being static constraints to become “complex sites for encounters” (Crouch & Malm, 2003, p.262), the event creates live “geo-morphologies” developed through co-performed bodily practices and expressions. The study thus proposes a new theoretical understanding of performance and performativity within tourism research through

the concept of the performative field. Indeed, a performative field of tourism means that groups of performers can co-create the tourism place by co-performing it. The place thus presents the potential to perform in a coalescent convergence of both mundane and extraordinary practices and actions during the Pink Night. Consideration of the concept of the performative field in other contexts, such as extreme tourism experiences, adventure tourism and sports tourism, would serve to enrich tourism scholarship. Similarly, it could be employed to study the emergence of the tourism place as a result of intersecting mobilities.

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