CHAPTER 6
TOURISM AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF REGIONAL IDENTITIES

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Tourism has grown enormously during the long twentieth century and it had and continues to have a profound and lasting impact on the process of regional identity construction throughout Europe. During the Belle Époque, vacations were still an elite affair, but it rapidly became a mass phenomenon and today, the tourism business is the largest service industry in the world. Tourism is also a highly competitive sector; entrepreneurs across Europe strive to find a profitable niche and retain or increase their market share. Tourists, however, are not a homogenous mass. Their economic capacities differ substantially; some stay in the tourist bubble, others choose to 'go native'; the entertainment and pleasures they seek vary immensely and foreign visitors might have different preferences than domestic tourists.

Obviously, the advent of tourism has major consequences for the socio-economic development of Europe, but it also has a vital impact on regions and their territorial identities. The way tourism affects the various parts of Europe depends on technological, socio-economic and political developments, such as the invention of the automobile, the introduction of paid holidays, the growth of commercial aviation, the expansion of the welfare state, governmental policies to stimulate or restrict leisure travel and questions of war and peace. However, more important for the impact of tourism on regional identities are cultural developments. Although tourists had many different preferences, a number of clear trends can be discerned. For instance, after sun bathing became fashionable, it occasioned a massive shift towards beach holidays. Other trends that had a strong influence on tourism were the fin-de-siècle interest in vernacular arts and crafts, the fascination with mass culture in the 1920s and 1930s, the modernization fervour of the post-war period and the growing appeal of cultural heritage in more recent decades. However, tourism does not only reflect major cultural trends, it magnifies them. Regions – just like resorts, cities and countries – have to stand out in a highly competitive market. Regions thus become a brand. This means that existing differences are emphasized, while new ones are created.

Tourism and rural heritage

During the Enlightenment, cultural life was inspired by Classical Antiquity and the Renaissance, while its contemporary centres were the courts and capital cities of

Western Europe. Tourists accordingly went to Italy – on the so-called Grand Tour – to visit the ruins, monuments and highlights of this shared European cultural heritage. The countryside, on the other hand, was not interesting and was perceived as backward. During the Romantic Era, this hierarchy was largely inverted. The backwardness and primitiveness of rural areas were reinterpreted in a positive light and the countryside began to be seen as the area where the vestiges of the nation's origins and its true culture or 'spirit' could still be found, whereas classicism, court life and urban civilization were slowly seen as artificial and inauthentic. Nevertheless, the countryside and its colourful costumes and traditions were primarily interpreted as representative of the nation, not of specific regional identities. This, for instance, is clearly visible in the folk tales that were collected by nationalist intellectuals like the Brothers Grimm and the attitude of painters specialized in rural themes,[1] such as Jean-François Millet, who primarily depicted the life of the peasants and a generic countryside, which generally was not recognizable as belonging to a specific region.[2]

Around 1900, as a consequence of the Second Industrial Revolution, secondary railway lines, bicycles, automobiles and buses made leisure trips to more remote areas easier to undertake. Everywhere in Europe, associations of excursionists sprang up and began organizing trips to the surrounding countryside. Boy scouts and other youth groups followed in their wake. All kinds of organizations stimulated domestic tourism, often with a clear nationalist undertone: citizens had a moral duty to get acquainted with the various regions of their fatherland. This message was already hammered home in many school manuals, such as *Le Tour de France par deux enfants* (1877).[3] People did not stop travelling to cities like Paris, Florence, Rome and London, but now also began to show interest in the natural and cultural patrimony of the countryside.

Excursions, however, did not always strengthen domestic unity. In East-Central Europe, tourism began to be organized along ethnic lines. German and Czech Bohemians, for instance, stimulated people to visit only the highlights of their 'own' heritage.[4] This also happened in some established nation states in Western Europe such as Spain. Thus, Barcelonese excursionist societies (re-)defined the monuments in the surrounding countryside as Catalan, while switching to Catalan as their main means of communication.[5] However, in general, it stimulated the inclusion of the region in the existing nation state, as happened, for instance, in Scotland, Brittany and Bavaria.[6] The construction of regional identities for touristic purposes was not only connected to domestic processes of nation formation or nation-building but was also strongly influenced by foreign travellers. To attract tourists from abroad, regions had to attract attention, and towards the end of the nineteenth century, this was primarily done by emphasizing their 'unique' rural and artisanal traditions.

This development can be analysed in condensed form at world fairs, which were major ephemeral tourist attractions drawing millions of visitors. At the 1867 Paris World Fair, the participating countries were invited not only to contribute machines and fine art to the gigantic central exhibition hall but also construct a national pavilion in a typical style to show their 'unique' culture and traditions. Most pavilions at this and successive exhibitions were copies of famous national monuments or were built in characteristic

historical styles. However, North and East European countries, which probably had less impressive and recognizable monuments, increasingly used vernacular buildings to represent the nation. Thus, already in 1867 Sweden reconstructed the Dalecarlian peasant house in which Gustav Vasa found refuge before leading the Swedes in their 'War of Liberation' against the Danish king.[7]

At the 1873 world fair in Vienna, several peasant houses formed a kind of international village. Although regional differences were obvious – with, for instance, a Hungarian peasant house from Transylvania, cottages from Croatia and Galicia and an Alpine farmhouse from Vorarlberg – the primary goal of this section was to study traditional family homes as models for the future.[8] Ensembles with inhabited buildings, both in the form of a historical pastiche such as Old London (1884) or in the form of an ethnographic village, rapidly became a popular feature at later expositions, while the focus shifted from practical utility to instruction and amusement.[9]

Historical and ethnographic ensembles were institutionalized at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The organizers decided to create a separate amusement sector where – among other attractions – more than a dozen ethnographic villages from all over the world could be visited. Europe was represented by a large German ethnographic village, two Irish villages and settlements from Lapland and Turkey. These picturesque re-creations appealed to all the senses; they were inhabited by natives who, dressed in traditional costumes, performed traditional dances and made crafts, while most of them also sold typical dishes and beverages. Most of these villages were commercial undertakings, although ethnologists were eager to lend a helping hand to make them as 'authentic' as possible.[10] Rather homogenous Irish, Tyrolean or Black Forest villages or representations of merry England continued to be popular attractions at world fairs until the 1930s.[11]

During the 1890s, nationalists also adopted the formula. The goal was no longer to represent the nation abroad, but to show the folkloric patrimony of the fatherland at home. The somewhat haphazard assembly of picturesque castles, town halls and farmhouses from various parts of the country was now replaced by a more systematic inventory of the nation's vernacular heritage. Thus, at the ambitious Czechoslavic Ethnographic Exhibition, which was held in Prague in 1895, activists reconstructed twenty-one vernacular buildings from across Bohemia, Moravia and Czech Silesia to underscore their claims that the Czechs were a nation in need of recognition. This also meant that the vernacular heritage of German-speaking Bohemians was deliberately ignored.[12] A similar ethnically inspired village could be found in Bucharest in 1906, when Romania organized a jubilee exhibition to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Carol I's accession to the throne. The ethnographic village not only contained vernacular constructions from all parts of the country but also from ethnic Rumanians from Transylvania, the Banat, Bucovina and Macedonia.[13]

Ethnographic villages in East-Central Europe could also be more inclusive. This was the case when in 1896 the Hungarian half of the dual monarchy celebrated the arrival of the Magyars with a millennial exhibition. At the inevitable ethnographic village there were twenty-four rural buildings, among which were also vernacular constructions

that represented Bulgarians, Slovaks, Rumanians and Danube Germans residing in Hungary. At the same time, however, ethnic minorities were strongly encouraged to adopt the 'superior' Hungarian language and culture.[14] Probably it was hoped that the recognition of their vernacular heritage would help all inhabitants to identify with the Hungarian state.

In Western and Southern Europe, ethnographic villages were generally less contested. Thus, the 1911 International Exposition in Rome, which commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Italian unification, contained an impressive ethnographic village that showed buildings from all parts of the country.[15] One of the most ambitious attempts to celebrate regional diversity at an exhibition was the Swiss Village. It consisted of fifty-six vernacular constructions representing all cantons and was assembled for the Swiss National Exhibition in Geneva in 1896 and then rebuilt at the Parisian world fair of 1900. The village contained chalets, shops, a bridge and a church and was inhabited by over 300 villagers. Moreover, it had a real lake, a creek, a waterfall and a forty-metre-high artificial mountain. Since it was wildly popular among visitors, the entrepreneurs enjoyed a considerable profit.[16] Even provincial exhibitions, for instance, in Lemberg/Lviv (1894), Dresden (1896), Leipzig (1897) and Nancy (1908), included an impressive ethnographic village, which presumably captured the spirit of the surrounding region.[17]

These ethnographic villages forced organizers to look for those buildings, costumes, crafts, songs, dances and dishes that were characteristic for a particular region. This meant that those elements that could not be found anywhere else had more chance to be selected as 'typical' than other more generic ones.[18] Moreover, they had to be recognizable and attractive to stand out at these enormous venues and convince visitors to spend precious time and money.

The curious results of this process can be illustrated by the case of the Hindeloopen room. Hindeloopen is a town on the Frisian coast in the Netherlands that had trading contacts with the Baltic and East Asia. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, wealthy merchants acquired colonial wares such as china, while chintz from India became part of the traditional attire of their wives and daughters. Moreover, they decorated their interiors with colourful painted furniture, probably inspired by Scandinavian examples. Because these cosmopolitan upper-middle-class interiors were so unique and striking, they were perfect to attract attention at international exhibitions. A Hindeloopen room with lifelike mannequins in traditional costume was first shown in 1877 at the Frisian Historical Exhibition in Leeuwarden. This was an immense success and the next year it could be admired in the Dutch section at the Parisian world fair of 1878. In subsequent decades the attention shifted from the costumes to the interior as a whole, which came to be seen as the quintessence of Frisian folk heritage. As such, it could be used to show the regional diversity of the Dutch and even the German nation. Thus, in the 1890s entire rooms were bought by the German Museum for Traditional Costumes and Craft Products in Berlin and the Germanic National Museum in Nuremberg, where they were shown as a typical farm interior of one of the Germanic tribes.[19]

International exhibitions were closely interrelated with more permanent institutions and the growing tourism business. Thus, ethnographic museums – or specific

ethnographic departments within larger national museums – were created in Berlin, Stockholm, Paris, Budapest and Prague, among others, in order to organize the ethnographic section at a major international exposition or to house the collection that had been brought together for such an occasion. Museum experts often played a leading role in the selection of exhibits. Ulrich Jahn, a staff member of the German Museum for Traditional Costumes and Craft Products, was the driving force behind the privately exploited German Village in Chicago, while Artur Hazelius, the director of the Nordic Museum in Stockholm, used the inspiration acquired at world fairs to found Skansen (1891), the first open-air museum, which displayed the vernacular heritage of the different regions of Sweden. Open-air museums were quickly copied in other parts of north and central Europe. At about the same time, all over Europe local museums were created to show the rich folklore and vernacular traditions of the surrounding areas.[20]

Remarkable, if not even outright eccentric, ancient furniture, decoration, costumes and buildings from a specific location thus became part of a regional heritage and had to be preserved.[21] In many countries, colourful vernacular traditions, houses and crafts of specific, remote regions were seen to embody the nation. Dalecarlia in Sweden, Telemark in Norway, Karelia in Finland, the Pusztas in Hungary and Podhale in Poland were often presented as a kind of heartland of the nation, where the country's traditional values were best preserved. Thus, national pavilions at world fairs were often inspired by vernacular constructions from these heartlands.[22] That foreign preferences played a crucial role is made clear in the case of Andalusia. During the first half of the nineteenth century, foreign travellers and artists, such as Washington Irving and Prosper Mérimée, had discovered the attractions of the Moorish remains and the flamenco music of the Andalusian gypsies. At the Parisian international exhibition of 1900 it would be a French company that mounted a vast *Andalusia at the Times of the Moors* exhibit, which included a replica of Seville's Giralda tower, donkeys and gypsy dancers.[23]

A new culture of regionalism

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, it had increasingly become common to represent regional identities at world fairs, in open-air museums and in all kinds of national, regional and local museums. No longer satisfied with making inventories of vernacular culture and protecting it, intellectuals and artists began to plea for reconnecting contemporary high culture – which they now condemned as academic, artificial and theatrical – with the authentic traditions of the fatherland. These could best be found in the countryside, where the true character of the nation was still alive. At the Parisian world fair of 1900 this was best exemplified by the Finnish pavilion. Several young, innovative painters, sculptors and architects had created a truly national *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which vernacular elements – mostly from Karelia – were harmoniously fused with fashionable Art Nouveau forms.[24]

Inspired by the British Arts and Crafts movement, everywhere in Europe artists tried to revive the decorative arts by reorienting them on vernacular traditions. Artists'

colonies, such as Abramtsevo in Russia and Gödöllő in Hungary, played a leading role in bringing artists and craftsmen together and marketing their products abroad.[25] At the same time, architects looked for inspiration in vernacular buildings to develop a new style that would break with the dominant historicist and academic conventions. By using natural materials, existing artisanal techniques and integrating their constructions into the surrounding landscape, they hoped to create a more organic architecture that would reflect the local *Volksgeist* and be in consonance with the spirit of the times (*Zeitgeist*). During the first decades of the twentieth century, this neo-vernacular style became popular in Europe and was applied particularly to villas in suburbs and cottages in garden cities where the integration of buildings, gardens and landscape was especially relevant.[26]

The neo-vernacular style also gained headway in tourist areas, both in seaside and mountain resorts. In Poland, this style is even known as the *Zakopane* style, after the tourist town in the Podhale region at the foot of the Tatra Mountains.[27] All over Europe second homes were built in the different regional variants of this neo-vernacular style. In the French seaside resort Deauville, even the market and the train station were built in a neo-Normand style.[28] In order to attract more tourists and reconnect the population to native traditions, large cities also embarked upon ambitious schemes to transform the urban landscape. Thus, in Seville, the squalid, insanitary alleys of the old Jewish quarter were converted into an archetypical Andalusian neighbourhood, with cobbled streets, decorative tiles and cast-iron street lamps. New constructions in the Barrio de Santa Cruz were even more typical than the existing ones.[29] Meanwhile, Fritz Schumacher decreed that new municipal buildings in Hamburg should adopt a neo-Hanseatic style, while the architects of the Amsterdam School revived artisanal brick construction techniques in the Netherlands.[30] In Fascist Italy, cities such as Florence and Arezzo restored monuments, plazas and entire cityscapes in an idealized medieval or renaissance form, while adding characteristic towers and liberating old buildings from later additions. By reinventing popular 'medieval' festivals, the Tuscan character of these cities was further intensified.[31]

Vernacular heritage should not only be preserved, while inspiring contemporary cultural expressions, but was also used to attract visitors. Thus, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Leendert Spaander promoted his hotel in the Dutch fishing village of Volendam by having his daughters pose in traditional costume for painters, by printing postcards of the village's most traditional sights and by making publicity abroad.[32] In Brittany, the colourful local pilgrimages began to attract a growing number of visitors. Particularly in the tourist centres, old pilgrimages were revived and others were moved to the summer season while new folkloric feasts, such as the Festival of the Flowering Gorse in Pont-Aven and the Festival of Bleu Nets in Concarneau, were added to the calendar.[33]

Local, regional and national authorities also began to take action. Around 1900, the first tourist information centres began to provide maps, guides and leaflets. In the next few decades, this was followed by a growing number of regional and national tourist boards. This also meant that regions had to become identifiable. This could be done by

including references to well-known tourist areas. Thus, in the nineteenth century, many hilly areas – for instance, in Saxony, Normandy and Luxemburg – became known as 'little Switzerlands'. Around the turn of the century, many coastal areas from the Black Sea to the Atlantic were named after the Italian Riviera,[34] and more individualizing designations such as Côte d'Azur or Costa Brava also gained currency.

Automobile clubs, national tourist associations and commercial enterprises became active in identifying regional highlights and making them accessible by erecting direction signs, marking foot paths and publishing road maps and guidebooks. This in part was meant to stimulate the inhabitants to get to know all the regions of the country. However, it also served to attract more foreign visitors. In both cases, the effect was that typical regional sights were put in the limelight. Thus, in 1904, the Touring Club de France began a campaign to identify the most important monuments and sites of the different parts of the country, while Michelin began to publish maps and its famous guide of cities, hotels and restaurants, giving stars to those that ought to be visited. The Danish Touring Club and the Ford factory in Copenhagen similarly stimulated trips to all beautiful parts of the country.[35] In the 1920s, the Spanish National Tourism Board even began its own chain of *paradores*, luxury hotels in ancient monuments in the more remote parts of the country (see Figure 6.1), where employees in traditional costume served regional dishes;[36] an example that was quickly followed by the Portuguese *pousadas*.

All these developments made many villages, cities and regions more characteristic than they had ever been. This was particularly true of those areas that were considered national heartlands or that attracted many tourists because of their specific charm. However, the heyday of this neo-vernacular trend did not last forever. Already before the First World War the first signs of its immanent decline could be detected. Traditional crafts and neo-vernacular buildings slowly prized themselves out of the market. Artisanal techniques could not compete with industrial mass production. Thus, in many countries ambitious plans were made for the reconstruction in a neo-vernacular style of the areas that were devastated during the war. However, in the end, the housing shortage and the post-war economic crisis made it impossible to adopt these plans. Standardization and the use of modern construction techniques – such as the use of concrete – became inevitable.[37]

Nevertheless, traditional craftsmanship and neo-vernacular architecture continued to be highly appreciated during the interwar period. Even many functionalist villas referred to local traditions. Architects in the Balkans, for instance, included protruding storeys and whitewashed walls that were inspired by local vernacular houses in their modernist designs.[38] At the Parisian world fair of 1937, an attempt was made to combine regional traditions with international modernity. France itself was represented by a large Regional Centre, with seventeen regional pavilions. All were built in an updated neo-vernacular style in which the use of steel and concrete was no longer proscribed. Inside, traditional arts and crafts were on display (see photo on the front cover). However, this was not a success. Some regional committees had difficulties finding traditional artisans, while vernacular forms made of concrete lost any pretence of authenticity.[39]
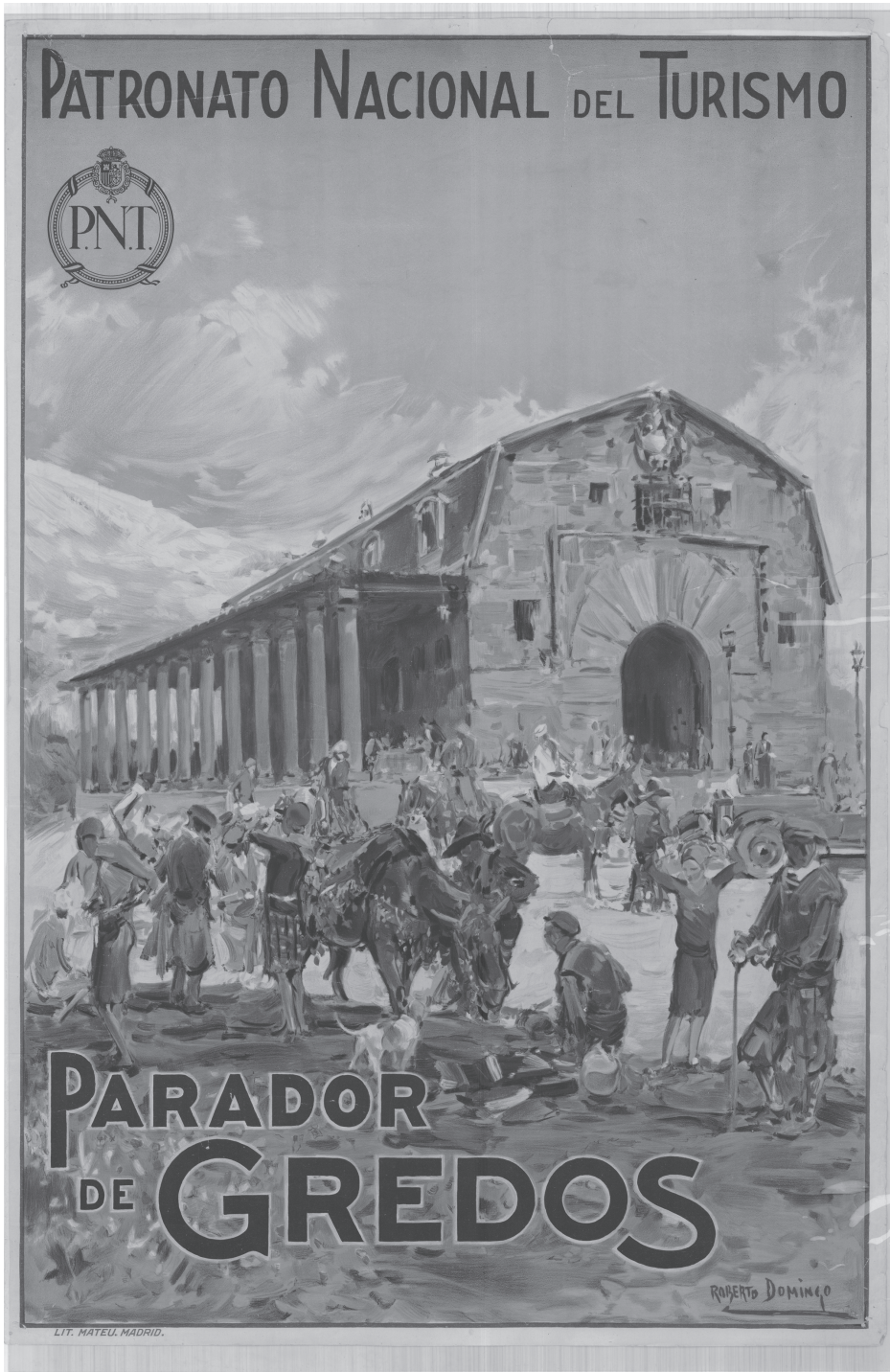
Figure 6.1 *Poster Parador de Gredos; Instituto de Turismo de España, TURESPAÑA.*

The rise of mass tourism in the late 1920s and 1930s would also undermine the prominent role of regionalist culture in the tourist areas. Mass tourism was stimulated explicitly by fascist dictatorships to win over the population. In Mussolini's Italy, *Dopolavoro* provided the masses with excursions and short holidays and this model was copied in Nazi Germany by *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy). Although these regimes celebrated the regional diversity of the country, their priorities were national unity and imperial expansion. Moreover, in order to make a holiday affordable to the masses, both fascist regimes had to be as efficient as possible. The massive four-kilometre-long Nazi holiday resort at Prora Bay, built of concrete and without any references to the region, was symbolic for the industrial functionalism that was deployed in order to let as many 'racially fit' Germans profit from it.[40]

Left-wing regimes also promoted mass tourism, but did not favour the culture of regionalism either. In 1922, the Soviet Union had been the first to introduce an annual vacation of two weeks for all workers. Regional tours that enabled the travellers to acquaint themselves with the history, landscape and social life of particular parts of the country – Crimea and the Caucasus being the most popular destinations – were more popular than organized trips to industrial enterprises or agricultural cooperatives. However, the goal of the excursions and holidays for workers and children was to convert them into exemplary soviet citizens. The progressive government that came to power in Spain in 1931 with the arrival of the Second Republic also preferred modern, urban culture over rural traditions and as a consequence many initiatives were undertaken to bring the countryside into contact with the nation's cultural highlights, such as paintings from the Prado Museum, plays from the Golden Age and films.[41] More conservative authoritarian governments, such as the Horthy dictatorship in Hungary or the Ulmanis regime in Latvia, on the other hand, strongly stimulated citizens to familiarize themselves with the vernacular culture and natural diversity of the countryside. The right-wing dictatorship in Portugal would continue this policy well into the 1960s and early 1970s.[42]

A fresh start

For most of Europe, the Second World War was a turning point. Tourism was disrupted and it took some years to return to pre-war levels, while the Cold War division of the continent hampered travel between East and West. The international exhibition tradition was interrupted as well and would only be revived in the 1990s. The main exception would be the Brussels world fair of 1958, which almost entirely ignored expressions of regionalist culture. Some aspects of the culture of regionalism had become suspect because they were now associated with the exalted nationalism and *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil) ideology of Nazi Germany. Thus, ethnographic villages with living inhabitants that supposedly represented the *Volksgeist* of the different regions or countries largely disappeared. Existing museums now focused on more matter-of-fact ethnographic displays, while at exhibitions the occasional artisan at work or folkloric shows were presented as relics from the past. This did not mean that ethnographic, local

and open-air museums closed their doors but that they no longer pretended to show the quintessence of the nation.

Moreover, the Reconstruction era, which lasted into the 1960s, was very future-oriented and modernist solutions were preferred in both East and West. Most politicians, city planners and architects chose to rebuild cities and industrial areas in a functional way, provide space for modern means of transport and erect new modernist buildings. Many inhabitants, however, were in favour of restoring old buildings and retaining the historical character of their city and region. Probably the most extreme case was the old town of Warsaw, which was thoroughly reconstructed by taking eighteenth-century paintings – thus before the partitions of Poland – as the main source of inspiration.[43] Elsewhere in Poland, nationalist motives were important as well and particularly the areas in the West that had belonged to Germany should now be Polonized. However, because of the magnitude of the task only major monuments such as the ducal castle in Szczecin/Stettin, the former capital of Pomerania, were thoroughly cleansed of later 'Prussian' additions.[44] In the Federal Republic of Germany, only few municipal authorities, such as those of Nuremberg and Münster, decided to preserve the air of a historic city centre by reconstructing monumental buildings and largely retaining the existing street plan. New, generally quite austere buildings had to respect the traditionally used materials and proportions. However, this did not lead to the neo-vernacular pastiches which had been common in the decades before 1945.[45]

Tourism also underwent huge transformations. After a slow start in the late 1940s, it became a truly mass phenomenon. In 1952 France already received some 3 million foreign tourists. These numbers would increase rapidly, partly because of the introduction of tourist-class airfares and charter flights in the 1950s and rising living standards in the 1960s. The number of international visitors in Spain, for instance, increased from 4 million in 1959 to a spectacular 34 million in 1973.[46] The Soviet Union and the other countries from the Communist Block also opened themselves up hesitantly for Western tourists – mainly for economic reasons – with Yugoslavia clearly in the lead.[47] Package tours gained in popularity, but other collective forms of tourism also played a key role. Commercial organizations, such as Billy Butlin's holiday camps in Great Britain and the French Club Méditerranée, began to offer all-inclusive holidays in vacation villages. During the interwar period many trade unions, political movements and churches had organized excursions and holidays for their members and this type of social tourism continued to prosper after the war. Trips organized by party organizations were even the main form of leisure travel in the Soviet Union and Communist Eastern Europe.[48]

The old preference for monuments, museums and mountains in the interior also gave way to a more hedonistic enjoyment of sea, sand and sun at the beach. Although sunbathing had been introduced in the 1920s by tourists from Germany and other Nordic countries, it would only become the dominant form of vacationing in the 1950s. For reasons of expediency functionalist architecture became the norm for hotels and apartment buildings. High-rise concrete hotel accommodations turned sleepy villages, such as Torremolinos and Benidorm, into modern resorts. Travel agencies now sent more and more tourists on interchangeable holidays along the Mediterranean coast.

Folklore and regional character became a rather generic side dish – in the form of an excursion to a characteristic village, buying a typical artisanal product, taking a donkey ride or visiting a folkloric show – of holidays at the beach.[49] Thus, urban modernity – mass amusement enabled by new means of transport and modernist accommodations – again became the standard, but now in a massified, 'Fordist' form.

Nevertheless, traditional family life in the countryside continued to be appreciated. Life in small towns or a generic countryside was celebrated in movies and on television,[50] which now largely took over the role of world fairs as the main visual mass-medium. Tourism to the countryside was also stimulated, but now primarily for economic reasons. Ireland aimed to gain hard currency by stimulating former emigrants to return to their home country for a holiday. As part of this campaign, in 1958 the Tourist Board launched a Tidy Towns and Villages Competition in order to show the country as an attractive and sanitized destination with brightly painted houses and clean streets decorated with flowers.[51] Other governments also tried to stimulate tourism in the less developed parts of the country. Moreover, not everybody liked the new mass holidays at the beach and continued to make trips to the mountains, lakes, forests and picturesque villages of the interior. The growth of car ownership now made it easier to get off the beaten track. Especially from the 1970s onwards campsites and holiday homes – like the Swedish red cottage, the Russian dacha and the Yugoslav *vikendica* – mushroomed in the more attractive parts of the countryside. But contrary to what had happened in the interwar period, most of the campsites and holiday homes were fairly generic and did not emphasize the specific character of particular regions.[52]

The new cultural climate of the 1960s was not much in favour of the backward-looking regional movements. The younger generation was critical of the popularity of folkloric traditions such as costumes, songs and dance among regional associations, or their use in the tourism business, where authentic handicrafts were turned into mass-produced souvenirs. German ethnographers denounced this use of folklore outside of its original setting as 'Folklorismus'.[53] Nevertheless, the youth revolt also caused a renewed interest in ancient crafts, authentic traditions, spirituality and individual self-cultivation. Locally produced, natural products were appreciated and many (young) people preferred an alternative lifestyle, including a holiday in a nudist camp,[54] rural or ecotourism. At the same time, the anxiety over the levelling effects of modernization increased. Many ancient traditions, professions and landscapes were threatened with extinction and needed to be preserved. There were many local initiatives to preserve the highlights of their natural and cultural patrimony and new forms of tourism could be of help there. Thus, in the face of a rapid modernization, many traditional communities, such as the fishing villages in Scotland, began to market their traditional ways of life to attract tourists.[55]

Starting approximately in the 1970s the number of tourists visiting national parks, museums, archaeological sites, monuments and other heritage sites increased exponentially.[56] This tendency was reinforced by the creation in 1975 of the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites. Although most cultural heritage sites that were proposed by national governments concerned individual monuments or cities, sometimes

regions were nominated as well. Thus, medieval architectural remains of Aragon, Wales and Transylvania were included in the list between 1986 and in 1993. Sometimes a combination of cultural and natural regional heritage was admitted, such as the Orhid region in Yugoslavia (1979), Venice and its Lagoon (1987) and the Upper Harz Water Regal in Germany (1992).[57]

Although the new popularity of heritage preservation meant that characteristic sites were protected, this did not mean that they were made more typical than before as often had happened in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. New, more rigorous restoration regulations impeded the removal of parts that did not fit an idealized image and the inclusion of new more typical elements. From the 1980s onwards, the postmodern addition of ultramodern structures that contrasted with the old preserved parts even became fashionable, thus in a sense including heritage as a fragment into contemporary, lived reality.[58]

Typical images and stereotypes that had been developed from the nineteenth century onwards were now also increasingly used for destination marketing. In the 1960s and 1970s countries like Great Britain, France, Italy and Spain began to decentralize their public administration, while the European Economic Community established the Structural Funds to strengthen the economy of less-developed regions. Many new regional authorities did not only compete to attract investors and economic activity, but also tourists.[59] Public relations departments and professional advertising agencies, often partially paid with European subsidies, emphasized the unique cultural heritage and natural beauty of each region. Local authorities, journalists, tour operators, museums and shopkeepers also identified regions with specific landscapes, events and even fictional heroes in order to attract more visitors. Thus, the Languedoc was marketed as the country of the Cathars, the heretics that had suffered terrible persecutions in the late Middle Ages, and Transylvania as the land of Dracula.[60] The Norwegian railways have a special Troll train to the Hardanger Fjord region; in Cornwall there are King Arthur Tours and, recently, La Mancha created a Ruta de Don Quijote.[61]

These government-related activities generally built on already-existing images and reputations. However, the notion of heritage was also extended to include defunct mines and industrial buildings. This also affected regional identities, and this is best exemplified by the Ruhr area in Germany. In the late 1980s, when mining and heavy industry were in clear decline, an ambitious programme of social, economic and ecological restructuring was adopted. One of its main goals was to attract tourists by creating a Route of Industrial Heritage.[62] The European Union financially supported the Ruhr project, but it also stimulated the development of new trans-border regions. The opening of Øresund Link in 2000, the tunnel-bridge between Copenhagen and Malmö that connected Denmark with Sweden, was accompanied by an effort to create a new Øresund region, consisting of both Sjælland and Skåne. It was branded as a creative hub by focusing on medical technology, leisure and quality of life.[63]

Tourism also contributed to create transnational regions of a very different nature. Genealogy or roots tourism of American and Australian emigrants returning to their native region in Europe gained importance in the 1950s and 1960s. It generally reinforced

the regional and national identity of both returnees and hosts, who on some occasions organized 'homecoming' events, such as the Ireland at Home festival of 1954.[64] This type of roots or 'homesick' tourism received a boost after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Many East European Germans who had been expelled after the Second World War – or Transylvanian Saxons and Volga Germans who emigrated to the West in the 1980s and 1990s – could now more easily visit the areas where they had grown up. Many of them were not received with hostility as maybe could be expected. The inhabitants – many also expelled from other parts of East-Central Europe – were often eager to hear stories about the past. Former emigrants also played a stimulating role in the preservation of regional heritage. Moreover, social media now provide them with the means to create online regional communities.[65]

Over the last few decades, the impact of tourists on regional identities has become more pronounced as the tourism business continues to grow. Improved highways, low-cost airlines and high-speed trains now carry growing numbers of tourists to all parts of the continent. And although the Mediterranean beaches continue to attract the bulk of the tourists, cultural tourism is growing as well. The areas that profited most from these developments were attractive cities with a broad cultural offer, such as Paris, London, Barcelona, Amsterdam and Prague. Barcelona used the Olympic Games of 1992 for an ambitious programme of urban renovation turning a degraded industrial neighbourhood into the Olympic Village, while reconnecting the harbour in an elegant way with the city centre. International star architects such as Norman Forster and Santiago Calatrava added allure with an array of spectacular new buildings. The best conversion of an old degraded city into an attractive tourist destination is offered by the Basque town of Bilbao, where Frank Gehry's new Guggenheim museum, which opened its doors in 1997, formed the icing on the cake.[66] During the first decades of the twenty-first century, the amount of tourists in major European cities has grown so quickly that it is now even seen as problematic. As a response to the large tourist influx, in 2009 the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area began to market the surrounding areas of the city as Amsterdam Beach, Amsterdam Flowers, Old Holland and Castles and Gardens of Amsterdam (see Figure 6.2), thus promoting visits to the surrounding regions by selling them under the label of the city.[67]

Conclusion

Tourist demand had a crucial impact on the construction of regional identities. During the long twentieth century, tourism stimulated regions to distinguish themselves from others by underlining their most exceptional and spectacular aspects. Because of tourism's strong economic incentives – as part of the rise of consumer society – the regional identity of most parts of Europe became much more pronounced. Nonetheless, the actual importance and the role of tourism in each phase depended on developments of a cultural, economic, political or technological nature. Although since the Romantic era rural areas were seen as the heartland of the nation only towards the end of the nineteenth century, strongly encouraged by tourists and world fairs, regional identities

Figure 6.2 *Amsterdam Metropolitan Area Map: Amsterdam Marketing.*

became more narrowly defined. This tendency was reinforced during the early decades of the twentieth century when the culture of regionalism became extremely popular, filling tourist resorts with neo-vernacular villas and providing them with artisanal souvenirs and typical dishes.

The main watershed was the Second World War, which interrupted the tourism business for almost a decade. However, it was not the war itself that caused major changes but the ideological transformations that were related to its outcome. Before 1939, regions primarily positioned themselves in the tourist market by emphasizing tradition and favouring rural aspects; after 1945, modernity became fashionable and urban culture began to set the tone. However, this does not mean that the war was a sharp turning point; many new tendencies – such as sunbathing, paid holidays and modernist architecture – had been anticipated in the 1920s and 1930s, while older traditions continued in new forms. During the Reconstruction era, regions became more uniform – at least in the built environment – and this was especially true for the coastal areas where most tourists spent their holidays. Nevertheless, regional peculiarities remained a lucrative side-dish. In the 1970s, heritage preservation, cultural tourism and destination marketing again began to emphasize regional differences. Although new forms of tourism, such as roots tourism, rural tourism and visits to industrial heritage sites, further encouraged the construction and dissemination of regional identities, it seems that large cities profit most from the new vogue for cultural trips.

Tourism, obviously, did not have the same effect everywhere. Regions that already attracted a lot of tourists before the Second World War, such as Tyrol, Bavaria, Brittany, Andalusia and Tuscany, became more typified than before. Regions that became a major tourist destination after 1945, such as the Mediterranean coast, were more affected by the vogue for international modernity both in architecture and urban planning, although in the last few decades, typical buildings and folkloric traditions have made a strong comeback. Regions that were not very attractive for tourists until recently were barely affected. However, today, because of the considerable economic impact of tourism, entrepreneurs across Europe try to welcome visitors with their own regional specialities, dishes, beverages, festivals, typical buildings, natural patrimony and folkloric traditions. If they do not yet exist, they will have to be invented.

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