

Vera Rebollo, J. Fernando y Baños Catiñeira, Carlos J. (2010) Renovación y reestructuración de los destinos turísticos consolidados del litoral. Boletín de la Asociación de geógrafos españoles. Nº 52 2010 pp 329-353

Vera Rebollo, J. Fernando; López-Palomeque, Francisco; Marchena, Manuel J.; Antón, Salvador, (1997), Análisis territorial del turismo, Barcelona: Ariel.

## Notes

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Passive protectionism is based on declassification operations of the potential urban land or the increase of restrictions for the transformation of the rustic land; although it often lacks management instruments.

“Protocol Ratification Instrument related to the integrated management of Mediterranean coastal areas.” (BOE from/03/2011).

Landscape European Convention signed in Florence in the year 2000, (BOE of 5/02/2008).

Landscape unit: “Portion of territory characterised by a specific combination of landscape components of an environmental, cultural, perceptive and symbolic nature and with clearly recognisable dynamics which result in an individuality differentiated from the rest of the territory,” according to Landscape Observatory of Catalonia <http://www.catpaisatge.net>

Thesis project carried out by the author, “Balearization. Majorca, the laboratory of experimentation in tourism and its coastal manifestations”, made an in-depth analysis of the characterization of each of the specifically tourist settlements as well as their location and management rationales in the lead up to constructing regional tourist systems.

The concept of positive externalities is used in both urban economy and environmental economy fields. The use of this concept in tourism economy, is understood as the profit generated by each of the tourism enterprises toward the rest of the enterprises of the same sector in the same area (localization economies) as well as in the local landscape capital value, such as agricultural activities or natural spaces. See on Polèse, Mario (1994). *Economía Urbano-Regional: Introducción a la relación entre territorio y desarrollo*.

The concept of minimum elements of tourism refers to architectonic and urban pieces, which form the tourist space, developed by Rosa Barba, Rosa PIE, Ricard (1996), *Arquitectura y turismo: Planes y proyectos*. Barcelona: Centre de recerca i projectes de paisatge.

The resilience in this case is defined as the capacity of the coastline area to fit in the impact that tourism economic activity has caused, leading to a strengthening of its values through the incorporation of natural dynamics in the planning strategies. Concept worked by the author as a professor of the Extreme city workshop. Climate change and the transformation of the waterscape. Università di Architettura di Venezia IUAV (2010). <http://www.juav..it/extremecity>

Planning guidelines ruled by coastal dynamics of each coastline type, in “Integrated and interdisciplinary scientific approach to coastal management” in *Ocean & Coastal Management* n.52, pp. 493–505, 2009. Journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/ocecoaman](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ocecoaman)

Methodology used in preliminary regional planning of Tenerife Island (PIOT). *Tourism regional planning (1992)*, by Joaquín Sabate, Miguel Corominas, and Is

# Selling Global Seoul: Competitive Urban Policy and Symbolic Reconstruction of Cities

*Dr. Blaž Križnik*

University of Seoul, Department of Architecture, Siripdae-gil, 13, Dongdaemun-gu, 130-743 Seoul, Republic of Korea  
e-mail: [blaz.kriznik@guest.arnes.si](mailto:blaz.kriznik@guest.arnes.si)

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## Abstract

■ The paper focuses on a process of symbolic reconstruction of cities, where existing image or meaning of places is purposely changed with an aim to attract new investments, events or tourists to a particular city. We try to situate the process within the context of growing competition of cities. Symbolic reconstruction also affects tourism development in cities as it provides an easily marketed and consumable image and meaning of places. The case of Cheonggyecheon restoration in Seoul helps us to study how symbolic reconstruction of cities is related to and affected by competitive urban policy of cities, urban renewal and city marketing. Observing local consequences we conclude that while the Cheonggyecheon restoration and resulting symbolic reconstruction helped Cheonggyecheon to become the major tourist attraction and icon of global Seoul, it also results in decline of local places and cultures, contradicting in this way its initial goals.

*Key words:*

Cheonggyecheon, city marketing, Seoul, symbolic reconstruction, urban policy.

## Introduction

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■ Seoul in South Korea is one of the world’s largest cities. Combined with the metropolitan region it is home to more than 22 million residents, which accounts for almost half of the national population. While the city is praised as the “Miracle on the Han River” for its rapid economic growth and urban development in the past, it is still largely overlooked that Seoul is recently quickly expanding its cultural industry and becoming one of the top tourist destinations in East Asia. Nearly nine million foreign visitors came to the city last year and the impact of tourism industry on the local economic growth, social structure and urban development is growing. Metropolitan government seems to be well aware of the opportunities that tourism development brings to the city and has designated tourism industry as one of the six growth engines that are expected to transform Seoul into a “clean and attractive global city” (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2006). Although there is a growing interest in Seoul in the field of urban studies in general, including urban planning and architecture, little research was done focusing on Seoul as an emerging tourism destination. The growing impact of tourism on urban policy as well as on everyday life in Seoul remains so far rather unacknowledged.

The paper focuses on urban renewal and city marketing as instruments of urban policy in Seoul, by which the metropolitan government tries to improve global competitiveness and appeal of the city. Urban renewal and city marketing are at the same time expected to boost tourism in Seoul. Such urban policy is based on an assumption that the global position of Seoul can be significantly improved by efficient management and marketing of its strategic resources, which would eventually result in a local economic growth, urban development and higher quality of everyday life (SDI, 2003; OECD 2005). Yet urban renewal and city marketing also result in what we call symbolic reconstruction of cities, whereby the existing image or meaning of places are purposely changed

in order to attract new investments, events and tourists to the city. We suggest that symbolic reconstruction of cities, also referred to as re-signification or re-imaging of cities, offers a conceptual framework, which allows us to study the relation between urban renewal and city marketing as instruments of urban policy in general and tourism development in particular against the backdrop of growing competition of cities (Balibrea, 2001; Smith, 2005). The paper takes the Cheonggyecheon restoration, the most known of urban renewal project in Seoul, as a case to study influence of urban policy on urban renewal and city marketing in the city. The case shows, how an ageing highway, crossing downtown Seoul, was torn down and the ancient Cheonggye Stream was restored on its place, transforming the stream into one of the ultimate places of global Seoul. Yet the Cheonggyecheon restoration not only transformed the downtown Seoul but also changed its image and meaning (Cho, 2010). Symbolic reconstruction of the city was to a large extent a result of aggressive city marketing. Although the restoration itself positively affected tourism in the city, lacking authenticity of the stream and ongoing decline of local culture may negatively affect tourism development in the city. We argue in the conclusion that the instrumentalisation of the Cheonggyecheon restoration to improve global competitiveness and appeal of the city results in undesirable outcomes, which contradict its initial goals to boost tourism in Seoul.

## Competing globally, whatever it costs

■ Globalization of cities is often seen as a one-way process, where success or failure of a particular city depends entirely on global conditions that are supposedly beyond local control. One may think that globalization process is inevitable, and all a city can do is to enter the global arena or stay outside the big game. While it is obvious that structural transformation of global economy, increasing cultural and political integration on cross-national scale, and informatization of societies affect cities around the world, such a view nevertheless fails to account that cities are not merely places where global flows of capital, goods and cultures are localized. Cities are at the same time the engines of global economy, which reproduce the global order as much as they are affected by it. Due to structural changes in the global economy, such as the new geographical division of labour and uneven capital accumulation, cities are forced to offer substantial financial, administrative or other incentives to attract global capital to a particular place. In this way cities have become increasingly autonomous economic and political agents that actively respond to pressures and opportunities of globalization. Consequently it is the urban policy of cities, and not the global forces outside them, that is the main source of urban change today (Sassen, 2001; Smith, 2002; Short, 2004).

Competition of cities affects their urban policy, which is becoming increasingly competitive in following strategic goals of a particular city. Competitive urban policy is commonly based on two assumptions. On one hand it assumes that a city can improve its position against rival cities by implementing efficient management of its strategic resources. On the other hand a city also needs to be efficiently marketed to make others aware of its comparative advantages. City marketing became an integral part of competitive urban policy and large financial and human resources are invested to promote a particular city as supposedly the most attractive business environment, place of the finest quality of life or the most desired tourist destination (Smith, 2005). By attracting foreign investments, transnational corporations, international events and tourists, a city is expected to benefit from a faster economic growth, new jobs, urban development and better quality of everyday life. Many local governments even believe that they can face a risk of economic and social decline if the city marketing fails short of anticipated results (Short, 1998). Yet there is little evidence that competitive urban policy always leads to a just and sustainable urban development beneficial for different social groups in the city. There is on contrary a growing body of evidence suggesting that benefits of aggressive city marketing are distributed in a noticeably uneven way (Smith, 2002; Urry, 2002; Perrons, 2004). While it is true that competitive urban policy can result in new public spaces, social amenities, infrastructure, and renewed neighbourhoods, the long-term benefits of economic growth generated by successful city marketing often stay in the hands of a small political elite and private developers, known as “growth coalitions,” which mediate between sources of competitiveness and their implementation (Logan and Molotch, 2007). Harvey (1989:4) showed that the only certain short-term outcome of what he calls a “shift to entrepreneurialism in urban governance” are uneven capital accumulation, speculative urban development, instrumentalisation of public-private partnerships, domination of economic interests in urban management, and declining social and spatial cohesion in cities.

During the last two decades city marketing gained a lot of attention as an instrument of competitive urban policy (Smith, 2005). City marketing follows strategic goals of local government, which mostly focus on strengthening

*Balibrea (2001:189) refers to symbolic reconstruction as a process of “resignifying the city”, while Smith (2005:403) talks about “re-imaging” of cities by means of connotations. Much of debate on symbolic reconstruction was recently focused on Barcelona, which has changed over the past two decades from a relatively unknown regional centre into one of the most successful European cities. Symbolic reconstruction was instrumental for the profound transformation of the city (Balibrea, 2001; Smith, 2005).*

global competitiveness of a city, enhancing its international image, attracting new investments, events or tourists, and improving the everyday quality of life. One of the main goals of city marketing is “to construct a new image of the city to replace either vague or negative images previously held by current or potential residents, investors and visitors” (Holcomb, 1993:133). In this sense selling a city is no different than selling any other product. Cities are therefore becoming increasingly commodified, where the emphasis is less on promoting actual qualities of a place as it is on selling its image. City marketing strategies range from a conventional tools like dissemination of appealing slogans and logos to more sophisticated approaches, which integrate organization of important international events, conventions, construction of iconic urban projects and city branding. Although such practices vary in terms of scale and scope they nevertheless aim to reconstruct the image and meaning of a particular place, which we refer to as the symbolic reconstruction of cities. Yet by reconstructing the meaning of a place the city marketing also legitimates interests of dominant economic and political actors. New meanings promoted by city marketing “are not innocent of social authority and political power. The city is written from a particular perspective for a particular audience” (Short, 1998:74). Cities try to promote themselves as safe and friendly places without conflicts, while environmental degradation or social injustice are rarely addressed. The potential allusion to the conflictive past that a place may invoke has to be reconstructed to the extent that “the end product loses its capacity to refer to a memory of capitalist exploitation and of the role that this exploitation has played in the city’s current prosperity” (Balibrea, 2001:190). Social groups and individuals, who do not fit or oppose the desired symbolic reconstruction, are excluded from the city life. Symbolic reconstruction of cities as a consequence of competitive urban policy thus serves as a new form of social and political domination and affects social polarization and denied political rights (Balibrea, 2001; Cho, 2010).

As one of the fastest growing global industries tourism directly affects urban change and is seen as one of the new growth sectors in cities along with the high-tech industry, advanced producer services and cultural industry. At the same time tourism development directly benefits from successful city marketing and resulting symbolic reconstruction of cities (Short, 2004). Aggressive city marketing in particular can attract new tourists, which in consequence supposedly affects the local economic growth and urban development. Symbolic reconstruction plays a rather important role in this case since it provides easily consumable images and appealing meanings of a particular place following market trends in tourism industry. Tourists namely tend to reduce their experience of a place to a “limited number of experiences” and demand a “coherent representation and meaning of a city, one that is easy and pleasant to consume” (Balibrea, 2001:189). City marketing however has a limited success without the actual transformation of a city. Large-scale urban renewal projects, which aim to replace traditional and seemingly rundown urban areas with new places of global spectacle, tend to transform the former into non-conflicting tourist attractions of mass consumption that inform us about anything except human relations and practices shaping those places in the past. Such development commodifies cities and transforms them into a spectacle for tourists deprived of any authenticity and meaning (Urry, 2002). For local residents tourism development may eventually generate new jobs, but it can also lead to gentrification, social segregation, community disintegration or decline of local places and cultures (Smith, 2002; Križnik, 2009a).

Now we want to turn our attention away from a general discussion on globalization and cities and focus on urban policy in Seoul to see, how urban renewal and city marketing transform the city to become one of the leading cities and a top tourist destination in the world. In particular we want to focus on the Cheonggyecheon restoration, the most known urban renewal project in Seoul, in order to uncover some consequences, which the restoration and resulting symbolic reconstruction of the city have on tourism development and everyday life in Seoul.

## Seoul, a clean and attractive global city

■ Seoul became increasingly competitive during the last decade in terms of challenging and improving its relatively low structural position in the global economy compared to the leading cities (Križnik, 2009b). While New York, London and Tokyo are widely recognized for having dominant position in the global economy, Seoul used to take a position of what Taylor (2004:160) calls a “wannabe world city.” According to Taylor (2004) cities, subordinated to those already holding a dominant role, are facing stronger economic and political pressures caused by their drive to improve global ranks. In Seoul global pressures seem to be further accentuated by its overwhelming position

*Taylor (2004:73) ranks Seoul as the 42nd in a classification, based on a network analysis of global producer services. The global network connectivity index of Seoul was 0,415. London had the highest index (1,000) and was followed by New York (0,976), Hong Kong (0,707), Paris (0,699) and Tokyo (0,694). For the three consecutive years Seoul was selected as the most wanted city to visit in a survey, which AC Nielsen conducts in China, Japan and Thailand (Lee, 2011). Foreign visitors to Seoul spent about 3,2 billion EUR during the first five months in 2011, 9% more than the year before. Related industries accordingly benefited for about 8,3 billion EUR (Lee, 2011). If the trend continues the tourism industry in Seoul may generate an income of about 20 billion EUR this year. In 2010 the metropolitan government’s spending on tourism and culture accounted for almost 550 million EUR, which is 3,6% of the total municipal budget (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2011:552).*

in the national urban system, and by a vast concentration of financial and human resources in the metropolitan region (Choe, 1998). Several studies show that the lower global rank of Seoul was not only a consequence of its structural position in the global economy but also of its distinct development in the past (SDI, 2003; OECD, 2005). Metropolitan government namely did not pay much attention to the negative environmental and social outcomes of the rapid economic growth and urban development. At the same time, Seoul possesses natural and cultural heritage that is, unlike in other cities, exceptionally well located, which is an important resource for its future. Yet the rich heritage used to be poorly marketed, invisible for tourists, and had so far a limited influence on global competitiveness and appeal of the city. The OECD (2005: 59) study thus recommends “in order to continue to play the role of national economic leader and reinforce its international competitiveness, Seoul must attend to improvements in its spatial development, urban environment and quality of life.”

Table 1. Visitors to Seoul and Barcelona from 2000 to 2010.

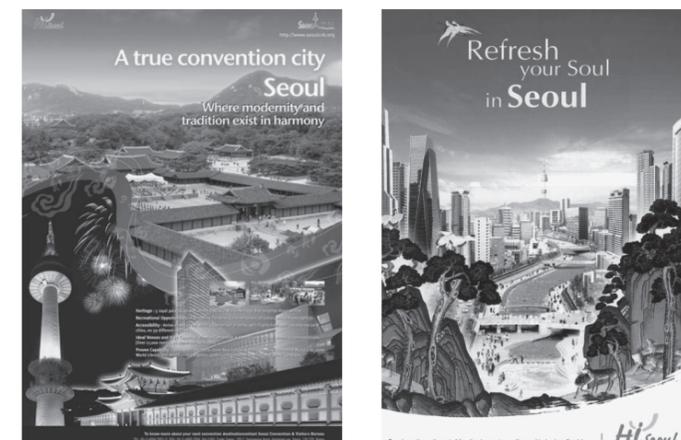
	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
Seoul	5.321.792	5.347.468	5.818.138	6.155.046	6.890.841	8.797.658
Barcelona	3.141.162	3.580.986	4.549.587	6.709.175	6.659.075	7.133.524

Source: Barcelona Turisme (2011:7), Seoul Metropolitan Government (2011:346).

Rich natural and cultural heritage is one of the key resources for economic growth and urban development of Seoul and for tourism in particular. Along with financial services, digital content, ICT, biotechnical, design and fashion industry the metropolitan government designated tourism and convention industry as one of the “six new growth engines”, which are expected to transform Seoul into a “clean and attractive global city” (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2006:26). The impact of tourism industry in Seoul is growing. In 2010 almost nine million visitors arrived to Seoul. Still less than the ambitious goal set by the metropolitan government, which wants to see twelve million visitors a year. However, while Seoul was virtually unknown as a tourist destination two decades ago, it has meanwhile become one of the most popular cities to visit in East and South East Asia. The city also serves as the gateway for the vast majority of foreign visitors coming to Korea. In comparison to Barcelona, which is considered to be a top tourist destination, Seoul displays a similar number and growth of visitors during the last decade (Table 1). Due to the growing economic importance of tourism industry the metropolitan government is investing substantial financial and human resources in the city marketing and promotion of Seoul as tourist destination. City marketing is considered as one of the three strategies that the metropolitan government is to implement “in order to attract more foreign tourists and foreign direct investment” (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2006:15). Marketing campaigns are particularly focused on the neighbouring countries, which represent the main market for the tourism industry in Seoul due to their proximity and cultural similarities. Another important source of tourism development is a fast expansion of convention tourism. Seoul ranked 5th among the most important “international meeting cities in 2010”, outdoing Barcelona or Tokyo (UIA, 2011).

Growth of tourism directly affects urban development in Seoul. The metropolitan government’s plan to transform Seoul in competitive and attractive global city focuses on integration of tourism development with the “revitalization of downtown Seoul as a center for economy and tourism” and seemingly necessary development of what is called “tourist attractions with global competitiveness” (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2006:26). The ongoing transformation of downtown Seoul includes the new Gwanghwamun Square, connecting the main Gyeongbokgung palace with the historical Namdaemun gate, development of special tourism zones in Myeongdong, Insadong, and Cheonggyecheon, planned green corridor between the Jongmyo royal shrine and Namsan mountain and the construction of the iconic Dongdaemun Design Plaza. In parallel to the transformation of downtown, the metropolitan government also introduced an ambitious large-scale urban renewal New Town Development, which was expected to address existing imbalances in economic growth and urban development between various parts of the city and thus improve the quality of life in Seoul (Križnik, 2009b). The most important urban renewal project in terms of long-term impact on the economic growth and urban development in Seoul as well as desired expansion of its tourism is the Cheonggyecheon restoration, which we will discuss in details later on.

Image 1. Symbolic reconstruction of Seoul: Coexistence of traditional and global.



Source: Seoul Metropolitan Government (2006:81), Seoul Selection (2006:66).

The image and meaning of Seoul are recently intensively reconstructed, mainly aiming to improve the global appeal of the city. The symbolic reconstruction seems to follow two dominant narratives, which are frequently used in marketing campaigns and reproduced in various forms and media, addressing domestic and foreign residents, investors and tourists. One narrative focuses on a so-called “royal Seoul”, while the other talks about a “breathtaking Seoul” (Seoul Tourist Organization, 2009) (Image 1). The first narrative has its references in historic palaces and temples, the old city wall and gates, remaining traditional villages, and the landscape surrounding Seoul. Long and rich cultural tradition of Korea, which it is referring to, makes it ideal to distinct Seoul from other cities in East Asia. The so-called glorious tradition of royal Seoul is used at the same time to legitimize the second dominant narrative about breathtaking Seoul, which apparently has its origin in “an ancient capital” and “a dynamic and emerging global metropolis” together (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2005:103). City marketing in this case wants to relate the image and meaning of traditional places to those of the global spectacle. The recent urban renewal projects in downtown Seoul, such as the earlier mentioned Cheonggyecheon restoration, new Gwanghwamun Plaza or the Dongdaemun Design Plaza under-construction, all try to present the continuity of Korean tradition on one hand, while on the other hand they want to show ambitions of global Seoul.

Symbolic reconstruction, where the ancient tradition is used to legitimize the cosmopolitan future, aims to boost the tourism development in Seoul. Though sometimes different in form and media, the marketing campaigns promoting the “royal and breathtaking Seoul” use narratives, which praise the city for a harmonious coexistence of traditional and global. In this way they try to create a distinct image and meaning of Seoul, one that is easily recognizable, marketed and consumed. Combination of traditional and global constructs an imaginary representation of a “clean and attractive global city”, which has its origins in the rich natural and cultural heritage. In order to study the process of symbolic reconstruction, its relation to the urban renewal in Seoul, and some of its local consequences, we will focus on the Cheonggyecheon restoration and meaning attached to it.

### Instrumentalisation of the cheonggyecheon restoration?

■ Cheonggyecheon restoration, as probably the most known urban renewal project in Seoul, draws a lot of attention in Korea and abroad for its successful and innovative approach. In 2002 the metropolitan government announced a plan to demolish the ageing elevated highway and restore the ancient stream on the site of the former. The restoration was successfully completed in 2005, only two years and three months after it started. Anticipated results of the Cheonggyecheon restoration were multiple. Seoul Metropolitan Government (2005) wanted to improve environmental and living conditions in the downtown Seoul, resolve disparities in development between the north and south part of the city, recover natural and cultural heritage, create new public spaces and amenities, increase traffic safety and boost tourism development in the area. Many goals of the Cheonggyecheon restoration were already achieved. Environmental and living conditions in the area are considerably improved, while local residents enjoy new public spaces and attend variety of cultural venues and

*Cheonggyecheon is about 8-kilometer long stream running through the downtown Seoul. It played an important role when Seoul was established in 1394. According to the traditional knowledge of Pungsu, the stream was believed to bring energy to the city and guaranteed its harmony with the nature. Before covered with a road and topped by an elevated highway during the rapid urbanization of the city, Cheonggyecheon used to be one of the central symbolic places in the pre-modern Seoul (Ryu, 2004).*

bustling commercial activities (Image 2). Yet the Cheonggyecheon restoration also plays an important strategic role as an instrument of urban policy, by which the metropolitan government tries to improve global competitiveness and appeal of the city. The Seoul mayor Lee left no doubt about the strategic goals before the restoration started, when he stated, “once the stream is restored, we want this area to stand out as a center of foreign investment. The ultimate goal is to make Seoul a great city, one that can compete as an attractive center of business with Shanghai, Tokyo and Beijing” (quoted in Kane, 2003). In this sense the Cheonggyecheon restoration should be seen as an urban renewal that tries to combine strategic goals of competitive urban policy with measures addressing local economic growth and urban development (Križnik, 2009b).

Recently less desired outcomes of the Cheonggyecheon restoration became evident. It seems that the project was narrowly focused on the restoration of stream alone, and did not provide a long-term comprehensive strategy to address complex consequences of such large-scale urban renewal (Cho, 2010). Land value along Cheonggyecheon significantly increased after the restoration was completed, and many old neighbourhoods, such as Hwanghak, Wangsimni or Sinseol, become places of land speculation and intensive urban development (Rowe, 2010). A number of high-rise office and residential projects are currently under construction along Cheonggyecheon, often completely out of scale and without meaningful relation to the local places nearby. Such development not only has a negative impact on the urban landscape, but also significantly changes existing social structure and economic organization of the area (Križnik, 2009a). Private development, which directly benefits from the restoration, namely pays little if any attention to existing economic and social complexity of the affected areas. Growing living costs caused by it force many local merchants and residents to leave the area. The ongoing gentrification, resulting from the loosely controlled private development, can be thus partly attributed to the Cheonggyecheon restoration. In a similar manner the restoration also affects the local economy. While certain industrial or service sectors are flourishing, traditional jobs are in decline. Places that used to play an important role for reproduction of local economy and life are about to disappear, while many local merchants are closing their business (Križnik, 2009b).

Image 2. Cheonggyecheon as new public space and tourist attraction in downtown Seoul.



Source: Križnik (2009b:125).

Cheonggyecheon restoration also affects tourism in Seoul. OECD (2005:102) study expected that Cheonggyecheon restoration “can serve as a flagship project showing to the international community Seoul’s dedication in building a lively urban landscape. If the project is closely connected to a cultural booming, it could become a major touristic asset for Seoul’s international image.” After its opening the stream actually became one of the major tourist attractions in the city and more than 120 million visitors reportedly visited Cheonggyecheon by now with about 20% of them foreigners. Although Cheonggyecheon lags behind other popular places in Seoul like Myeongdong or Dongdaemun, which are visited by more than half of all foreign visitors, we have to notice that Myeongdong and Dongdaemun are two of the most important shopping areas in the city. Compared to historic and cultural sites similar to Cheonggyecheon, such as Insadong for example, the number of foreign visitors to both is rather similar (Table 2). Due to the growing number of visitors the Cheonggyecheon restoration positively affects tourism industry in downtown Seoul and generates new jobs in the area, which was once known mainly for its small industrial workshops and local markets. To support tourism development the metropolitan government designated

*There used to be 60.000 shops, which employed about 800.000 workers, excluding illegal street vendors, located along the Cheonggyecheon (Cho, 2010). Cheonggyecheon flea market, once one of the largest street markets in Seoul, virtually disappeared after the restoration. The nearby Hwanghak flea market seems to be following the same fate. The metropolitan government was aware of consequences that the restoration may have on local markets and allowed some street vendors to continue business in the old Dongdaemun stadium after the restoration started. The majority of street vendors had to relocate to other parts of Seoul or lose their work. Yet the Dongdaemun area also became a part of urban renewal and the remaining street vendors had to relocate again. Today there are reportedly only about 700 street vendors left in the newly opened Seoul Folk Flea Market in Sinseol area, which shows the vast impact of large-scale urban renewal on the local economy. A survey, conducted monthly over the year, included 8.123 foreign visitors in 2006 and 9.634 foreign visitors in 2010. They were asked about places, which they visited during their stay in Seoul. However one public official was less*

Cheonggyecheon as a special tourism zone and built facilities like Cheonggyecheon Museum and Seoul Folk Flea Market nearby the stream. The iconic Dongdaemun Design Plaza, which the metropolitan government expects to become the “global fashion hub”, also benefits directly from the transformation triggered by the Cheonggyecheon restoration (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2006:75).

Table 2. Foreign visitors to major tourist attractions in Seoul in 2006 and 2010.

	Myeongdong	Dongdaemun	Old palaces	Insadong	Cheonggyecheon
2006	51,4 %	48,5 %	42,9 %	26,6 %	12,7 %
2010	66,7 %	56,4 %	44,0 %	32,2 %	19,8 %

Source: Korea Tourism Organization (2007: 107), Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism (2011: 128).

Urban renewal is rarely only a matter of transforming a particular place, but also about the interpretation of its outcome. The narratives giving new meaning to places under urban renewal namely also legitimize its goals. Dominant social and political groups try to impose in this way their particular interpretation, which often stands in a strong contrast with the traditional meaning of local places. Symbolic reconstruction of cities is therefore inherently a contested process and the Cheonggyecheon restoration is no exception. However in the case of Cheonggyecheon the traditional meaning of the stream was already lost long ago, when it was covered with a road and elevated highway. There were actually little if any historic references for the Cheonggyecheon restoration, neither in terms of its image nor meaning. Cho (2010:151) hence points out that if the stream “was to be restored, it either had to be reinvented or reconstructed in the urban context of global Seoul. This meant that natural Cheonggyecheon was to be discursively created...” The dominant group, lead by the Seoul mayor Lee, favoured reinvention and rapid restoration process, which the mayor saw as an opportunity to improve global competitiveness and appeal of the city and to strengthen his political position. The new image and meaning of the stream were to support his interests. The contending group, consisting of civic environmental and cultural organizations and merchant’s associations, opposed to what they perceived as undemocratic restoration, instrumentalised by the metropolitan government. Yet while the merchant’s associations focused on protecting their private interests, the environmental and cultural organizations struggled for a democratic restoration process and opposed the lacking “ecological and historical authenticity” of the stream (Cho, 2010:162).

The interests of the dominant group eventually prevailed over the concerns of civic society. More than on a careful restoration of natural environment and cultural heritage the metropolitan government was focused on constructing a place of global spectacle, which to a large extent lacks authentic meaning. Cho (2010:160) therefore describes the Cheonggyecheon as a “public park decorated to the theme of nature.” Such approach to urban renewal resulted in a new symbolic meaning of the Cheonggyecheon and greatly affected the image of global Seoul. Reports for example show that Cheonggyecheon restoration successfully challenged the widespread international perception of Seoul as an “urban concrete jungle” (Walsh, 2006). The restoration process was not only an instrument of competitive urban policy, which aimed to improve the quality of everyday life in downtown Seoul, but was apparently also used by city marketing to reimage the city and sell it as a “clean and attractive global city” in order to improve the global competitiveness and appeal of the city (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2006). While environmental and historic importance of the restoration was presented to the public, the strategic goals were hidden by narratives presenting Cheonggyecheon as the “new face of Seoul” and “hope for the Seoul citizens.” The metropolitan government (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2005:105) widely promoted the restoration as “a greater task that the entire nation is interested in as a symbolic project to revive an important part of Korea’s historical and natural heritage at the start of the 21st century”.

Narratives about national interests, supposedly related to the Cheonggyecheon restoration, were in this case used to legitimize particular economic and political interests and competitive urban policy of the metropolitan government (Ryu, 2004; Cho, 2010). For those reasons Cheonggyecheon is portrayed as a place, where the heritage of the ancient Hanseong coexists with the global Seoul (Image 1). However, not all historic legacy fits the new image and meaning of the city. While the traditional heritage and cosmopolitan future are used as sources of imagination and representation of things to come, the legacy of industrialization, symbolized by once heroic and now demolished Cheonggye Expressway, does not fit the desired image of global Seoul. The assistant mayor

*Optimistic about the number of foreign visitors to Cheonggyecheon. Referring to daily field surveys in an interview, he believes that less than 10% of all visitors to Cheonggyecheon are foreigners. Rather than for a long-term gradual restoration of the entire Cheonggyecheon water basin and its ecology, which would result in sufficient water flow, the metropolitan government decided to pump the required water into the stream from a nearby water-treatment facility. Restoration of cultural heritage also drew a lot of criticism. Several archaeological sites were partly destroyed during the restoration and the ancient Gwanggyo Bridge was rebuilt away from its historic location (Križnik, 2009b; Cho, 2010).*

of the Cheonggyecheon Restoration Project Headquarters Yang stated clearly that by “liquidating the unsightly legacy from Korea’s developmental period and restoring the city’s natural environment, Seoul can be ready to emerge as a cultural metropolis where tradition and modernity are harmoniously blended with each other” (Weolgan Hwangyeong, 2004). Many traditional local cultures and places along Cheonggyecheon that once gave rise to the rapid development and the present prosperity of Seoul were literally deconstructed and forgotten during the restoration process. Cheonggyecheon restoration seems to have a rather strong impact on the symbolic reconstruction of the city.

### **Conclusion: contradictions of symbolic reconstruction of cities**

■ We studied the process of symbolic reconstruction of cities and tried to situate it within the context of growing competition of cities, which increasingly affects their urban policy. Competitive urban policy assumes that the position of a city in the global economy can be improved by efficient management and marketing of its strategic resources, which eventually results in a local economic growth, urban development and higher quality of everyday life. Symbolic reconstruction of cities can be described as an outcome of competitive urban policy, where existing image or meaning of places is purposely changed to attract new investments, events or tourists to a particular city. The result is an easily marketed and consumable image and meaning of places. However symbolic reconstruction of cities should not be seen as a formal instrument of urban policy. Rather it offers a conceptual framework, which allows us to understand the relation between urban policy on one hand and urban renewal and city marketing on the other. The two are namely gaining a lot of attention as instruments of competitive urban policy, which among other strategic goals aim to boost tourism development in a city in order to improve its position in global economy.

The paper focuses on the Cheonggyecheon restoration, probably the most known urban renewal project in Seoul, to study how symbolic reconstruction of the city is related to and affected by competitive urban policy, urban renewal and city marketing in Seoul. The restoration of the ancient stream considerably improved the area along Cheonggyecheon in many aspects and has a growing impact on the tourism development in the city. The stream became not only one of the major tourists attractions in global Seoul, but also one of its icons. At the same time the Cheonggyecheon restoration became an important part of city marketing, which successfully challenges the lacking international attention to Seoul as a tourist destination. The image and meaning of Cheonggyecheon is therefore rewritten from a particular perspective, which praises the stream and the city for what is promoted as a distinctive coexistence of traditional and global. The instrumentalisation of the Cheonggyecheon restoration to improve the global competitiveness and appeal of the city seems to have resulted in undesired outcomes in the area affected by urban renewal, such as the ongoing gentrification, decline of traditional industrial and service sectors and disappearance of local places and cultures. The example of traditional flea markets along Cheonggyecheon illustrates how distinct local places and cultures, once characteristic for the area, are replaced by places of global spectacle that are easily found in other cities too. At the same time the image and meaning of local places are changed to fit the dominant narratives promoting the global Seoul. The resulting symbolic reconstruction of the city negatively affects local places and cultures, which are an important resource for tourism development in the future. Such outcomes contradict the strategic goals of competitive urban policy, which aims to boost tourism development in the city, and may at the end prevail over the actual benefits of the Cheonggyecheon restoration for tourism and everyday life in Seoul.

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# Tourism Reclaiming Urban Case Study: City Of Macau In The Pearl River Delta Region, China

*Miguel Lima*

Porto University, Faculty of Architecture, 4150-755 Porto, Portugal miguel.lima.arquitecto@gmail.com  
Chinese University of Hong Kong, School of Architecture (Prof. Hendrik Tieben).HK SAR, China  
architecture@cuhk.edu.hk

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## Abstract

■ The main subject of this paper is to study the use of land reclamation development in the contexts of tourism spaces construction in its relation to consolidate urban and growing regions. Referring to the processes involved, it is relevant to analyze the interaction of massive tourism developments using urbanization based on rapid construction enhanced by land reclaimed to water. The "urbanization of water" for tourism purposes creates diverse asymmetries, raising problematic issues namely in the urban context. Among others one can find conflicts - in the limits and borders, contaminating and spreading phenomenon that formulates new in the existing, causing controversial dichotomies leading to the construction of history in detriment of consolidating past testimonials - that includes heritage and cultural aspects now replaced, reinvented and recreated in thematized urban contexts.

*Key words:*

tourism spaces, land reclamation, Macau city, Pearl River Delta region.

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## Introduction

■ The main subject of this paper is to study the use of land reclamation development in the contexts of tourism spaces construction in its relation to consolidate urban and growing regions. Referring to the processes involved, it is relevant to analyze the interaction of massive tourism developments using urbanization based on rapid construction enhanced by land reclaimed to water. The "urbanization of water" for tourism purposes creates diverse asymmetries, raising problematic issues namely in the urban context. Among others one can find conflicts - in the limits and borders, contaminating and spreading phenomenon that formulates new in the existing, causing controversial dichotomies leading to the construction of history in detriment of consolidating past testimonials - that includes heritage and cultural aspects now replaced, reinvented and recreated in thematized urban contexts.

This paper pretend to do a comparative study of urban situations using massive land reclamation not only as a process of gaining more land "for needs" but also above all as a way of constructing and "making" city.

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## Land reclamation in people's Republic of China

■ People's Republic of China (PRC) is very active in reclaiming land from water mainly from its coastlines. In the last five decades of the twentieth century, PRC reclaimed about 12.000 sq Km, that is, almost five times of the size of Luxembourg or seventeen times of that of Singapore, fifteen times of Barcelona, four times of Dubai. PRC is leading, and will continue for the next decade, the process of land reclamation to water.