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Consuming Urban Rhythms: Let's *ravalejar*

During 2006, while walking through the neighbourhood of el Raval, a poster in a small independent shop captured my attention as it proclaimed in Catalan, Spanish, Urdu and Tagalog (El Raval's most spoken languages): *ravalejar* – in other words 'to do, to live El Raval'. It was the first time I had seen a place turned into a verb, into an activity which inferred that by being in or walking across El Raval one could partake in the neighbourhood's life, merge with it, and 'do' El Raval. Of course one could easily dismiss this as just a clever marketing campaign promoted by Barcelona's city council and local shop-owners. However, as I suggest in this chapter, there is more at stake here, and presenting El Raval's daily life as a set of experiences to digest or immerse oneself within, should be regarded as part of a growing trend to attempt to control urban experience and commodify urban rhythms.

El Raval is a neighbourhood that has become paradigmatic for entrepreneurial urban regeneration processes in cities across the world. Since the 1980s, Barcelona's city council has invested large amounts of money in redesigning this working class, and former red light district, into a cultural quarter to

dispel its negative reputation, the ultimate aim being to include this valuable city centre real estate into Barcelona's middle class and tourism circuit. The general upgrading of El Raval's housing stock and public spaces was accompanied by a range of flagship developments over the years. Starting with a 'starkitect' modern art museum designed by Richard Meier, built in 1995 to spearhead a new 'cultural quarter' in the north of the neighbourhood, the re-organisation of El Raval's spatial landscape continued in 2000 with the construction of a new avenue: La Rambla del Raval, that in Hausmannian fashion cut through the heart of the neighbourhood's main prostitution and drug trade area and required the demolition of more than three blocks of low rent apartments. The cultural re-signification of el Raval has been further

supported institutionally by attracting a range of university faculties, research centres and cultural institutions into the once dilapidated district, sometimes housing them in historical buildings, at other times building them anew. Since the late 1990s a string of art galleries, restaurants and designer boutiques have moved into El Raval gradually replacing old neighbourhood cafes, brothels and the neighbourhood's manual industry. So far, this could be regarded as a familiar tale of gentrification processes, only that in El Raval one of the more unexpected outcomes in the late 1990s has been the constant influx and settling of non-European migration, establishing El Raval as Barcelona's most multicultural area. As a result the gentrification of El Raval is far from complete and, instead, the neighbourhood offers an eclectic mixture of spaces where minimalist designer boutiques live next to halal butcher shops and Filipino hairdressers, and where the last vestiges of cavernous neighbourhood bars with old gentlemen playing dominoes and drinking 'carajillos' stand their ground against luminous pink lid cocktail bars.

The remodelling of a marginal area into a cultural quarter involves a dramatic transformation of the urban spatial structure and leads to a deep change of its experiential landscape as its urban fabric and social uses are altered (Degen 2008). Let me explain this in more detail. Regeneration strategies entail the dismembering and re-assembling of the built environment. In such processes, buildings get whitewashed or demolished, streets repaved and widened, new shops and attractions etched onto a re-signified urban landscape. The effect is the formation of a novel social geography of place as new social groups enter the area, sometimes replacing old inhabitants, yet at other times, living side by side with the old residents. An inevitable consequence is that the activity and sensory rhythms of a place change and are reorganised. Essentially, urban regeneration processes transform the sensory qualities of places which in turn shape the exclusion or inclusion of certain cultural practices and expressions in the public life of the city. A feature often ignored in the literature that assesses contemporary urban renewal processes is that these changes occur progressively, over time, for the process of regeneration is gradual, with the consequence that a locality adapts, refractures, reworks and at times even discards these regeneration processes as the example of el

Raval illustrates. So, how are we to research these elusive experiential expressions and negotiations of spatial power relations? In this chapter I argue that an analysis of sensory rhythms in urban public places reveals the various and contested ways in which place experience is created, controlled, consumed, or commodified. I begin with a discussion of the relationship between sensory embodied experience, urban rhythms and urban change. In the second half of the chapter I examine the transformation of El Raval's experiential make up since its urban renewal in the 1980s. Firstly, I show how in the first instance the diverse regeneration processes were an attempt to control and sometimes erase what were considered negative and unruly urban rhythms. Secondly, I argue that as these attempts have failed, the emergent and distinct experiential geography has become a central ingredient in El Raval's place marketing. My discussion draws on continuous ethnographic fieldwork conducted in el Raval since 1998.

Senses, rhythms and urban change

The senses mediate our contact with the world. In urban environments, this means that public life is first and foremost experienced through the sensory body, a feature often forgotten in a dominantly occularcentric Western society (Degen, Rose & Basdas 2009). We do not only see but feel and hear the cold aura of an empty granite square. And, not only can we see the buzz of a busy pedestrian street, but we sense bodies brushing past us, hear and smell bodies, perfumes, activity. To put it simply, cities and bodies are mutually constitutive: “[...] the form, structure, and norms of the city seep into and effect all the other elements that go into the constitution of corporeality and/as subjectivity” (Grosz 1998:47). The built environment, the shops and social life we encounter, people's everyday practices, all amalgamate through our embodied perception to create a sense of place, or what Lefebvre has described as the 'lived space': the concrete, subjective space of users, the space of everyday activities where “the private realm asserts itself, albeit more or less vigorously, and always in a conflictual way, against the public one” (1991:362). The movement of bodies through spaces generates an ephemeral, continually changing and fluid space experience. For Allen therefore a city is filled with “expressive meanings [that] have more to do with

how the city is felt than how it is perceived or conceived“(1999:81). The diverse combinations of material and social features produce “felt intensities” (Allen 1999) and come together in what is experienced as the ever fluctuating nature of public life which, I argue, can be understood through Lefebvre’s (1991) notion of rhythmanalysis. While some writing has emphasized the temporal aspects of rhythms (Crang 2001; Elden 2004), less attention has been given to Lefebvre’s quest “to rehabilitate sensory perception” (Meyer 2008:149) in our understanding of the urban.

Towards the end of his life Lefebvre became increasingly interested in the senses, especially in their role in establishing the spatio-temporal relationships between the body and space. His premise was that social space is experienced first and foremost through the body. Rhythmanalysis plays an intrinsic part in exposing the social production of space for Lefebvre. Indeed rhythmanalysis seeks to capture empirically the embeddedness of social relations in the sensory make up of space. Hence the rhythmanalyst, “must simultaneously catch a rhythm and perceive it within the whole, in the same way as non-analysts, people, *perceive* it. He must arrive at the *concrete* through experience” (Lefebvre 2004:21, emphasis in the text). The rhythmanalyst does not restrict his/her observations to the visual but moreover listens out, experiences the movements in everyday life, the cyclical comings and goings of people, of nature, the subtle transformations of space. One observes and perceives to attain a particular state of awareness (Allen 1999), to make sense of the ever changing character of place. The analysis of rhythms attempts to capture the temporal and lived character of space. Similar to an orchestra that builds a symphony from different instruments, each one playing its own tune to its own rhythm, we have to imagine the urban environment as a place where the interplay of multi-layered perceptions (the tune) and different intensities of these (the rhythm), create a sense of place. For Lefebvre, there are many different rhythms in the city, from the flows and stops of car and pedestrian traffic to the more subtle rhythms of the changing seasons or the body’s personal cycles. To understand how urban change produces new sensuous geographies there are two particular rhythms one needs to pay attention to; firstly, rhythms in terms of activity/movement

and secondly, sensuous rhythm that relate to our embodied, sensory experiences of place.

Activity rhythms are created by the daily movements, everyday, repetitive spatial practices: the coming and goings of people to and from work, the rush hour traffic, lunchtime breaks, the garbage men collecting rubbish, and so on that Jane Jacobs (1961) famously describes this as a 'sidewalk ballet'. The mix of superimposed, parallel flows that repeat each day confer the place with a specific rhythm and give those who live, visit and work in a place a sense of location. It is this repetitiveness that produces distinct spatial rhythms.

A focus on sensory rhythms on the other hand, helps us to understand how space experience is being shaped by constantly shifting sensescapes that easily slip through our fingers and we tend to summarize as the 'feel' or 'atmosphere' of places. Activity rhythms are intricately linked to sensory rhythms. As public life is punctuated and produced through activities we experience these through the senses; thus we hear the buzzy droning of mopeds, feel the pressure of other bodies in the lunchtime crowd, notice the stale smell of recycled air in the underground or see an army of street-cleaners descending in the early morning hours onto the city's empty streets. However, other sensory rhythms surrounding us are afforded by the physicality of spaces. For example, the visual monumentality of a church, the touchscapes reflected in the various textures surrounding us: the coarse touch of brick, the cold feel of metal; the soft yet grimy seats of the nightbus, the wet scent of rainy streets or the shiny and hard marble in a shopping mall. To understand the daily life and experience of the city as being constituted through a layering and multiplicity of rhythms helps to conceive the city as a polyrhythmic ensemble, "the idea of the urban not as a single abstract temporality but as the site where multiple temporalities collide" (Crang 2001: 189). Moreover, as Crang (2001) argues, the rhythmic city is based on an understanding of time-space relations as a continuous folding and unfolding of individual past and future experiences with the multiple temporalities inscribed in the surfaces of the city. The material expression of these temporalities

becomes especially poignant in areas in process of regeneration where the temporality of decay and regeneration is mapped onto the urban texture, producing both temporal and sensory juxtapositions.

Sensescapes fluctuate in intensity and in their relationships. What interests us especially about the fluctuations of rhythms is that once the rhythm analyst has established the interaction of rhythms, one's next step is to determine what kind of relationship these rhythms have and to "keep his [sic] ear open", but he does not only hear words, speeches, noises and sounds for he is able to listen to a house, a street, a city as he listens to a symphony or an opera. Of course he seeks to find out how this music is composed, who plays it and for whom" (Lefebvre 1996: 229). We can see in this quote how Lefebvre clearly identifies power relations as a crucial part of the production of rhythms in the city. In fact, sensory perceptions are far from neutral but, as several critics have highlighted "social ideologies [are] conveyed through sensory values and practices" (Howes 2005:4; see also Law 2001, 2005; Edensor 2005). To understand the cultural geographies, meanings, values and practices of places it is paramount to interrogate whose rhythms intensify, alter or disappear as different social groups make their claim to space.

Domesticating El Raval

Spatially, El Raval (literally meaning periphery or outskirts) has always been, both physically and symbolically, at the margins of and in opposition to the bourgeois city of Barcelona. Built between two city walls, it became the cradle of Barcelona's textile industry in the 17th century and Europe's densest working class neighbourhood. When the industry moved out at the end of the 19th century the empty factory shells were transformed by waves of internal Spanish migrants into precarious living areas which led to a flourishing of non-licensed residences and subletting as well as the construction of shacks on most rooftops, the so called 'barraquismo vertical' (vertical slums). At the start of the 20th century, its geographical proximity to the harbour saw it transformed into Barcelona's main entertainment and red light district. Cafes, taverns and music halls stood side by side with brothels and sex-shops providing it with a unique bohemian and cosmopolitan character which

attracted artists and punters alike. Soon the area became infamously known as 'Barrio Chino', because its street-life resembled the seedy Chinatowns of North America.

After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) the neighbourhood increasingly deteriorated as a new moral climate led to the closing of theatres and other leisure establishments (in 1956 prostitution was officially banned by the Spanish government). During the 1960s new social trends moved the nightlife gradually to other parts of the city. Gradually El Raval decayed into an area of cheap prostitution and sordid sex shops. The neighbourhood became increasingly marginalised in the social imaginary. The final straw was the entrance of heroin into the neighbourhood in the 1980s which led to an extreme level of insecurity and a further deterioration of El Raval's social life and forced many residents to flee the neighbourhood.

It was at this time that the first plans for urban renewal were devised with the main aims to improve the quality of life of its residents and control and domesticate what was perceived as an unruly public life and decadent sensory landscape. It was a place that most of Barcelona's population would shun, segregated spatially from the rest of the city by wide avenues and hidden behind tall, so called 'panel buildings' – increasing its isolation from the city centre. From an urban planning point of view this was an area that had been kept largely untouched by the organizing power of modernity. While it had been El Raval's poor housing conditions that had inspired the urban planner Ildefons Cerdà to develop the rational grid of the Eixample in 1854 (Barcelona's modern urban expansion which led to the demolition of the old city walls), El Raval's squalid landscape had not received any major investment or restructuring during the 20th century. As a result, at the start of its regeneration in the 1980s El Raval's urban landscape was still based on a chaotic medieval street pattern, with narrow streets, a multitude of courtyards and alleys, bordered by grey 5 storey buildings, closed shop shutters, boarded up windows and crumbling walls. On the streets the musty smell of abandonment mixed with stinging waves of urine. Occasionally, a glimpse into a workshop revealed a carpenter engaged in carefully polishing a chair and

provided a glimpse of the lively working class neighbourhood el Raval had once been. On its streets, one would come across a mixture of old women returning with trolleys from the market, a young man scavenging for food in a bin and a haggard prostitute leaning against an empty doorway.

The first step of the regeneration was thus to 'air' el Raval, to open up what had been regarded as closed, insidious environment by cutting different sized airholes into the dense space, a method described as 'esponjamiento'. One could also view this as a modernist planning project of ordering, reorganizing and cleansing spatially and sensuously a pre-modern space. Hence, we witness the demolition of large amounts of houses to be replaced by a multitude of new public squares and large open spaces that allow the eye to roam, such as the area around the new Museum of Contemporary Art. The overall design style of these schemes is European modern. Wide and pale surfaces, the use of glass, steel, and granite provide a coherent textural mix which would be equally at home in Berlin or Stockholm. These spaces are characterized by a sensuous uniformity: noise gets filtered through the spaciousness, smells quickly whiff away, tactility is minimized by the smooth surfaces. A hierarchical relation of the senses is afforded by the spatial design of the environment in which the sensuous rhythms of the place clearly heighten the visual sense whereas odours, sounds and tactile experiences are relegated to supporting features. Cultural critics have identified a clear shift in contemporary cities towards producing a recognizable global iconography in which buildings by global architects have become status symbols of their post-industrial success and "connote ideas such as cosmopolitanism, globalism and designer status" (Smith 2005:413; see also Evans 2003). This standardization of sensuous and spatial organization makes these spaces recognizable environments for tourists. These are self-consciously designed spaces that produce familiar sensations and draw on a common cultural capital. They fit into Zukin's (1995) description of commercialized spaces for visual consumption, to be captured and circulated in travel magazines and tourist guides.

During the re-assembling of El Raval in the late 1990s the continuous humming of bulldozers, interspersed with the growling noise of demolition started to become a regular tune. Leftover walls of gutted houses revealed the shadow of a bed-frame, the blue tiles of washbasin were all that remained of the communal toilets – physical ghosts of disappeared voices, the roaring sound of construction that was foretelling its own story of new apartments and broad avenues. A geographical segregation of sensory rhythms started to emerge as tourists, newcomers and museum workers accessed the cultural attractions through specific streets which progressively would be transformed into light ‘regeneration corridors’ lined up with cleansed heritage, modern cafes, libraries and boutique hotels. Other streets, often only feet away, were characterised by grimy walls and closed shutters.

At first, the new spaces, especially the Plaça dels Angels surrounding the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona, stood in stark sensuous contrast to the rest of the neighbourhood. Yet, very quickly these spaces were appropriated by the residents of El Raval. Dog owners walked around in the early morning, their dogs defecating on the granite floor, children started playing football and skating on its slopes, Filipino and Moroccan families gathered for picnics in the cool breeze of the evening and, as soon the museum doors closed, homeless people assembled their card-board shelters in the corners. Hence, the purity of the visual became sullied by manifold sounds and smells as the spectacular space is digested within the neighbourhood’s daily life. To counter some of these less desirable activities and to regulate the urban rhythms, the council resorted to cultural animation strategies such as the promotion of late opening hours for galleries, museums and bookshops and the organization of a range of festivals, markets and fashion shows in these new public places.

Consuming and commodifying El Raval

The start of a second phase of regeneration was marked by the opening of the new Rambla del Raval in 2000, initially a long empty avenue lined by stubby palm trees. This signalled a more mature phase of urban planning which started to emphasize preservation over demolition. More importantly, as

mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, El Raval's population has radically changed since 1995 as an increasing number of European and non-European migrants have settled and now compromise 48% of the population. Slowly Catalan corner shops have been replaced by Pakistani delis that are open till late at night, the sound of Filipino dialects emanates from call-centres, the gradual emergence of mosques and prayer halls are signs of a parallel sensory re-ordering of sensuous and activity rhythms alongside the forces of regeneration.

El Raval's urban transformation is hence sensed in diverse ways and at different paces around the neighbourhood. Thus, on the same street one can observe the sand-blasting of 19th century buildings; listen to the roaring fall of rubble of yet another demolition; and hear to the sound of hip-hop music coming out of a new record shop. A diversity of sensuous rhythms and intensities have started to blend, so that "the aroma of chic [has begun] to waft through the once-pungent streets of the neighbourhood" (Richardson 2004:135). The mixture of ethnic cultural activities, 'cool' venues and traditional working class life has started to map an array of sensuous juxtapositions. Despite the planners attempt to control El Raval's public life, the neighbourhood is developing its own melody.

Informal interviews held with many of the new younger residents and users of el Raval at the end of the 1990s revealed that it was precisely this mixture of new and old; the unregulated sensory combinations emerging from the various social groups living here - bohemian gentrifiers, migrants and leftover poor that attracted them in the first instance to live in this neighbourhood. Both newcomers and tourists celebrate the 'multicultural' character of the neighbourhood by favouring the sensory bricolage available in its public spaces to the apprehension of a temporally and ethnically homogenous Barcelona. Furthermore, the common impression was that El Raval's reputation as a marginal place had isolated it from the rest of the city, thereby preserving forms of sociality that have disappeared in the 'modern city'. For example it is still common in old traditional shops to have chairs for customers to sit on, wait to be served and have a chat. These traditions are continued in

many immigrant shops. Such forms of sociality lead El Raval to have its own aura and temporality, creating, as many residents describe it, 'a village within the city'.

What we see here is how El Raval and its inhabitants are producing their own individual melody out of a precarious and momentary balance of middle class taste, working class lives, gentrification processes, and immigration. As both Hannigan (2004) and Molotch et al (2000) comment, place distinctiveness is hard to engineer; instead a distinctive urban tradition "arises through interactive layering and active enrolments over time, something that is difficult to produce all at once" (Molotch 2000:818 quoted in Hannigan 2004). At this moment in time El Raval can be regarded as a polyrhythmical neighbourhood "that is, composed of various rhythms, each part, each organ or function having its own in a perpetual interaction which constitute an ensemble or a whole" (Lefebvre 1996:230). Different global flows of ethnic groups, finance, media, and ideologies have disrupted the search for coherence or unity by local economics, culture and politics (Julier 2000, see also Appadurai 1990). Instead what has occurred is a particular hybridization where these global flows mix with and in the local realm to generate new place identities. The linear tunes of developers have been remixed by a variety of local and global forces into a unique combination of tempos, intensities and tunes that produce El Raval's distinct public life.

Inevitably, the story is not as straightforward and two complications must be taken into consideration. Firstly, as Lefebvre argues "Polyrhythmy always results from a contradiction and also a resistance to it – of resistance to a relation of force and eventual conflict."(1996:239) Thus, while to an extent rhythms co-exist in el Raval, this has not been without initial conflict. New sensescapes code the cultural meanings of places differently and many of El Raval's established residents have been feeling threatened and overruled by the new sensescapes developed both by immigration and tourism. Hence, over the last 10 years several incidents of protest against tourism and immigration have occurred. The underlying discourse is most of the time based on sensuous paradigms such as protest against the noise of bars and

restaurants, the smells left by urinating night-revellers, or the perceived lack of basic sanitary conditions in immigrant homes to mention a few.

Secondly, the emergence of the marketing strategy 'ravalejar' in 2005 is indicative of a new phase of place promotion and change in processes of commodification in the city. The campaign was conceived by the *Fundació Tot Raval*, a platform first set up in 2001 by a mixture of cultural entities, official authorities, private businesses and individuals from the neighbourhood and whose aim is "to act as an intermediary with the authorities and to sensitise citizens to the positive image of Raval and erase forever the negative image that had been created" (see www.totraval.org). The campaign was financed by Barcelona's city council and conceived as a communication campaign to promote positive values about the neighbourhood. As Tot Raval states: "El Raval is more than a neighbourhood, it's an attitude, a way of doing and living. This is why the campaign was based upon the conjugation of a verb, so that it would not be static, so that it is alive and that everybody can create his/her own version of ravalejar" (Fundacio Tot Raval 2005). The campaign consisted in making this verb appear in a variety of spaces and on "elements of everyday life" (Fundacio Tot Raval 2005) in El Raval. It appeared amongst other places as a slogan on the walls around the Museum of Modern Art and other parts of the neighbourhood and as a mobile object on t-shirts, posters, bags, lollipops or table mats. Furthermore more than 23 restaurants offered menus, cocktails or other products called 'ravalejar'. Fundacio Tot Raval has described the campaign as a success as 'ravalejar' has gained its own momentum and is used as a term in the local (and increasingly) international press (see for example the *Barcelona Lonely Planet Guide 2006*).

There are various issues to take into account here. On the one hand we could understand the campaign in Lefebvre's terms as a commodification of lived space by conceived space and capital. After the council's unsuccessful attempts to control and manipulate the sensory rhythms and public life of El Raval with the regeneration of the neighbourhood, this campaign recycles and appropriates the urban rhythms that already exist. The campaign does not aim to control public life but appropriates it under a coherent narrative with the

intention to change perceptions and attract more visitors and consumers into the neighbourhood with a clear economic aim. Following Pine & Gilmore (1999) 'ravalejar' can be seen as an expansion of 'experiential marketing' where "[e]xperiences represent an existing but previously inarticulate genre of economic output" (ix). Experiential marketing once relegated to private enterprise is adapted and applied in the entrepreneurial city in the promotion, and thereby, consumption of public space. Indeed, 'ravalejar' infers following a specific spatial route as the campaign is supported mainly by El Raval's hip new shops and cultural establishments, in other words, those located in the regeneration corridors. The slogan promotes a particular spatial practice and engineers circumscribed forms of experiencing the diversity of rhythms in the neighbourhood. It entails a selective process as to which aspects our senses are to be alerted. Specific configurations of sensory rhythms configure into distinct sensescapes where El Raval's designer bars; cutting edge shops and boutiques mix with immigrant lifestyles and the more gritty aspects of the neighbourhood. As one does 'ravalejar' a distinctive somatic landscape emerges at the same time as the consumer is invited to participate in and be the producer of a lifestyle: "theming an experience means scripting a story that would seem incomplete without the guests' participation" (Pine & Gilmore 1999:48).

The success of the marketing campaign 'ravalejar' highlights the desire by city users for less homogenised and more polyrhythmic environments in which a multiplicity and diversity of sensations are possible. It also draws attention to a new trend in contemporary urban planning and marketing campaigns to frame and regulate urban rhythms so that "certain kinds of multicultural become visible [and sensible] because of the visual [and sense-able] ordering of the spatial" (Keith 2005:175). So, while El Raval's ethnic and cultural mix has repositioned this once unmarketable area as one of the trendiest neighbourhoods in Barcelona and is attracting more than 25 million visitors a year (El Periódico 27.5.2008), El Raval's poverty and health indicators remain one of the lowest in Barcelona (Subirats & Rius 2005).

CONCLUSION

In the case study of El Raval we can clearly identify a transformation in processes of commodification of space where visual consumption, Urry's (1990) famously quoted 'tourist gaze', is expanded into a more holistic consumption of sensory rhythms: textures, sounds, smells and even tastes. Howes (2005) describes this increased commercialisation of the senses as the sensual logic of late capitalism. In his view, as consumer landscapes have become more alike and visual fatigue quickly sets in, touch (and we might add to that sound, taste and smells) revivify. As I have shown the campaign 'ravalejar' implies not only the commodification of architectural or urban spaces but moreover the sensorial consumption of the lifeworlds of residents and visitors, who precisely with their uses and spatial practices define the atmosphere of the neighbourhood. From a cynical point of view one could argue that marginality, which is often related to unexpected and uncontrollable experiences, is becoming a desired attraction in increasingly homogenised cityscapes. The existence of immigrants, of prostitution, of extreme poverty are 'signs of authenticity' for a neighbourhood (see also Zukin 2008), as long as they are interspersed with trendy bars, restaurants or entertainment and can be left behind once the visitor can step into a chic venue or close the doors of the newly regenerated loft apartments

The explicit focus of this chapter on urban rhythms illustrates changes in the ways that urban regeneration and place branding operate. It highlights that an important element of these processes is to precisely transform the sensory-experiential geography of places. As bohemian gentrifiers and 'cool' tourists shun generic and commercialised spaces in search for places outside mass consumption, city councils and urban marketing professionals are consciously searching for, producing, managing and commodifying novel urban rhythms in edgy and often marginal neighbourhoods from Barcelona, Paris to Tokyo or Sao Paulo. Yet, while there is a wish to fix and manipulate urban rhythms the example of El Raval has shown that these are fluid, elusive and slippery - constantly changing through cultural adaptation, resistance and mutation.

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