

CHANGE OF URBAN IMAGE WITH DEMANDS OF CONTEMPORARY
TOURISM: THE CASE OF BATUMI

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ABSTRACT

CHANGE OF URBAN IMAGE WITH DEMANDS OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISM: THE CASE OF BATUMI

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The cities are being presented as commodities with their constructed images. Their names are being transformed to brand names, of entertainment, culture etc. Tourism industry is the main actor of this process. In my study on the relationship between tourism industry and its effects on the built environment of the city, the present study focuses on Batumi, a resort city of Georgia. A massive construction activity is being conducted in the city aiming to create tourist attractions, which include the creation of international chain hotels, beautification of public spaces and regeneration of the beach line. The city of Batumi, which has a long history as a port city and also as a resort mainly attracting tourists from the neighboring countries to Georgia, is undergoing a rapid change that transforms the city into a space of consumption. This change, including creation of tourist enclaves, commodification of heritage, gentrification and refashioning the city to create particular ways of seeing reflects the impact of consumption culture on tourism.

Keywords: urban tourism, globalization, city images, commodification

ÖZ

ÇAĞDAŞ TURİZMİN TALEPLERİ DOĞRULTUSUNDA KENT İMAJLARININ DEĞİŞİMİ: BATUM ÖRNEĞİ

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Günümüzde kentler, kendileri için yaratılan imajlarla ticari ürünler gibi sunulmakta; kent isimleri rekreasyon, eğlence ve kültür etkinlikleri ile özdeşleşen markalara dönüştürülmektedir. Bu sürecin baş aktörü turizm endüstrisidir. Turizm endüstrisi ile yapılı çevrenin şekillendirilmesi arasındaki ilişkinin incelendiği bu çalışmada Batum şehri örnek olarak kullanılmıştır. Kentin turizm açısından daha cazip hale getirilmesine yönelik uluslararası zincir otel inşaatları, kamusal alanların rejenerasyonu ve plaj bölgesinin canlandırılmasını da kapsayan yoğun inşaat faaliyeti sürmektedir. Özellikle komşu ülkelerden turistlerin ilgisini çeken bir turizm kenti olarak uzun bir tarihe sahip olan kent bir tüketim mekanına dönüşme yolunda hızla değişmektedir. Turist bölgeleri tanımlama, tarihi değerlerin metalaştırılması, soylulaştırma ve belirli görme biçimleri sağlamak amacıyla mekanların dönüştürülmesi süreçlerini de içeren bu değişim, tüketim kültürünün turizmdeki yansımalarını ortaya koyar niteliktedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: kentsel turizm, küreselleşme, kent imajları, metalaşma

To Gülşen Terakye

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definition of the Problem

The city, in the globalizing world, is the space where culture, capital, and politics are concentrated and distributed. The impacts of the new mobility of capital, people, and technologies in the form of tourism activity and how it transforms the production of the built environments are discussed in this thesis.

Tourism is a significant factor in the economies of the cities particularly of developed countries, which have shifted their economies from industrial production to service sector, thus competition is strong between cities for the tourism revenues. Cities shape and reshape their images to appeal to the interest of the tourism industry through cultural events, festivals and most of all through their built environments.

The need for a conscious effort to build city images emerges from the changing natures of the tourist and tourism. The transformation of the traveler to tourist has taken shape under the modernization of Western societies that provides the necessary grounds for the emergence of mass tourism. Growing numbers of middle-class people become capable of affording long way trips. The increasing accessibility of travel has changed the definition of the latter as a bourgeoisie activity and assigned it with popularity for the middle-classes. Thus it was not until the means of communication and transportation evolved to a level that physical access to places and access to information on places all around the world becomes available, that tourism has evolved to a globalised business. While tourism involves flows of people, capital, images and cultures, globalization is the major force shaping tourism flows and consequently shaping the cities competing with each other for their share

of these flows. Not only the built environments of the cities but also how cities are represented is changing according to the market rules of the tourism industry.

The complex structures of production, distribution and consumption is also evident in the creation of tourism scapes and flows. Tourism under such conditions along with many other factors leads to a change in the function of cities as places of representation, power and consumption rather than production:

Ateljevic argues that there is a need to conceptualize tourism ‘as a nexus of circuits operating within production– consumption dialectics enabled by the processes of negotiated (re)production’ (2000: 371). Production-consumption dialectics are necessary. These dialectics are perhaps most clearly evident in respect of tourist attractions. Ritzer sees shopping malls, theme parks, and casinos, among other tourist venues, as ‘cathedrals of consumption’, where there is a ‘dizzying proliferation of settings that allow, encourage, and even compel us to consume goods and services’ (1999:2). In order to attract increasing numbers of consumers (tourists), these cathedrals of consumption ‘need to offer, or at least appear to offer, increasingly magical, fantastic, and enchanted settings in which to consume’ (Ritzer 1999:8). Consumption informs production, as much as production shapes consumption in these settings (Shaw and Williams,2004:13).

Tourism industry reduces cities and places to assemblages of frozen images and cultures to easily perceivable and thus consumable sets of values. Rigidly constructed tourist practices today positions the tourist as spectator and the built environment as spectacle. The issue of commodification of tourism is defined by Meethan as “the ways in which material culture, people and places become objectifies for the purposes of the global market (2001:5)”.

Branding and marketing are the new trends in the competitive tourism industry. Tourists are regarded as customers and places as products of the market. The marketing discourse suggests that places have to be developed and changed according to “customer need” (Moilainen and Rainisto, 2009:25). The main actors of this change are public and private sectors in a collaboration shaped by ‘urban entrepreneurialism’:

The new urban entrepreneurialism typically rests, on a public-private partnership focusing on investment and economic development with the specific construction of place rather than amelioration of conditions within a particular territory as its immediate (through by no means exclusive) political and economic goal (Harvey, 1989:8).

The results of such an approach are often the production of themed environments, separation of the tourist spaces from the rest of the city, and the relocation of unprivileged.

Economic development strategies, based on tourism revenues are highly image conscious. Cities claiming positive and attractive images have sought an architecture and urban design convenient for the purpose. Environments, creating a sense of adventure and safety at the same time with an eclectic mix of styles, arbitrary historical quotations as well as providing sanitized and predictable spaces for tourists have been widely successful in attracting capital and people. As a consequence this has become the accepted pattern of transforming places to tourist destinations which leads to homogenization of tourist places all over the world.

This study examines the transformation of leisure practices under the changing conditions of production and consumption and how it responds to the impact of globalization. Within this perspective the study analyzes the emergence of urban competition in the global scale and discusses the rising importance of the urban tourism as a new strategy for urban regeneration.

Representations of desires, future visions and profit plans of the political forces are shaping the urban development. The aim of this study is to explore the relationships between the built form and the forces shaping the city, in particular focus to the reshaping of the cities for tourism development. The intricate relationship between tourism and the built environment constitutes a multidimensional area of study. This study explores the processes of utilization of architecture for image making and marketing purposes in this scope. The creation of built environments shaped with such motives will be evaluated.

In this thesis the recent tourism development in the city of Batumi, the capital of Adjara Autonomous Republic of Georgia will be evaluated in the scope of the theoretical discussion presented. The study mainly aims to reveal the conditions under which this transformation is initiated and shaped.

The motives behind choosing Batumi as a case study are:

- A very obvious construction boom is taking place in the city. Although it might not be surprising to see a project of renewal after 70 years of Soviet rule, under which Batumi has physically declined as many of post-Soviet cities, it is important to observe that the construction is not focused on the improvement of urban facilities for the inhabitants but hotels and attractions for the expected tourist interest.
- The international nature of the capital invested and professionals employed in Batumi calls for attention.
- History of the city as a resort city, enables the researcher to compare the past and present tourist motivations and expectations and reveal the changing nature of tourism.
- The multi-layered character of the city: historically, socially and religiously which finds its clear reflection on the built environment makes it more interesting to investigate the selectiveness of the transforming forces.

Batumi, the fourth largest city in Georgia with a population of 122.000, is still small enough, as a result not only one part of the city will be effected but all the residents experience the impacts of the transformation in their daily lives.

The main focus in the discussion on the case study is not the architectural styles or qualities of the buildings recently built in Batumi but the conditions which led to the development of a new city image and the process of transformation of the built environment.

1.2. Method and Structure of the Study

In this chapter, the relationship between transformation of cities and tourism and the relevance of the case study for exploring this relationship is discussed. The object and structure of the thesis is introduced.

In the following chapter, the transformation of leisure practices with reference to globalization will be highlighted. Discussions on the changing nature of production and consumption practices and commodification of places as well as experiences will be explored. Then the increasing importance of urban tourism in relation with the competition between cities and urban entrepreneurship will be investigated. We will discuss the elements of place marketing practices and efforts of city managements to construct attractive images for their cities. Built environments as a significant element of city images and their reevaluation and transformation in order to enhance the images attributed to cities will be the last concept discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter mainly traces the transformation of Batumi from a post-Soviet city with economic and political struggles to an attractive tourist destination in the Black Sea. The history of the city as an international port and a Soviet resort city is also discussed. The 'reimaging' process of Batumi is evaluated through the new structures added to the city and the new organization of the built environments.

How urban spaces of Batumi is shaped according to the concepts discussed in the second chapter and the impacts of this change. is the main concern of the last chapter of the study.

CHAPTER-2

SPACES OF TOURISM

Globalization, together with changing patterns of production and consumption has a significant impact on the transformation of how people work and how they spend their leisure time, how their built environments are shaped and how they experience the built environments. The aim of this chapter is to explore the effects of globalization on the increased mobility of people and the perception of leisure as well as the second stage of this process; commodification of leisure and the production of themed spaces for tourism. The second part of this study focuses on processes involved in the enhancement of urban tourism; mainly, branding, marketing and image based strategies. The role assigned to architecture in this processes and the outcomes are also the main concerns of this part.

But before a detailed discussion on those subjects, there are some issues that require examination, about the characteristics of tourism spaces: first, the “symbolic value” of space, second, the process of creating tourist spaces. Shaw and Williams, point out that the “socio cultural values of tourists relate to spatial patterns” and referring to Zukin (1995), they argue that the symbolic economy of space is a significant issue and there is a linkage between material and symbolic space (2007:242). Meethan, following the ideas of Lefebvre (1991), highlights “representational spaces” –third element of Lefebvre’s three-fold distinction in his analysis between spatial practice, representations of place and representational spaces- as space associated with “images and symbols [which]... tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs” (Lefebvre,1991:39 cited in Meethan, 2001:37). Symbolic value has a significant importance in commodification of tourism so this concept is further discussed in the next parts of this study.

The second issue concerning the processes of creation of tourist spaces is closely related to new trends in urban change; new entrepreneurialism of cities and the desire to draw flows of people and capital. These spaces are the products of a collective effort of local administrations, private investors and real estate developers. Architects and urban designers are commissioned as a part of this process to create spectacular designs and iconic buildings to contribute to the symbolic economy of places that desire to be centers of tourism flows. There is more than simply creating tourism spaces; transforming some existing spaces into appealing products for tourism is also a common strategy. Britton (1991) proposes two main ways by which places and sites can become a part of tourism spaces; first, giving powerful meanings to 'products' by associating them with some particular events or themes appealing to media culture; second, assigning particular attractions to a tourism product, as in the case of new shopping malls that incorporate leisure and tourism roles (Shaw and Williams, 2007:244). Still it has to be emphasized that the production of tourist spaces are not a completely detached process, it is dependent also on national and local policies and economy.

The tourist spaces that answer the basic needs of the tourists such as sleeping, dining and entertaining are the main elements of the industry. However tourists seek to experience entertainment and adventure as well as novelty, their interest is usually superficial, fickle and pleasure oriented. Existing architectural spaces do not always satisfy the need of providing the places with a continuous allure for tourist attention. Change and integration of the existing spaces of the cities to tourist products and the creation of new kinds of tourist spaces are experienced in this context. This transformation is often characterized by the tendency of replacing the original with the copy, authentic with the fake or desirable with the real. As pointed out by Debord: "what is false creates taste, and reinforces itself by knowingly eliminating any possible reference to the authentic and what is genuine is reconstructed as quickly as possible, to resemble the false" (1998:50).

'Symbolic value' is a significant concept in the creation of tourist spaces. This concept not only limited to the spaces of tourism, is inherent in the restructuring of the spaces of modernity since the 1970s, a process which revealed the development

of symbolic economy of space (Meethan, 2001:14). These spaces, which are products of the contemporary culture are also spaces of consumption.

2.1. Tourism in a Global World

Tourism as an economic activity which does not only has a leading role in shaping the built environments but also has various impacts in terms of growth and social change. Nation states attempt to control the tourist flows in their favor to create revenues and economic growth, but in the increasingly globalized market it is a difficult undertaking.

Shaw and Williams (2004) provide a perspective on the opportunities and risks of tourism development in a global world. First, tourism, in less developed economies stimulates the capitalist growth and in developed economies, boosts the incomes and this contribution helps to restructuring. As an additional economic activity it helps to diversify the resources of income as an alternative or complementary flow of income to agriculture or industry and thus reduces the risks. The second and a contested opportunity of a developing tourism is that it provides interconnections between cultures and thus helps relatively isolated communities to integrate to a wider society. The third opportunity discussed is the possibility of promoting biodiversity by using the tourism revenues. Three major economic, spatial and socio-cultural risks of tourism for places are also discussed; first being the unpredictability of the volume of demand and related changes in visitor numbers and income. Second, there is a greater homogeneity of tourism spaces, partly related to “globalization of consumption” (Shaw and Williams, 2004:11). Competition between homogenized “products” results in a decrease in prices and quality of services as well as in the wages of workers. Spaces of tourism increasingly look alike and they are mostly organized according to a similar pattern of tourist behavior. The third risk discussed, is related with the high mobility –one of the main characteristics of tourism: Open systems of mobility provides an increased interaction between host communities and tourists, which leads to “imitative social and cultural practices” (Shaw and Williams: 2004:11). Shaw and Williams also discuss McDonaldization of culture as another major risk of tourism which will be further discussed in this study.

Concepts of 'scapes' and 'flows' (Urry,2000), are significant to understand how the landscapes of tourism are constituted. The concept of flows emphasizes the fact that the tourism activity has an important contribution to mobility of people as well as the mobility of images and information.

2.1.1. Globalization and the Transformation of Leisure

Recent studies on tourism are increasingly involved in the interrelations between tourism and globalization (Meethan, 2001; Franklin, 2003; Shaw and Williams, 2007). The impact of globalization on the increasing mobility, homogenization of the places and the competition between cities as well as the decline in the control of nation states over the flows of capital, information and people are significant.

As there is no single definition for globalization, approaches to globalization are mainly studied in three groups, distinguished by their interpretations of the position of nation states faced with globalization; proponents of globalization argue that the social, economic and political changes have diminished the importance of nation states and this has resulted in a 'borderless world' (Ohmae, 1990, in Shaw and Williams, 2007); 'traditionalists' agree that there are significant changes but regard them as an extension of 'internationalization' processes and argue that nation-states are still the main regulators of the economy; and 'transformationalists' claim that the change in political, economic and social framework led by globalization has transformed the nation states but they argue that this change does not result in a demise or continuing supremacy of nation states but only transformed their forms and operations (Held, 2001:3).

Hyper-globalists, Dicken argues, claim that the world no longer has borders and 'national' is no longer relevant, globalization is the new economic, political and cultural order. In such a new world where nation-states are not significant actors any more Dicken discusses that: '...consumer tastes and cultures are homogenized and satisfied through the provision of standardized global products created by corporations with no allegiance to place or community' (2007:5). The concepts of 'time-space compression' and 'end of geography' are also embraced by hyper-globalists. But they are some not so certain about the high level of globalization, particularly compared the era a half century prior to World War I, they claim that the

world economy is not fully globalized but it is an ‘international economy’ (Dicken, 2007:7). This second point of view overlaps with the claims of the ‘transformationalists’ discussed above.

Held claims that people and places have become ‘enmeshed in networks and systems of interchange – a new era of regional and global movement of people, goods, information and microbes’ (2000: 1). Those forms of movements and increased connections across national boundaries are leading to new forms of operations of nation states, new concepts of consumerism, and new forms of production of public spaces. Shaw and Williams summarizes their argument about the impacts of those new global movements as:

These interconnections operate in different ways: economic interconnections (global flows of capital, and transnational activities, resulting in increased competition); global consumerism, leading to increased homogeneity (around an increasingly hegemonic American model); and global mobility of people, whether for tourism or migration (2004:42).

On the other hand, Harvey points out a different aspect of the diminution of transport costs and the increasing movement of goods, money, people and information; which is the enhancement of the significance of the qualities of places and the rise of competitiveness of cities for capitalist development i.e. investment, jobs, tourism (1989b:10). He further explains the impacts of inter-urban competition from the stand points of multinational capital and from the stand point of places:

Consider the matter, first of all from the stand point of highly mobile multinational capital. With reduction of spatial barriers, distance from market or from raw materials has become less relevant to locational decisions (...) The ability of the capital to exercise greater choice over location, highlights the importance of the particular production conditions prevailing at a particular place (...) Consider the matters in the second instance, from the stand point of the places that stand to improve or lose their economic vitality if they do not offer enterprises the requisite conditions to come to or remain in town (...) Urban governance has thus become much more oriented to the provision of a “good-business climate” and to the construction of all sorts of lures to bring capital into town (1989b:10-11).

Thus globalization has reinforced both the significance of the qualities of place and the efforts of localities to compete for their place in the world. Zukin argues that the characteristics of place has become more homogeneous in some ways and more heterogeneous in others in the last years (1993:12). She claims that while the spread of national and global cultures particularly Hollywood and Disney cultures as well as cheaper transportation costs, and the use of new technologies tend to weaken local distinctiveness and cause homogenization of place; however the potential of places to attract or lose business investment with the variety and quality of amenities they can offer makes them heterogeneous (1993:13).

Attracting tourist flows is a strong motivation for local governments and other related actors for reshaping places as well. As tourism is one of the main elements of globalization in the form of movements of people, globalization is similarly a significant force in transformation of leisure in the last decades. Globalization of tourism is a result of the fundamental changes in political and economic factors that are also traceable in various different industries; the emergence of a world wide financial system is enhanced by the cultural and social changes as well as the changes in information technologies and the media (Spirou, 2011:39). However, for understanding the transformation of leisure, the change in consumption processes should first be considered.

Urry (2002:14) regarding the changing character of consumerism sets out two ideal types, of Fordist mass consumption and post-Fordist differentiated consumption: Mass consumption is the purchase of commodities that are produced under Fordist, mass production conditions and are not far differentiated from each other by fashion, season, and specific market segments. Market for those products reflects the interests of producers, which are limited in numbers, rather than consumers. On the other hand consumption has the upper hand over production in post-Fordist consumption, while consumers are encouraged to spend more by credit permits which led to a dramatic increase in indebtedness. Social life has been commodified in many ways and a variety of market segments are formed with huge differences in purchasing patterns. As a reaction to being part of a 'mass', personalized consumption behaviors are developed and consumption has been 'politicized'. Producers eventually became, in a greater degree, consumer-driven, particularly in service industries.

A shift to new forms of tourism consumption is one of the concerns of this study. While the demand for the large-scale, highly standardized forms of tourism in Fordist modes is falling, more flexible and individualized options are offered to the market by the supply side of the tourism industry. Yet the uniqueness of the places and experiences offered by the new forms of tourism are disputable. Shaw and Williams asserts 'mass tourism' as the representative of Fordist mode of consumption and list the main qualities of mass tourism as: "collective consumption by undifferentiated tourists; collective gaze of tourists-focused on signifiers designed to concentrate tourists' seasonally polarized consumption; demands for familiarity by tourists; undifferentiated product-similarity of facilities and experiences; rigidity of production-highly standardized, large-scale, dependent on scale economies; low prices; large numbers of tourists related to a circuit of mass production (2004:155)".

Transformation of leisure to a mass activity is strongly related with the diminution of travel costs as well as the differentiation of the concepts of work and free time. The shift in tourism from an activity affordable only by the aristocracy to a wide spread phenomenon for the middle classes follows the availability of effective means of communication and less expensive, less time consuming and less dangerous means of transportation (Cohen, 1972: 167). In the case of United States, Spirou argues, 60's and 70's are the era when "mass production and distribution of goods can be observed, with leisure itself becoming a commodity and part of commercial industry" and by that time middle classes became capable of engaging in 'conspicuous consumption' practices which was a generation earlier only practiced by upper-middle class and wealthy (2011:20). The relationship of tourism and paid work in 'modern' societies is discussed by Urry as:

Tourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organized work. It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organized as separate and regulated spheres of social practices in 'modern' societies. Indeed acting as a tourist is one of the defining characteristics of being 'modern' and it is bound up with major transformations in paid work. This has come to be organized within particular places and to occur for regularized periods of time (2002:2).

The characteristics of mass tourism and spaces of mass tourism were parallel to the characteristics of mass production in terms of establishment in rigid patterns of Fordist economy. Particularly in highly industrialized countries, working classes tended to spend their holidays in particular places produced solely for leisure activities and in a particular period of time similar to how they worked in rationalized systems. The need for specific places for working classes to spend their holidays had led to the emergence of the concept of sea side resort as a mass tourist destination. Particularly in Britain the sea side was used to be popular among the bourgeois already by the 19th century for the reputation of sea bathing as a health cure but it was only by the interwar period when car ownership and use of coach transport rapidly grew, holidays in sea side resorts became a mass tourist activity (Urry,1992).

Meethan also argues that the development of tourist specific spaces is a consequence of modernity, “of splitting the sphere of work from the sphere of leisure in conceptual, temporal and spatial terms (2001:11)”. However the demarcation of work and leisure as well as the demarcation of work spaces and leisure spaces is the pattern established in the early years of mass tourism, it still shapes tourism in contemporary society (Meethan, 2001:9).

Post-Fordist tourism consumption brings along the production of more specialized markets, shaped according to the changing demands of the tourists. Different from the rigidly structured mass tourism, tourists increasingly prefer more individualized options and more independent forms of tourism within a wider range of options. The characteristics of post-Fordist tourism consumption are: “increasingly dominant consumers and more consumer-oriented producers; greater volatility of consumer preferences; increased market segmentation; growth of consumers’ movement with the increase in the information provided about alternative holidays and attractions through the media; development of many new products, each of which has a shorter life; increased preferences expressed for non-mass forms of production and consumption; consumption of less and less ‘functional’ and increasingly aestheticized; and de-differentiation of tourism from culture, retailing, education, sports and hobbies (Urry,1995:151 cited in Shaw and Williams, 2007:116)”.

Although the post-Fordist forms of tourism consumption has a significant impact on how the tourist spaces are organized now, it does not mean that Fordist forms of tourism consumption in other words mass tourism is totally abandoned. In fact Cohen (1972:167), in his sociological analysis of international tourism, proposes a typology of four tourist roles; “the organized mass tourist” buys a package-tour as if it were just another commodity in the modern mass market, all the decisions and arrangements are made in advance and he mainly remains in the “environmental bubble”; “the individual mass tourist”, not bound to a group and pre-planned activities but his major arrangements are made through a tourist agency, “the explorer”, arranges his trip alone, dares to leave the “environmental bubble” but prefers comfortable accommodations and transport; “the drifter”, ventures furthest away from the beaten track and considers the ordinary tourist experience phony, tries to live the way the people he visits live, he has no fixed timetable or goals of travel. Cohen, according to their levels of attachment to the tourist establishments, calls first two types; institutionalized tourist roles and the last two types; non- institutionalized tourist roles. It can be argued that the demand for institutionalized tourism is related with two main factors; the image of the destination and expectations of the tourist. First, tourism in less developed or developing countries are mainly institutionalized due to the concerns of the tourists of higher possibility of danger and unexpected encounters while in developed countries tourists more often tend to leave the “environmental bubbles” and in fact the distinctions of tourist spaces and everyday spaces are less rigidly divided in such places. The second factor is obviously the expectations of the tourist of the holiday experience; expectations of new experiences and adventure distance tourist from institutionalized forms of travel.

But to further understand the concept of tourist, Daniel J. Boorstin’s widely accepted separation of “traveler” and “tourist” is important. He defines the “traveler” as active subject that searches for people, adventure and experience; and “tourist” as a passive pleasure-seeker, only sight-seeing and waiting for interesting things to happen to him (Boorstin, 1961 cited in MacCannel, 1973:600). MacCannel opposes to sharp separation of touristic and intellectual attitudes and claims that they all seek authenticity (MacCannel, 1973:600).

Mac Cannel's position about authenticity has been challenged in various dimensions. Day-dreaming and anticipation, processes intricate to modern consumerism, are central to the concept of getting satisfaction not from the actual use of products but from 'imaginative pleasure seeking' (Urry, 2002:14). Based on Campbell's view of 'imaginative hedonism', Urry argues that:

People's basic motivation for consumption is not there for simply materialistic, it is rather that they seek to experience in reality "the pleasurable dramas they have already experienced in their imaginations". However, since 'reality' rarely provides the perfected pleasures encountered in daydreams, each purchase leads to disillusionment and to the longing for ever new products. There is a dialectic of novelty and insatiability at the hearth of contemporary consumerism (2002:13).

In this context, tourism as a form of consumption is a good example of a search for imagined experiences and pleasures but not merely authenticity. Those imaginations are mainly shaped by conscious efforts such as media and advertising.

Not only the imaginations but also experiences are shaped by tourism professionals and entrepreneurial efforts. Intentionally created 'simulated cultural experiences' are now familiar to tourists (Lasansky, McLaren, 2004:xvi). Such experiences now consist a major genre in tourism consumption and spaces of tourism are shaped accordingly.

Tourists who seek out historical sites and monuments and who revel in their awe over the past are but a small portion of the total array of tourists. A much greater magnitude of economic activity is generated by resort and theme-park tourism carried out in entirely new and purposefully artificial environments. We know intuitively that such modern tourist sites are different from the ruins of Rome (...). (Lasansky, McLaren. 2004:xix).

Tourists seek experiences which are out of their everyday routines of work and home and they want to explore places different from their everyday places. Commercial strategies of the tourism industry are mainly shaped around this main motivation of the tourists. But these strategies, widely copied all over the world, fostered the creation of a typology of tourist spaces, no matter where they are located. While these standardized tourist spaces provide predictable tourist routes, easily

conceivable signs and a feeling of safety, they also encourage tourists to act their roles as tourists in familiar surroundings. Suggesting a similarity between organized tourist spaces and 'task spaces' identified as "as those everyday spaces that are fostered by the ways in which habits and habitation recreate local and domestic space and render it comfortable and homely", Edensor and Kothan suggests that:

Mundane maneuvers and modes of dwelling are unreflexively carried out in such spaces, constituting a practical knowledge of what to do and how to behave. Habituated bodily dispositions emerge out of these routine practices, becoming embedded over time to produce a sort of touristic habitus (Bourdieu 1984). Yet such habits require well-ordered environments if they are to persist, and the spatial constraints and opportunities which inhere in enclavic tourist spaces facilitate the reproduction of conventional tourist performances (2004:197).

Contemporary tourists tend to show no disappointment or they are no longer surprised to see that the environments they visit are sorts of stages organized for their entertainment, they in fact expect to find a ready-made pattern of practicing the place and look forward to follow this routine. The concept of post-tourist explains this paradigm. Featherstone argues that post-tourists do not prefer to spend time for authentic experiences but they enjoy "the constructed simulational nature of contemporary tourism" although they are aware that it is a game (2007:129). This helps us to understand how standardization and theming strategies which led places to be commodified are embraced by so many places and cities -seeking their places in tourism industry- all over the world.

2.1.2. Commodified Experiences - Themed Environments

Related with the above mentioned transformation of processes of production and consumption, the impact of this transformation on the organization of space and how space is experienced is discussed in this part of the study.

While arguing the impacts of the transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation, David Harvey highlights two developments in the area of consumption as particularly important; first the accelerating of consumption not only in clothing, ornament and decoration but across life-styles and recreational activities such as

leisure and sports, by mobilization of fashion in mass markets; second, a shift from the consumption of goods into consumption of the services –not only educational or health care services but also into “entertainment, spectacles, happenings and distractions” (1989a:284-5). He considers this shift profitable for capitalists as the life cycles of such services are shorter than goods, it allows them to be consumed on a higher frequency.

However Featherstone, referring to Ewen (1976), argues that construction of new markets and ‘education’ of the publics as consumers by media and advertising are the approaches embraced with the boost of capitalist production and Fordism around the turn of the century (2007:43). The logic of Fordist production is reflected in the sphere of consumption with the shift in consumers’ perception of their needs:

Leisure time pursuits, the arts and culture in general become filtered through the culture industry; reception becomes dictated by exchange value as the higher purposes and values of culture succumb to the logic of the production process and the market. Traditional forms of association in the family and private life as well as the promise of happiness and fulfilment, the ‘yearning for a totally different other’ which the best products of high culture strove for, are presented as yielding to an atomized, manipulated mass who participate in an ersatz mass-produced commodity culture targeted at the lowest common denominator (Featherstone, 2007:43).

Another aspect of capitalism is that it produces images and sites of consumption which endorse the ‘pleasures of excess’ thus Featherstone highlights a number of issues around this theme; first, the persistence within consumer culture of elements of the pre-industrial carnivalesque tradition; second, the transformation and displacement of the carnivalesque into media images, design, advertising, rock videos, the cinema; third, the persistence and transformation of elements of the carnivalesque within certain sites of consumption: holiday resorts, sports stadia, theme parks, department stores and shopping centres; fourth, its displacement and incorporation into conspicuous consumption by states and corporations, either in the form of ‘prestige’ spectacles for wider publics, and/or privileged upper management and officialdom (Featherstone, 2007:51). He emphasizes the tradition of carnivals, fairs and festivals as ‘liminal spaces’ favoring pleasures of excess and experiences outside the ‘civilized’ culture (2007:51). Since leisure time activities are also shaped by the new consumer culture and with images and marketing devices, elements of carnivalesque are dominating the spaces of leisure activities that are also transformed

into sites of consumption. As discussed above tourists seek experiences out of their daily lives and the spaces designed for tourists therefore reflects the elements of carnivalesque that allow the tourists to experience pleasures of excess. This is not a case limited only to tourist spaces such as hotels or holiday resorts but any place now seeking its place in the global world as a center of attraction is transformed into another space of consumption:

As the spread of entertainment industry continues unabated across the globe, as entire regions are being turned into giant theme parks, as the world becomes a complex web of intertexts and hypertexts, reality, media and tourism are more and more closely intertwined. Tourists are viewers, viewers are tourists (Solage, 2005:178).

Urry (2002), argues that the 'tourist gaze' is socially organized and systematized and there are professional experts who help to shape it and it is constructed in relation to its opposite, namely non-tourist ways of consciousness and social experience. Photography if considered as the materialized form of the tourist gaze reveals how tourists look at their surroundings and how they conceive them. Crouch and Grassick question why the tourists set up their cameras at similar points, documenting similar subjects and ask if it is a pre programmed behavior or is it just to mark the point they have reached in their travels or just because the moment presented itself (2005:48). They argue that the 'pre programmed visual culture of tourism' gives significance to the sights as do material culture gives new significance to objects through the ways in which they are conceived. Referring to consumption as 'an active process where by objects, products, places and things can be made to matter' they suggest that pre programmed visual culture of tourism helps meanings change and be changed and assign new significances (2005:49)

The shift in the consumption parallel to the production systems, marketing of leisure time activities as a life style choice, the significance of images, dreams and fantasies attached to the experience derived from tourism and the efforts places and publics undertake to be centers of tourism which lead them to be standardized and non-different from each other are some of the main reasons why tourism is considered as a main domain where commodification is a main determinant. As consumption and

commodification are inherent in modern capitalism and tourism is a part of these processes, referring to Appadurai (1990) it is possible to conceptualize tourism as “a global process of commodification and consumption involving flows of people, capital, images and cultures” (Meethan,2001 :4). Suggesting that the issue of commodification must be addressed in any study dealing with tourism as consumption, Meethan approaches commodification as a process which leads culture, people and places to become objectified for the purposes of the global market (2001:5). He argues that:

The processes of commodification rather than being a side issue, are in fact central to the whole basis of tourism and, what is more, that tourism is one aspect of the global processes of commodification rather than a separate self-contained system. (...) For all its global spread, tourism is also irreducibly associated with the specificity of places, with the processes by which sights are demarcated and set apart from the mundane becoming in effect the commodities to be sold in the global market place (Meethan, 2001:5).

Since there are two interconnected ways of establishing commodification: first, the development of images by professionals and their dissemination in the media; second, the acting out of those tourist images and experiences in particular destinations, commodification begins before the tourist arrives in a destination and images are the significant elements of the ‘social construction of tourism spaces’ (Shaw and Williams, 2004:184). Tourism as a commodity, mainly shaped by images and desires, is therefore assigned with a ‘sign value’ and can be a signifier of social status and life style choice or a statement of taste.

Featherstone argues that commodities are no longer purchased only due to their functionality and quality but the experience associated and consumed alongside the commodity also has significance which is related to the psychological role of the experience as ‘fantasy fulfillment’ and social dimension related to the role of commodities as communicators (2007:121). He claims that not only goods but also experiences are commodified and sold and it is particularly evident in sport spectacles, tourism theme parks, Disney World etc. as they increasingly involve an aesthetically mediated ‘perception of reality’ (2007:121).

The production of tourist experiences and the construction of the environments for tourists to experience reflect certain elements of capitalist production. Similar elements around the concepts of efficiency, rationalization, standardization and theming are discussed in relation to the production, distribution and marketing systems of McDonalds fast-food restaurants by Ritzer (1996) and of Disney theme parks by Bryman (2004).

Ritzer, in his book “The McDonaldization of Society” investigates the transformations in contemporary social life. He discusses that standardization and primacy of efficiency shape many aspects of life from eating to shopping, from entertainment to politics. He emphasizes predictability, efficiency, calculability and increased dehumanization through controlling technologies as the main determinants of McDonaldization. While defining new means of consumption through those concepts Ritzer, also refers to tourism:

Travel to exotic foreign locales has also grown more streamlined. The best example of this is the package tour. Take, for example, a thirty-day tour of Europe. To make it efficient, tourists visit only the major locales in Europe. Buses hurtle through cities, allowing tourists to glimpse the maximum number of sites in the time allowed. At particularly interesting or important sights, the bus may slow down or even stop to permit some picture taking. At the most important locales, a brief stopover is planned, there, a visitor can hurry through the site, take a few pictures, buy a souvenir, then hop back on the bus to head to the next attraction. The package tour can be seen as a mechanism that permits the efficient transport of people from one locale to another (1996:126)

As the day-to-day lives of people are gradually McDonaldized, a rise in the demand for standardized and predetermined tourist experiences in a domain where the consumers are familiar with is predictable. Although the growing diversity of consumer choice by post-Fordism seems contradictory to the homogenization favored by McDonaldization, the ‘mass customization’ presents tourists with flexible products and more choices as well as a variety of tourism packages (Shaw and Williams, 2004:125).

Ritzer points out amusement parks as an example of McDonaldized spaces as they provide safe and predictable environments and have certain regulations with their preprogrammed routes and fixed prices. In fact Alan Bryman, a professor of social research has coined the term 'Disneyization' referring to Disney theme parks, assuming that more and more aspects of society and economics are infiltrated in the process he calls Disneyization. The standardization of production and consumption practices and dehumanization of employees are the overlapping concepts McDonaldization and Disneyization. Bryman (2004) argues that more and more aspects of the society are exhibiting features that are associated with Disney theme parks. Thus Disneyization is a convenient frame in which issues related with consumption and globalization can be evaluated. He puts forward four dimensions of Disneyization: theming, hybrid-consumption, merchandizing, and performative labor.

All four dimensions of Disneyization outlined by Bryman are applied in modern practices of tourism. Particularly the first dimension: "theming" is much relevant to the arguments of this study. Construction of themed resorts in the limits of their gated areas is one aspect of this approach. But it happens in a more complex way when theming along with a narrative is applied to a city. Architecture has a significant contribution in reinforcing the constructed narrative with the image of built spaces.

Distinctions between forms of consumption are increasingly blurred. Hybrid-consumption in tourism practices varies from attending to cultural events to visiting memorial sites and to entertainment and shopping. Hybrid-consumption and merchandizing are interrelated practices. While urban tourism is mainly based on visual consumption architecture of the city, representations of architecture can also become a merchandize. Souvenirs collected by tourists as trophies of their achievements exhibits such a transformation. In fact Disneyization is a commonly employed as a method for making a place attractive for tourists. McCannel (1973) argues that the principles of Disney theme parks are beginning to influence and reshape the true historical and geographical images of destinations all around the world.

Roman Cybriwsky explains one of the interpretations of why geography and time are being conflated at today's urban spaces as:

Imitation of Disney's Tomorrowland, Frontierland, Adventureland and Fantasyland is part of the story, because of the theme park's popular appeal and acknowledged success at encouraging consumption. Put simply, images of faraway places and romanticized history are good for business. Furthermore, they are reflections of the ever smaller, more internationalized world in which we live, as well as reflections of the expanding reach of global merchandising and multi-national corporations into all our lives (1999:229).

It is argued that postmodern and postmodernising tendencies can be observed in new urban spaces of the contemporary Western cities. Those tendencies reflect an interest towards aestheticization of the urban fabric, development of new consumption and leisure enclaves such as shopping centers, theme parks and museums and gentrification of inner cities by populating them with new middle-classes (Featherstone, 2007: 136). Featherstone claims that the pre-modern city cultures of a strong sense of place and collective identity as well as the de-cultured city of modernist and functional architecture have been replaced by postmodern city and he defines the postmodern city as:

(...) the postmodern city which marks a return to culture, style and decoration, but within the confines of a 'no-place space' in which traditional senses of culture are decontextualized, simulated, reduplicated and continually renewed and restyled. The postmodern city is therefore much more image and culturally self-conscious; it is both a centre of cultural consumption and general consumption, and the latter, as has been emphasized, cannot be detached from cultural signs and imagery, so that urban lifestyles, everyday life and leisure activities themselves in varying degrees are influenced by the postmodern simulational tendencies. (...) If architecture and art take quotations from everyday consumer culture and play them back to produce postmodern cities 'where everything is "larger than life"', where the referents are swept away by the signs, where the artificial is more "real" than the real' then what of the people who move through these urban spaces? In many ways the people are regarded as engaging in a complex sign play which mimics or resonates with the surfeit of signs in the built environment. (2004:126-127).

David Harvey emphasizes the use of historical references in the form of eclectic quotations of past styles. And adds that through films, television, books, etc. history and past experiences are turned into an archive of references capable of being

consumed over and over again thus 'reality, it seems, is being shaped to mimic media images' (Harvey, 1989b:85)

Zukin argues that, while the built environment today, reflects the qualities of opera scenery and the landscape of consumption it creates takes ingenious root in the social imagination, this landscape is built up by the architectural facade that mirrors and recedes, the Disneyland that re-creates a built environment for mass leisure consumption (1993:219). Discussing that the postmodern cities are now the centers of consumption, play and entertainment full with images and signs –in which everything can become represented, thematized and made an object of the 'tourist gaze'- Featherstone argues that leisure time activities should also be reshaping according to that (2007: 128). Disney World as the 'prototype for postmodern simulational experiences' has not only been imitated by other theme parks but also set an example for other forms of organization of leisure time activities (2007:128).

Shaw and Williams mention what Gottdiener (1997:48) terms 'themes in circuits of capital' as the constructing concept of a variety of new tourism spaces as the themed environments of those spaces represent 'the melding of material space with the media-scope of television, advertising, movies, cyberspace and commodity marketing' (2004:244). However Baudrillard's notion of 'hyperreality' constructs a bases for discussions on production and consumption of signs and images as well as the commodification and 'symbolic value' of things not only in study of tourism or urban geography but in many fields:

Particularly influential has been the work of Baudrillard (1983a, 1983b) with his notion of a simulational culture. Arguing that consumer commodities in late capitalism have developed the capacity to take up a wide range of imagistic and symbolic associations which overlay their initial use-value and hence become commodity-signs, he detects a qualitative shift in the intensification of this process which leads to the loss of a sense of concrete reality as the consumer– television culture with its floating mass of signs and images produces an endless series of simulations which play off each other. Baudrillard refers to this as a 'hyperreality', a world in which the piling up of signs, images and simulations through consumerism and television results in a destabilized, aestheticized hallucination of reality. For Baudrillard, culture has effectively become free-floating to the extent that culture is everywhere, actively mediating and aestheticizing the social fabric and social relationships. A move beyond the discursive reflexive primacy of language towards figural cultural forms which emphasize the immediacy and intensity of aural and visual sensations which provide inchoate and dispersed pleasures for decentred subjects (Featherstone, 2004: 127).

2.2. Transformation of Cities to Tourist Places

The phenomenon of urban tourism and the competition between cities to attract tourist flows and capital is discussed in this part of the study. The politics of the entrepreneurial city reflected in how cities are managed and shaped according to the demands of the market is a significant concept. Evaluation of such efforts, in relation to architecture and urban space reveals the role assigned to design in order to create city images.

In the last century, the decline in jobs related with industrial production resulted the West European and American cities to struggle for survival which led them to become tempted to transform themselves to tourism destination as tourism is an industry with a potential of large amounts of investment and jobs as well as few barriers to entry (Fainstein and Judd, 1999:2). Since tourism becomes more and more popular for declining cities as a hope for revitalization of their social and economic conditions and to add them an allure to attract young professionals and creative classes, the competition between cities is increasingly fierce. Harvey argues that:

The emphasis upon tourism, the production and consumption of spectacles, the promotion of ephemeral events within a given locale, bear all the signs of being favored remedies for ailing urban economies. Urban investments of this sort may yield quick though ephemeral fixes to urban problems. But they are often highly speculative (1989b:13).

However city governments are inevitably drawn into the competition and have to engender “leap-frogging innovations in life styles, cultural forms, products and service mixes, even institutional and political forms if they are to survive” (Harvey, 1989:13). Harvey believes that the result is often overwhelming innovations of urban-based cultural, political production and consumption, he also points out the significant connection between the efforts of the cities and postmodern tendencies:

It is at this point that we can identify an albeit subterranean but nonetheless vital connection between the rise of urban entrepreneurialism and the postmodern penchant for design of urban fragments rather than comprehensive urban planning, for ephemerality and eclecticism of fashion and style rather than the search for

enduring values, for quotation and fiction rather than invention and function, and, finally, for medium over message and image over substance (Harvey 1989b:13).

The relationship between urban renewal and the process of postmodernization is also reflected in the gentrification of downtowns, emergence of ‘simulational environments which use spectacular imagery in malls, shopping centres, theme parks and hotels (Featherstone, 2007:98)’. He points out the common features emerging between such places and also tourist experiences in the contemporary city where “cultural disorder and stylistic eclecticism become common features of spaces in which consumption and leisure are meant to be constructed as experiences” (2007:130). Referring to Lefebvre (1971:114) Featherstone remarks:

(...) in the contemporary city we have ‘consuming displays, displays of consuming, consuming of signs, signs of consuming’. This convergence takes place not only on the level of the common form to the sets of experiences which are sought to be generated by advertisers, designers, architects and other cultural intermediaries, but also in terms of the alliances forged between the proprietors, patrons, trustees and financiers of these institutions (2007: 130).

As places are consumed over their images and also over the experiences they offer aestheticizing the urban landscape is a crucial element of transformation of cities to tourist destinations. Visualization of a distinct architectural character is often embraced as a method for constructing new identities which in many cases “the final product results from a conflation of existing and imagined sites – reconstituted into a new whole that is presented to the public through various mass-media strategies (Lasansky, 2004:7)”.

2.2.1. Urban Tourism and Urban Competition

Traditional practices of leisure characterized by travel to sea side resort or rural areas as a retreat from exhausting urban life is being strongly challenged by the emergence of urban tourism as a mass tourist activity. A growing number of urban population engaged in post-industrial forms of production and consumption who has high levels of disposable income, also demand leisure time activities. As more and more people living in cities prefer visiting other cities in their leisure time, cities are now not only places of production and consumption but they are tourist destinations. As focal

points of cultural and social activities, cities offer opportunities for entertainment, leisure time activities thus they become one of the most important types of tourist destinations. The emergence of urban tourism is related not only to the influence of an expansive capitalist tourism industry but also the need for urban economic restructuring of the cities.

Spirou argues that cities and their managements are increasingly interested in displaying their heritage and their cultural identities so that they can turn these policies into revenue and that revenue would provide social and economic transformations (2011:2). He structures his examination of rising importance of urban tourism with four themes:

- Cities began to search for alternative development methods in the post-war period. Change in economic structures along with globalization resulted in an increase in the competition between cities thus cities began to “embrace a variety of entrepreneurial strategies.
- Cities embracing urban tourism as a development strategy began to change their urban landscape accordingly.
- The change in the city centers through tourism not only attracted tourists but also young professionals living in the city. This helped further revitalization of those areas.
- Implications related with urban tourism, such as; overabundance of cities, serving both to the residents and to the tourists; diversion of resources; and the nature of the system “which tended to aid the interests of corporate elite”.

The existing infrastructures of cities often serve also as the basic elements of the spaces of urban tourism. Some cities have capacity to absorb the tourist pressure with their rich variety of leisure activities and their infrastructure which are already in use by their citizens. In other words places of leisure which are originally designated to the residents of a city become tourist attractions as well. There are also cities with a desire to take their share in the global economy of tourism industry but rather lack the tourist attractions or the necessary infrastructure. In this case an aggressive transformation led by the public and private sectors is embraced to build a tourist city made out of a whole cloth. This method usually ends up in a division of city spaces between tourists and residents. But in any case places are transformed to some

degree by the entrepreneurs who want to turn tourist flows into capital, or by the public sector with a motivation of making the city more attractive for tourists by building new tourist attractions and reinforce the tourism infrastructure. New objects of the tourist gaze produced or reproduced, has a complex and changing hierarchy which depends upon “upon the interplay between, on the one hand, competition between interests involved in the provision of such objects and, on the other hand, changing class, gender, generational distinctions of taste within the potential population of visitors (Urry, 2002:3)”.

A significant impact of the transformation of cities from ‘industrial’ to “post-industrial” and “modern” to “post-modern” characteristics, and of urban economic configurations from “Fordist” to “post-Fordist” modes, are; first the change in the focus on a single central business district to a multi-nodal pattern of outlying commercial centers and ‘Edge Cities’, and second assigning decaying industrial zones with new uses, “in many cases to so-called emerging landscapes of consumption and “urban good life”, such as waterfront commercial and entertainment complexes, sports stadiums and convention facilities, new parks and upscale residential developments; and architectural and design trends that beautify the city and present it with interesting buildings (Cybriwsky,1999:223).” Spirou interprets this strategies of urban beautification, construction of new facilities such as theatre districts, convention centers sports stadiums, ethnic precincts and “constructing and promoting new, culturally based images that rely on entertainment, leisure activities, urban tourism” as an attempt to create and adopt new urban identities in order to revive local economies (2011:7).

The pioneers of urban redevelopments following the strategies of attracting investors and visitors by renewing the city centers and waterfronts, building shopping centers, theaters and museums - projects in which real estate agencies and financial firms played the leading roles and presented a clean image for the cities, were Western states particularly Britain and US, struggling to modernize with traditional industries they have and experiencing an image crisis (Zukin, 2007:62). This had led to a shift in how the cities manage their built environment. Developers, with more authority as they lead the new projects, began to be involved in planning mechanisms of the cities. Zukin claims in the ‘entrepreneurial city’- borrowing the term from David

Harvey- city administration has little authority to impose their vision of public needs to developers, zoning laws were set aside and financial incentives were given to developers (2007:62). And she further claims that:

At best landscapes of entrepreneurial city create an image of glamour, mobility and excitement. At worst, they lead to a dizzying increase in property values and a terrifying increase in homeless (Zukin 2007:63).

The social costs of urban entrepreneurialism are also emphasized by Harvey. He claims that it contributes to the inequality of income and increasing the poverty, and gentrification (1989b:12). Harvey's concept of 'entrepreneurial city' is based on the idea that the discourse of urban governance moves from managerialism to entrepreneurialism. He dates this change to 1970s and expresses that; "the shift from urban managerialism to some kind of entrepreneurialism remains a persistent and recurrent theme in the period since the early 1970s (1989b:5)". He argues that this shift has occurred under the conditions of industrial regression when cities needed to embrace innovative strategies to revive their economies. The main focus of the city managements have become "to maximize the attractiveness of the local side as a lure for capitalist development (1989b:5)". Three aspects of this shift have been highlighted; first, the rising importance of public-private partnerships and the rising pressure of investors; second, the engagement of local governments in risk taking investments with entrepreneurial motives; third, the shift of focus from broader problems of a territory, to construction of specific places (1989b:8). The main strategies followed by entrepreneurial urban governance are; responding to the inter urban competition for capital investment, establishing a service oriented economy, assembling supportive services in finance, media and government and making main resources available.

Featherstone's discussion on the growing interest in city cultures and urban life styles provides a different perspective for the analyses of urban tourism. He questions if more economic and functional emphasis versus a more cultural and aesthetic emphasis is related to "the asserted shifts from modernity and modernism towards postmodernity and postmodernism" (2007:122). He claims that blurring between the boundaries of 'culture as a way of life' in the anthropological sense and culture as 'the arts, spiritually elevating cultural products and experiences' has

broadened the definition of culture thus high culture and everyday cultures has merged and anything now can be an object of cultural interest. This has led to a shift in evaluation of lifestyles as fixed sets of elements such as cultural tastes and leisure practices that divide people into groups to a concept of a more actively formed lifestyle. In other words the lifestyle is no longer a dominator of class based distinctions but it is “the playful exploration of transitory experiences and surface aesthetic effects (Featherstone, 2007:122)”

The expansion in the production and consumption of symbolic goods goes hand to hand with the increasing awareness that ‘culture industries’ such as publishing, broadcasting, and tourism created by arts and cultural institutions are capable of boosting economies (Featherstone, 2007:132). Featherstone argues that the potential of culture industries of contributing to the economy of the cities in the form of “enhancement, renovation and redevelopment of the cultural façades, fabric and lived space of cities” is recognized in the recent years (2007:132). Referring to Bourdieu (1984, 1987) he argues that the concept of ‘cultural capital’ is similar to economic capital in terms of calculability and exchangeability and there are processes of accumulation based on culture thus culture is a form of capital (2007:132). Featherstone argues that ‘objectified state’ (cultural goods like pictures, books, machines, buildings etc.) as a form of cultural capital is particularly related to cities and specific sites can accumulate cultural capital by preservation of buildings, artefacts and goods (2007:132).

Cultural capital is an important element of city images and cities rich with cultural capital has an important advantage in the competitive global geography consequently city managements and private investors invest in culture. Featherstone discusses the shift in purchase and consumption of commodities from a material act to an act mediated by cultural images such as advertising, display and promotion so that the source of satisfaction is now “consumption of signs or the symbolic aspects of goods” (2007:123). At this point he underlines the increasing significance of leisure consumption:

(leisure consumption) in which the emphasis is placed upon the consumption of experiences and pleasure (such as theme parks, tourist and recreational centres) and the ways in which more traditional forms of high cultural consumption (such as

museums, galleries) become revamped to cater for wider audiences through trading-in the canonical, auratic art and educative– formative pretensions for an emphasis upon the spectacular, the popular, the pleasurable and the immediately accessible(2007:123).

As tourism is a way of reconverting cultural capital back into economic value, urban centers are eager to invest in boosting their cultural capitals and use it as a tool for enhancing their competitive powers in the tourism industry. Cities, to convince potential visitors and investors, transform their urban centers into tourist destinations. Harvey argues that the motivation to bring money into a city through tourism is not the only motive for the cities to improve their competitive position:

The consumerist style of urbanization after 1950 promoted an ever-broader basis for participation in mass consumption. [...] Competition for that becomes more frenetic while consumers who do have the money have the opportunity to be more discriminating. Investments to attract the consumer dollar have paradoxically grown apace as a response to generalized recession. They increasingly focus on quality of life. Gentrification, cultural innovation, and physical up-grading of the urban environment (including the postmodernist styles of architecture and urban design), consumer attractions (sports stadia, convention and shopping centers, marinas, exotic eating places) and entertainment (the organization of urban spectacles on a temporary or permanent basis), have all become much more prominent facets of strategies for urban regeneration. Above all, the city has to appear as an innovative, exciting, creative, and safe place to live or visit, to play and consume in (1989b:9).

With regard to the changing role of spatiality in urban society, Harvey underlines the power of the peoples to change the space in a way that they can be more attractive to highly mobile capital as capitalists become increasingly sensitive to spatial qualities of the places they will invest in (1989a:295). He further explains the active production of places and the competition between them:

Corporatist forms of governance can flourish in such spaces, and themselves take on entrepreneurial roles in the production of favorable business climates and other special qualities. And it is in this context that we better situate the striving for cities to forge a distinctive image and to create an atmosphere of place and tradition that

will act as a lure to both capital and people 'of the right sort' (i.e. wealthy and influential) (1989a:295).

Harvey argues that inter urban competition and urban entrepreneurialism has led to many kinds of development patterns including the serial reproduction of science parks, gentrification, entertainment centers, shopping malls etc. yet any competitive advantage is ephemeral because the infrastructure designed to make cities more attractive are rapidly imitated elsewhere (1989b:11-12). While inter-place competition is expected to create varied places within increasingly homogeneous international geography, it end-up producing recursive and serial monotony as the competition opens up cities to 'systems of accumulation' (1989a:295).

2.2.2. Branding and Marketing Cities

Place promotion which was traditionally "expected to embody notions of the public good and social benefit" but not at the expense of communities, is now influenced by the spread of market principle (Ward and Gold, 1995:7). They claim that places now compete with each other similar to any profit-making commercial entity and now professional place promoters from the world business are hired for running marketing campaigns (1995:7).

Marketing is a business practice that promotes clearly defined, tangible good to a clearly defined group of customers and its ultimate aim is to maximize the sales. However places cannot be marketed in the same way because neither the product nor the way of consumption is apparent (Ward and Gold, 1995:9). Accepting that marketing turns places into commodities Ward and Gold claim that calculability of marketing in this sector is still very low due to its complex structure consisting of good, services and experiences consumed in different ways (1995:9). Although the profits of place marketing is very debatable, it is yet increasingly popular and considerable amounts of city budgets are shared for promotional practices.

Promotion of a city mainly depends on the creation of an attractive urban imagery and attempts by city leaders to build a physical and social imagery of cities suited for the competitive purpose. However Harvey argues that production of an urban image of this sort has political and social consequences:

It helps counteract the sense of alienation and anomie that Simmel long ago identified as such a problematic feature of modern city life. It particularly does so when an urban terrain is open for display, fashion and the “presentation of self” in a surrounding of spectacle and play (1989b:14).

This critical perspective demonstrates the difference between place promotion and marketing as argued by Ward and Gold above. While the target groups of urban images and marketing strategies are mainly the potential visitors or investors of the cities, place promotion has a more comprehensively defined audience, including the city dwellers.

Advocates of marketing and branding practices claim that now we are in an era of place branding and the city managements need to define the customers, their needs and expectations and explore the ways to create added value to their locations (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009:24). Referring to place as a product they argue that ‘place product’ needs to be developed and changed according to customer need (2009:25).

It is a common approach of many city governments to utilize the cultural capital to create city brands or to brand the cities so that they can reinforce the position of their cities in the global market and this process inevitably involves commodification of the cultural capital (Varlı Görk, 2010:44). Emphasizing that ‘marketing cities’ is different from ‘presentation of cities’, Varlı Görk argues that cultural capitals of the cities are presented with appealing images and city brands in order to have a better chance in the inter urban competition to attract potential investors and tourists (2010:45). Although it should also be noted that the reputation of a city brand fluctuate according to local conditions, such as infrastructure, services and crime rates as well as the city’s marketing efforts, in this aspect they are not very different from commercial brands as their reputations also rise and fall with the quality of their products and the effectiveness of marketing (Holcomb, 1999:55).

As tourism has become one of the prominent strategies for urban regeneration, city managements and tourism industry are eagerly investing in marketing campaigns “to sell the city to potential customers” (Holcomb, 1999:54). In the global competitive

environment cities are redesigned and reimaged for visitors, rather than for residents. However their competitive advantage lies not in labor, lax regulation, or tax incentives but in their perceived appeal as places of play (1999:54). How cities respond to images attached to them and the supremacy of the needs of the tourists over the city dwellers is discussed as:

Cities are sold just like any other consumer product. They have adopted image advertising (...) The product must plausibly resemble the representation, and thus cities often remake themselves in conformity with their advertised image. If an infrastructure that will attract and nurture the needs of tourist does not already exist, it must be constructed. Since this cannot be left to chance, governments are inevitably involved in coordinating, subsidizing, and financing the transformation of the urban environment (Judd and Fainstein,1999:4).

The images and preconceptions, in other words representations of space presented by tourism professionals through tourism brochures and other forms of media is the first of the two interconnected levels of commodification in terms of tourism, while the second is the reflexive organization of experiences of the tourists into forms of their self-identities (Meethan:2011:86). Accordingly, it can be argued that images of a place represented by the media which constitutes a significant part of marketing strategies (to create an image and disseminate it through the media) shapes the tourist expectations, behavior in the place visited and perception of the experience. As the gaze of the tourist is pre-constructed, only the sights which have been attributed with significance by the tourist information are gazed upon and conceived. While the representation of cities as sets of 'sights' to be visited is obviously a reductionist approach, it should also be noted that the motivation of the tourists to live out the dreams created by image-makers results in reductionist representations of local cultures as well and the interaction of the tourists with the local people, particularly in developing countries are mainly shaped in this manner. If marketing system does not transform the locals and their built environments it surely does construct ways of seeing and experiencing for the tourists.

The imaginary of international tourism is not reality but "myths and fantasies", generated by marketers and consequences of images created for destinations (Crick,1989; cited in Shaw and Williams, 2004:254). While Lasansky (2004:3)

argues that photography, film and souvenirs blur the boundaries between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture by mediating and mythologizing specific sites, Rojek emphasizes the role of myth and fantasy play in the social construction of all travel and tourist sights (1997:53). Rojek argues that physical movement to new places which is intricate to the nature of tourism invokes the unfamiliar, inviting speculation and fantasy nourished by the knowledge of the tourist of the culture of tales, symbols and fantasies about the place to be visited. Thus “travel experience involves mobility through an internal landscape which is sculptured by personal experience and cultural influences as well as a journey through space (1997:53)”. He further argues that a range of signs, images and symbols make sights familiar to us which he refers as “an index of representations” (1997:53). In the case of tourism that index includes travelers’ tales, post-cards, travel brochures, movies, novels etc. Rojek claims that, factual and fictional are equally important in social construction of tourist sights and sight framing involves the interpretation of both elements to support tourist expectations (1997:53). In fact, tourist places are in some cases reflections of tourist expectations shaped by their images which are constituted by ‘index of representations’ of factual and fictional elements.

The central theme in marketing processes is to identify specific places as areas of consumption, different from the ordinary world. Commodification of tourism places are related to the advertising industry and its practices in the media as the media promote tourism and travel as well as defining places as out of the ordinary (Shaw and Williams, 2007:168). Signifiers of “the exotic, as well as history, memory and tradition” are the prominent tools of the advertising industry (2007:168).

Featherstone, citing from Adorno, refers to the dominance of exchange-value over original use value of goods and how the commodity becomes free to take up a secondary or ersatz use-value and how they became available to be associated with a wide range of cultural associations and illusions (2007:43). He underlines the ability of attaching “images of romance, exotica, desire, beauty, fulfillment, communality, scientific progress and the good life to mundane consumer goods” of advertising industry (2007:43). Featherstone argues that:

This becomes central to late capitalist society where sign and commodity have come together to produce the ‘commodity-sign’. The autonomy of the signifier, through,

for example, the manipulation of signs in the media and advertising, means that signs are able to float free from objects and are available for use in a multiplicity of associative relations. (...). The overproduction of signs and reproduction of images and simulations leads to a loss of stable meaning, and an aestheticization of reality in which the masses become fascinated by the endless flow of bizarre juxtapositions which takes the viewer beyond stable sense (2007:44).

Marketing practices have reduced lifestyles to themes and signs while consumption is practiced in strongly engineered mind sets. Urban tourism as a form of consumption is also shaped by the dominance of production and consumption of signs and representations and the spaces of urban tourism are mainly developed according to 'customer needs' by partnerships between the state and regional, national or international capital. Zukin argues the impacts of marketing on cities:

The concept that unifies the entrepreneurial city is marketing. Real estate developers want to market their buildings, public officials- their city and architects- their professional expertise. The influence of marketing across these groups reflects both the historical expansion of consumer society and the immediate competition for investment and jobs. In a world of standardized products and spaces, competitors need to be different (Zukin, 2007:63).

Architecture is a significant tool to create 'difference' which -Zukin argues- is strived for by the cities. As Fainstein and Judd believe; "to appeal to the tourists, cities must be consciously molded to create physical landscape that tourists wish to inhabit (1999:5)" but they also have to develop unique images to have the ultimate advantage against their competitors.

2.2.3. Architecture as a Tool for Building City Images

Creating and marketing urban images is a significant phenomenon that develops parallel to the advancement of urban tourism. While main actors of this process are mostly the political leaders who shape the entrepreneurial management of cities, tourism officials and marketing experts; it is the contribution of designers and architects that create the ultimate marketable images. Lasansky and McLaren emphasize the role of architecture in creating marketable city images, arguing that buildings -particularly spectacular designs and buildings designed by star architects- add value to the urban districts and they give cities where they have been built in, a competitive advantage (2004:3).

Zukin (1993) similarly discusses the role of star architects in creating attractive and marketable images. She argues that while cities refashion their commercial districts to attract capital, 'name' architects are usually hired with an expectation of minimizing the financial risk by the help of the reputations of those architects (1993:47). However, Zukin claims, these architects - expected by their clients to design distinctive and salable products- consequently "place their own signature on the landscape" but they do it in a standardized form wherever they are designing for. That is the reason why Zukin criticizes the capacity of those designs to fit in with the local context although the designs have an impressive look from a distance in the city skyline which makes this kind of architecture less risky for the investors but also less evocative of a sense of place (1993:47). Overall star architects with their 'cultural commodities', "mediate the leveling of local and regional distinctions by transnational economic investment" (Zukin, 1993:47).

The importance of urban tourism for politicians and economists as well as for the urban planners, developers and architects arises with the opportunities brought by flows of tourists and capital and the growing interest in contemporary architecture, historical monuments, temporary constructions, cultural spaces, historical fragments and obviously the basic tourist infrastructure such as hotels and restaurants. Bodenschatz argues that architecture serves as the best advertising as events and spectacles use it as their backdrops and thus change the initial function of architecture (2010:7). Güzer claims that in an 'information age' architecture is becoming one of the mediums while architects become the communicators (1994:72). He argues that architecture helps to create images and a tool for entertainment:

In this sense the new tradition in architecture is not simply a matter of "less is bore", opposing to the pure language of the modern movement, but architecture is one of the tools to create images not necessarily effective within the "métier" of building. It is not a process limited to the re-emergence of ornament, but a process of legitimating a "fallacy" showing itself as a richness of meaning and means of entertainment in various dimensions of post-industrial society (1994:72).

As suggested by Aldo Rossi (1982, cited in Lasansky and McLaren, 2004:3) architecture is “simultaneously a site, event and sign.” In this sense architecture not only creates structures but also has the potential to shift the meaning of specific sites. It is defined in this context as “a process of reception, representation, use, speculation and commodification as meaning is mediated by the rhetorical strategies of diverse media and performance” (2004:3). The production of the mediated meaning is for and within the mass culture of the consumer market place and the architects function as the “imagineers” generating images for consumer culture (Cass, 2004:246). Cass further argues that:

In other words, "imagineers" create architectural commodities that consumers need not interpret for themselves because "the mass culture of the consumer marketplace" has already dictated their semiotic significance and cultural meaning. In essence architectural spaces take shape through commodified images. Now "pressed into service" architects of the postmodern have unwittingly become complicit with corporatist capitalism (2004:246).

Architecture practiced under the conditions shaped by the mass culture of the consumer market place and profit maximization objectives of capitalism is in many senses not different from any other consumer product. Güzer argues that the architectural object which is a primary product to be consumed, the dominant ground of everyday life and a powerful tool to create image has inevitably transformed to the changing conditions of the society (1994:41). Zukin emphasizes the effect of internationalized investment, production and consumption on the urban form, arguing that the built environment today is produced under the same social conditions as consumer products while they are increasingly standardized and produced following the pattern of market differentiation (1993:42). The condition under which professionals shaping the urban form work and the connection between architecture and multinational capitalism is discussed by Zukin as:

While architects today work mainly under corporate patronage, urban planners, real estate developers, and city officials work within a matrix of state institutions and local preferences. Both are neither free nor unfree from market forces and the attachments of place. Although architects most often produce designs for an individual client rather than “on speculation,” with the idea of offering them for sale,

the business clients who are sources of most commissions impose market criteria by demanding more rentable space in less construction time. Increasingly, these clients are national and international investors. There is thus a practical connection between architecture and urban forms and “multinational capitalism” (1993:42).

It should also be highlighted that the only requirement of the capital from architecture is not creation of economic value and maximization of profit but it also seeks to create a spectacular effect. The priorities of the investors and the design programs focused on surveillance and control reflects a failure of courage among public officials and “architects as servants of power” (Zukin, 2007:60). This atmosphere also suggests the concepts of place marketing and globally competing cities though Zukin claims that “the focus on competing cities hides a general perception that the city as an inspirational idea is dead” (2007:60).

Both Harvey (1989a) and Featherstone (2007) refer to the concept of ‘contrived depthlessness’ that is used by Jameson (1984) to define the postmodern architecture. Harvey argues that postmodern architecture, different from modernist thought and practice, usually does not have a sensibility about the question “how can we build, represent and attend to these surfaces with prerequisite sympathy and seriousness in order to get behind them and identify essential meanings”, it refuses to contemplate that question with its “resignation to bottomless fragmentation and ephemerality” (1989a:59). He further argues that the new significance of cultural production on events, spectacles, happenings, and media images have led to the “collapse of time horizons and preoccupation with instantaneity” (1989a:59). He also discusses that postmodernism is often accused of a surrender to commodification and commercialization due to its lack of any avant-garde or revolutionary impulse –like Dada and early surrealism, constructivism, and expressionism did- regarding the closing of the gap between high and low culture (1989a:59). Briefly, the points emphasized by Harvey are the lack of resistance of postmodernity to ephemerality and its resignation to commodification and commercialization.

On the other hand Featherstone refers to ‘depthless culture’ as a parallel concept to postmodern culture which he defines as the culture of consumer society in which signs and messages are given a new significance and “everything in social life can be

said to have become cultural” (Jameson, 1984a: 87 cited in Featherstone, 2007:44). He argues that as high culture does no longer remain isolated from mass culture, ‘Las Vegas Strip pop-culture’ is equally valid along with serious high culture thus “the immanent logic of the consumer capitalist society leads towards postmodernism” (2007:44). Harvey also underlines the Las Vegas Strip aesthetics, arguing that Venturi et al. (1972) recommends that architectural aesthetics should be learned from Las Vegas Strip to support the rights of the middle-class and their own architectural aesthetics as people obviously like such environments (1989a:60). Güzer claims that under the slogan of “giving people what they want” architecture is no longer revolutionary and has no power of resistance thus it only reflects everyday language as it is (1994:83).

Featherstone argues that privileging of figural forms over discursive forms of culture that reflects the primacy of visual images over words is a characteristic of postmodernism (2007:96). While discussing the aestheticization of everyday life through the transformation of reality into images he claims that while the concepts of “‘the liquefaction of signs and commodities’, ‘the effacement of the boundary between the real and the image’, ‘floating signifiers’, ‘hyperreality’, ‘depthless culture’, ‘bewildering immersion’, ‘sensory overload’ and ‘affect-charge intensities’” draws inspiration from the intensification of image production in the media and consumer culture, those are also inherent in the contemporary city (2007:64). Here he does not only refer to the architecture defined as postmodern but to any “eclectic stylish hotchpotch”, found in the built environment of the cities (2007:64).

Referring to Charles Jencks, Harvey discusses the concept of ‘musée imaginaire’ (1989a:87). He argues that postmodernist architecture and design gives reference to various kinds of information and images of architectural forms from different parts of the world, in other words it quotes from a global ‘musée imaginaire’. He believes that behind all this eclecticism, it is not possible to spot any purposeful design but only the effects are particularly purposeful and he also highlights the significance of the fascination with surfaces and relates it with the concept of ‘contrived depthlessness’ (1989a:88).

Zukin argues that gentrification and Disney World are fine examples of selective consumption of space and time, created by cultural strategies of visual consumption. She refers to the articulation of strategies of cultural consumption and service economy as an interesting point:

Although they [strategies of cultural consumption] certainly manipulate and capitalize on symbols -hence their association with “symbolic capital”- they also produce real economic value. Continuing to analyze cultural capital in only symbolic terms misses its relevance to structural transformation. For this reason I have turned around Fredric Jameson’s assertion that “architecture is the symbol of capitalism” and suggested that in an advanced service economy, architecture is the capital of symbolism (1993:260).

Architects and urban planners, by appealing to and stimulating differentiated tastes and aesthetic preferences, contribute to an important aspect of capital accumulation which is described by Bourdieu (1977,1984) as “the collection of luxury goods attesting the taste and distinction of the owner”, namely the ‘symbolic capital’ (Harvey, 1989a:77). Harvey argues that, despite symbolic capital originates in forms of material capital, it can only be considered effective when it succeeds to conceal this fact (1989a:77). Thus urban environments are produced with an approach that favors surface appearances and comprehends the use of material from ‘musée imaginaire’. In fact postmodern architecture, as argued by Güzer, legitimizes the “cultural logic of late capitalism” (1994:26). Further discussing the reconciliation of architecture with the contemporary market demands Frampton argues that:

It is a sign of our times that aesthetic display has come to be used as a form of packaging to such an extent that architecture is often called upon to provide nothing more than a set of selective images with which to “sell” both the building and its product (Frampton, 1991:23, cited in Güzer, 1994:26).

In any period of economic growth, real estate developers and local elites turn to architects, ‘searching for an image oriented visual consumption’ but now architectural design in a great degree reflects elements of mass communication including Disney broadcast shows, soap operas and glossy lifestyle magazines (Zukin: 1993:241). Architecture is increasingly produced and reproduced by the

means of mass communication and the reductionist language of image making and marketing. Zukin believes that an appealing image is the key to market power which determines what forms get built and by whom (1993:241). In this context, she argues that most of the examples of postmodern architecture -like the late modern work of Frank Gehry and Arquitectonica have significance for the market economy with their visual images and facades showing an accessible face of power (1993:241).

Projects focusing on urban renewal through creating spectacles often use elements of carnivalesque as discussed by Featherstone (2007). Harvey argues that such development projects require a different kind of architecture from the austere modernism that has dominated the 1960s; they require “an architecture of spectacle, with its sense of surface glitter and transitory participatory pleasure, of display and ephemerality, of *jouissance*” (1989a:90-91).

Lois Fernandez-Galiano, in his article “Spectacle and Its Discontents; or, The Elusive Joys of Architainment” discusses the characteristics of the contemporary built environments in relation to the globalization. Proposing a similarity between the Roman Empire spreading its sphere of influence in architecture and town planning to the whole Mediterranean region and the United States to the rest of the world, Galiano argues that:

These new landscapes of wealth can be summarized in two words, *sprawl* and *spectacle*: a physical environment cluttered with construction and a symbolic universe devoured by the media. Under the sovereign rule of the consumer, the built environment is trivialized and thematized, but such is perhaps the price to pay for political and economic freedom, which carries in its wake urban and architectural freedom as an inevitable consequence. Many have mourned for the waning of highbrow architecture in a global context that fails to value excellence over popularity. In contrast, much of the best contemporary design does not ignore sprawl or spectacle but rather struggles to ride the wild wave of mass culture. And indeed, mass culture has become a synonym for global culture, because the tidal wave of mass taste has already engulfed the farthest shores of a world woven by the warp and woof of the instantaneous net that blurs identity, breeding uncertainty and rendering meaningless the comforting oxymoron of the *glocal* (2005:2).

While Galiano underlines the changing conditions for architecture and how the priorities of the practice are changing, he claims that “thickness and depth” are no longer praised but the new architecture, the architecture of “architainment,” praises fleeting images and flashing screens (2005:2). As discussed above this is not a process related only with the dynamics of the domain of architecture but it is mainly a result of the changing conditions of production and consumption and how this change is reflected in the built environments of the cities.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRODUCTION OF THE TOURIST SPACES IN BATUMI

3.1. Introduction

The concepts discussed in the previous chapter constitute the basis for the evaluation of the case study; the transformation of Batumi, a Georgian city in the Black sea coast. To better understand the circumstances under which the city is experiencing a tourism development and an extensive transformation reshaping its built environment, this chapter will first provide a historical review of the city.

3.1.1 Georgia: Incorporation of a Soviet Republic into the World Economy

When the civil war in Russia came to an end in 1920, the Red Army occupied Azerbaijan and Armenia proclaiming them Soviet Republics. Following the withdrawal of British forces in Georgia, The Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic was eventually declared in 1921.

¹ According to a local historian, the “Georgian historic tradition dates the first attempt to unite the country under King Parnavaz at the beginning to the 3rd century BC” (Mouravi, 2008:164). Following this period, Georgia became a continuous battlefield of different forces around South Caucasus, including Persia, Byzantine Empire, Arabs, Seljuk Turks and Mongols. Later attempts for unification of the country and declaration of independence were repeated in the 10th, 12th, 14th, and 18th centuries. The end of 18th century witnessed Georgia’s acceptance of becoming a Russian protectorate, but with the change of authority in Russia, the Kingdom of Georgia has been abolished by the beginning of 19th century. “Successful wars with Turkey and Persia confirmed Russian rule over the South Caucasus, or Transcaucasia” asserts the Georgian historian Mouravi (2008:164). When Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd (St. Petersburg) in 1917, the Georgian Mensheviks, the Armenian Dashnaks and Azeri Musavatists created Transcaucasia Commissariat later to proclaim the Federative Republic of Transcaucasia which only was going to last only five weeks. Georgian Democratic Republic declared its independence in 1918.

With its distinct climate and landscape from most parts of USSR, GSSR's main products were based on agriculture. Sub-tropical crops, tea, grapes and wine production, fruit and tobacco growing were highly developed but the only production was not in agriculture, the country also had manganese and coal resources as well as electric power and machine industries during the Soviet era (Gamkrelidze, et al., 1962:676).

Two thirds of machine-building plants are concentrated in Tbilisi, and there are large-scale enterprises in Kutaisi, Batumi and Poti. The machine building plants mainly produce equipment for wine-making, tea canning, textile and coal industries. (Gamkrelidze et al., 1962:676)

The policies of perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness) embraced in Gorbachev era has only strengthened the nationalist movement in GSSR which was led by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a political outsider, gradually gaining popularity (Mouravi, 2008:166). In 1991, Georgia did not participate in the referendum on Gorbachev's concept of renewed union treaty but held its own referendum for independence and declared its independence on 9 April, becoming the first republic to secede from the USSR. Gamsakhurdia became the elected President of Georgia but only until January 1992 when the army intervened, with significant amount of weaponry acquired from Russia (Mouravi, 2008:166).

The Military Council invited Eduard Shvardnadze (First Secretary of the Communist party of Georgia from 1972 to 1985 and Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1985 to 1991) as the president of the State Council, "in an attempt to increase their legitimacy" (Mouravi, 2008:166). Later he was elected the president of the Supreme Court and head of the State.

Former USSR countries have experienced economic upheavals since the disintegration of the USSR in 1991. The crisis mainly characterized by high inflation had different impacts in each country. But the main difference was between the countries of "Central Europe which generally implemented early, radical and successful economic reforms and Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS) countries which pursued slower, more gradual and unsuccessful reforms" as argued

by Åslund (2005:3). It was not until mid-2000s that Georgia –one of the nine CIS countries undertaken substantial market reform- could be classified as a market economy, with predominantly private ownership and reasonable macroeconomic stability (Åslund, 2005:3).

Georgia pre-occupied with the ongoing civil war between 1992 and 1994 had a relative disadvantage in concentrating on the economic transformations. The restlessness in Abkhazia and Ossetia which even led to a war with Russia in 2008 eventually were long term obstacles in the growth of the economy.

The change in the terms of trade was not in favor of Georgia. While producers of petroleum, natural gas and steel doing well, producers of armaments, agricultural goods and manufactures including Georgia, suffered.

Privatization was often blamed for the widespread of corruption in CIS countries, although corruption was more frequently caused by the extensive and arbitrary power of undemocratic governments. (...) Particularly in Central Asia and Caucasus, the ruling family tended to play a major role in both business and in government extortion (Åslund, 2005:6).

Schvardnadze government failed to end the conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia, the economy was not improved and corruption was not controlled.

The political power has changed hands in Georgia from Eduard Schvarnadze to a young leader Mikheil Saakashvili in 2004, following the Rose Revolution in 2003. Mouravi argues that “from the very beginning of the uprising [that resulted in Rose Revolution], the West and USA in particular, explicitly demonstrated its dissatisfaction with the incumbent leadership and supported the victorious opposition” (2008:167). The expectations from the new government were high, including the enhancement of democracy and freedom as well eliminating corruption.

The main focus of the new government was stabilizing the economy, which has yielded impressive results in terms of growth numbers. Simplified tax legislation and

improved tax collection resulted in a sharp increase in budget revenues (Mouravi, 2008, p.168).

Åslund argues that the CIS countries experienced dramatic collapse of incumbent regimes and corruption and re-privatization were the main threats to further economic development in the region (2005:8). Aslund's comment is validated by time in the Georgian example.

3.1.2. Batumi: Eastern Black Sea Port and a Resort City

Located in the southwest coast of Georgia, Batumi is an important port and resort city for the region and the administrative center of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara one of the two autonomous regions of Georgia.

Batumi has a long history that can be traced back to the first millennium BC (Mikaberidze, 2007:188). It was mentioned as a Greek city named 'Bathus' in the works of Aristotle. Until it was captured by the Ottomans in 1547 and kept for another 300 years it had been under the rule of many different forces prevailed in that part of the world.

The social, economic and spatial features of Batumi were mainly shaped by its history of changing hands between three different empires (Ottoman, British and Russian empires) in the 19th century and almost 70 years of Soviet rule followed by the recently neoliberal practices of national and international capital. Similar to the previous changes in the ruling political powers, in the era following the 'Rose Revolution' the city has experienced large scale transformations in its built environment although this time it is mainly shaped by efforts of the new government to enhance its relationship with the Western world and attract international investment and capital.

But before examining those recent changes in the city, a brief historic background including last two centuries will be presented.

Ottoman Rule in Batumi

Although the Ottoman rule of 300 years marked the city not only socially but also physically, it is now difficult to witness any physical evidence due to the selective demolitions in the early years of the Soviet rule under which, buildings that had Turkish or Persian influences had been consciously torn down and buildings of the European bourgeoisie were spared (Pelkmans, 2006:209).

Representative of British Empire, James Brant defines Batumi in 1836 in his report, as a port city with a huge potential but he also mentions the problems with hygiene and the contagious diseases wide spread particularly in summer months (Greenhalgh and Jarman, 2003:2). In the same report he mentions a market place that consists of 60 shops mostly of wooden construction, a few coffee places and a mosque. He argues that the city is similar to a new found colony with the extensive construction activity was going on. He defines the eastern part of the city, particularly the places around the mosques as the cleanest parts of the city and habitable all year around. Brant in his report has emphasized the importance of the port and he underlines the potential significance of the city for the Russian Empire.

32 years later in 1868 British representative of Trabzon Palgrave writes a report on Batumi including the information that, 4500 Muslim, 350 Greek and 120 Armenians are inhabiting in the city, there are almost 150 shops in the marketplace and the big customs building, the quarantine building, governors palace and Russian Embassy are the most important buildings of the city (Greenhalgh and Jarman, 2003:470).



Figure 3.1. Batumi map, 1878. Source: Zaur Margiev archive.

On the Batumi map of 1878, the Turkish settlement on the eastern part of the city can be seen. The organic street pattern of this part with three mosques and the gathering places around them indicate that this part of the city has emerged during the Ottoman period. The square in front of Merkez Mosque is one of the main squares and the administrative center of today's Batumi. Burun Bastion, constructed for defense of the city in this era, located in the northeast coast of the city had been used for a long time due to its proximity to the military port and it constituted the center of the military area of the city.



Figure 3.2. Merkez Mosque. Source: Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara “Old Batumi”, Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara, 2011

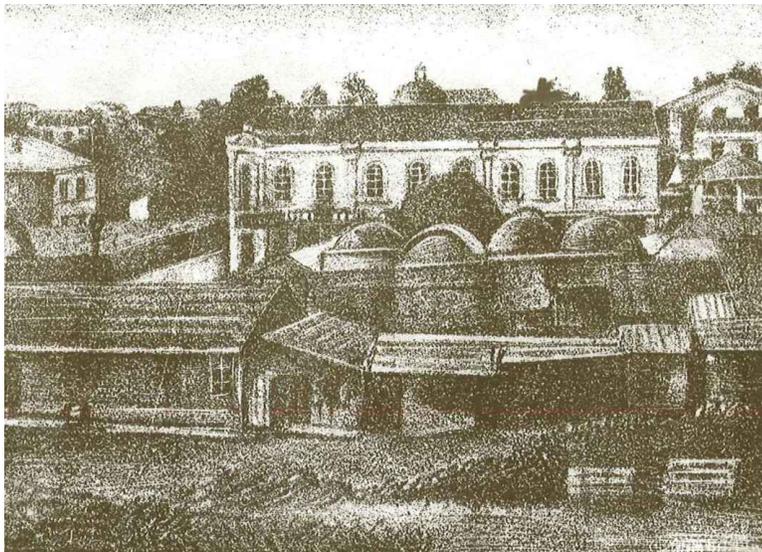


Figure 3.3. Turkish Bath and its vicinity. Source: Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara “Old Batumi”, Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara, 2011

Porto Franco Period and the Introduction of International Capital with Batumi

Following the Crimean War, with the Berlin treaty in 1878 Batumi was seceded to Russian Empire which will keep ruling the city until Brest-Litovsk treaty, signed in 1918. However the city was declared *Porto Franco* (free port) due to the pressures from the European states, particularly the British Empire.

It can be argued that the city has experienced its most glorious days from 1878 to 1886 while it had the status of *porto franco* (free port). The rapid growth accompanied by a construction boom shaped the part of the city which is now called 'Old Batumi'. Nasmyth argues that at the period following 1878, "strong Europeanization and investment began almost immediately" (2006:211). Oil pipeline linking Batumi to Caspian oil fields made the port of the city one of the most important ones in the Black Sea. "Batumi Oil Production and Trading Company" was found in 1883 and taken over by the famous European family of Rotschids. Baku-Tibilisi-Batumi railway was also built in this period of commercial expansion (Vasilliou:2009:79). The first oil tanker has entered the Batumi Port in 1885 and since then import and export has rapidly expanded (Greenhalgh and Jarman, 2003:4). The connection between Batumi and the oil resources around Caspian Sea made the city one of the most important ports in the Black Sea region. Not only oil from Baku but also manganese produced in Georgia in large amounts were passing through Batumi port, the trade expanded and by 1917 it was said Baku had more millionaires than Paris or London - most had villas in Batumi (Nasmyth, 2006:212).

Even though this progress has brought prosperity to the city in a big extent, it did not help to change the fact that majority of the residents were living in poor conditions, it also resulted in speculation in accommodation prices in the city (Greenhalgh and Jarman, 2003:4).

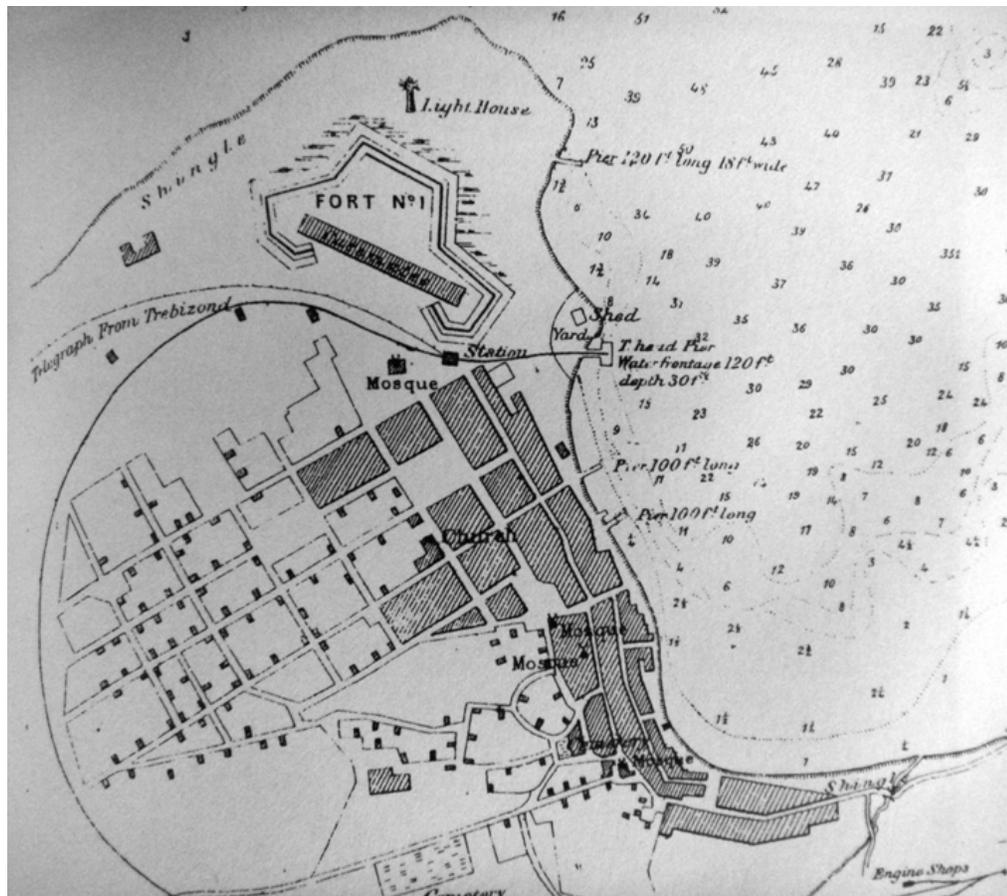


Figure 3.4. Batumi map 1885. Source: Hugo Greenhalgh; Robert L Jarman (2003) *British Archives on Caucasus Georgia/Adjara*, v:2, London: Archival Publications International Limited.

In 1886, Tsar Alexander III, has canceled the porto franco status of Batumi, claiming that it does not meet the expectations and it is harmful for the local industries, but in fact the underlying reason was the significance of the city as a military port and intents of the Russian Empire to put it into use.

Batumi and The Russian Empire

With the beginning of the Russian rule, great demographic changes has taken place in Adjara. Approximately 80.000 Muslims have emigrated to Ottoman Empire and many settlements were left empty and uninhibited. But this change had not effected Batumi in the same way as rest of the Adjara. Although the Muslim population has decreased in numbers, the total population of the city has increased from 3000 in

1878 to 7000 in 1882 and 1000 of this difference is consisted of the workers of the city port (Greenhalgh and Jarman, 2003:2).

In 1914 when the World War I had started, Batumi was on the danger zone between Ottoman and Russian forces due to its proximity to the border. The city used as a military base by the Russians during the war had been bombarded by Turkish submarine Yavuz (Göbel).

Following the civil war in Russia and the revolution in October 1917, the power of Russia has loosened in the area. As suggested by Montrose Armistice the city was occupied by the Allies from 1918 to 1920. After World War I, British forces governed Adjara for that two years until it was incorporated into the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1920. However the following year Red Army invaded Georgia and Batumi was assigned as the administrative center of Adjarian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic by Bolshevik authorities. With the treaties of Moscow and Kars signed between Turkey and Soviet Union in 1921, the city together with Adjara region became a part of Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic (GSSR).

Batumi as a Part of GSSR

Under the rule of SSCB Adjara had the status of an autonomous republic of GSSR and was named Adjar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Batumi was the administrative center

The urban population increased all over the country and old towns expanded under the Soviet rule. Batumi was not an exception, it had a population of 82.000 in 1959 (Gamkrelidze, etal, 1962:676) and more than 30 factories were established in and around the city. Batumi machine building plant (machinery for the tea and wine-making industries) and Batumi veneer factory was among the main large-scale industries of GSSR (Gamkrelidze et al., 1962:677).

During the Soviet era, Batumi became one of the leading resorts and tourist destinations in the USSR (Mikaberidze, 2007:189). The greatest impact of this era in

the collective memory of the citizens is marked by the demolition of the cathedral on the boulevard and its replacement by Intourist Hotel. The cathedral can be regarded as one of the most important symbols of the city considering the high frequency of its representations on the post-cards of the town before this era.

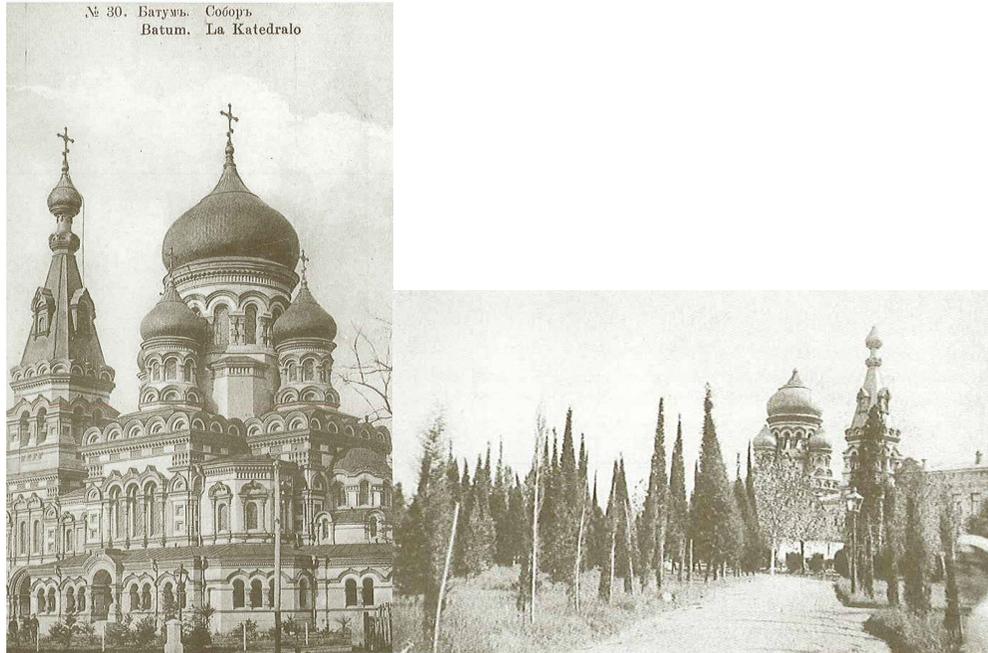


Figure 3.5. Batumi Cathedral, pre-Soviet era post cards. Source: Department Of Tourism And Resorts Of Adjara. (2011). *Old Batumi*, Batumi: Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara.



Figure 3.6. Intourist Hotel in 1960's. Source: www.ebay.com. accessed: 19.02.2012



Figure 3.7. Intourist Hotel luggage labels from 1930's. Source: www.travelbrochuregraphics.com.access: 11.02.2012.

The residential blocks in Batumi which were built by Soviets are characteristic of the idea of construction after 1950s. In 1955, at the 2nd All-Union Congress of architects “paths were indicated for the further development of Soviet architecture, on the basis of the wide utilization of standardized planning and the industrialization of building” (Savitskii,1962:155). This led to an increase in the production of prefabricated reinforced concrete as well as precast elements like windows, doors, staircases produced in factories, ready to be installed. The production of residential blocks in groups was preferred rather than single blocks due to the ease of mass construction. Savitskii argues that:

Preconceived symmetrical schemes for the planning of residential blocks are gradually giving way to freer, more rational and more economic planning methods. Blocks are becoming larger, and groups of blocks are being erected which makes possible a more organic inclusion of children's establishments, schools and green spaces in the area within the blocks. (1962:156)

It is possible to trace back these elements in the residential blocks built in and around Batumi. High rise residential block were the dominating elements of the city skyline

until recently. Even now a considerable amount of the city population lives in those buildings. Other important buildings of this era are the opera house and cinema located in the same square where Merkez Mosque was once located in (Freedom Square today). With its decorative design the opera house is an example of Stalin era architecture. On the old location of the cinema building construction of a hotel now continues.



Figure 3.8. Opera house, 1959. Source: www.ebay.com. accessed: 19.02.2012.



Figure 3.9. Cinema, 1985. Source: www.ebay.com. accessed: 19.02.2012.

In the Soviet era Batumi has lost its significance as a busy port. The population has lost the cosmopolitan character it used to have. But industry particularly, agricultural industry has been developed, urban population had increased accordingly and the city has expanded. Due to its location in the southern coast of SSCB, Batumi had received a considerable investment in tourism industry in this era. A definition of the city in 1967 mentions the city as:

[Adjara] will always be associated with citrus plantations and perfectly well trimmed tea bushes, with the glossy fans of tropical palms rustling in the wind, and with the scenic Batumian bay (...) with its ocean steamers and oil tankers (Daviata, 1967:262 cited in Pelkmans, 2006:5).

Pelkmans assuming the “tropical palms” to stand for tourism; defines three important aspects of Soviet Adjarian economy; transit harbor mainly for oil as it used to be until 1880s, cultivation of sub-tropical crops and tourism (2006:6).



Figure 3.10. Batumi themed pin from the Soviet era. Source: www.ebay.com. accessed: 19.02.2012.

Post-Soviet Batumi

Considering the economic activities conducted in Adjara, it is not much of a surprise that the end of Soviet rule and the opening of the border have negatively affected the economy. No longer privileged as a southern state and best possible holiday destination in USSR, Adjara and its capital Batumi lost most of the allure they had in the first years.

The similarity between the description of the economic activities conducted in the book, 'Information USSR' (Maxwell,1962) published in 1962 and 'Historical Dictionary of Georgia' (Mikaberidze, 2007) published in 2007 is remarkable. Both give the emphasis on agriculture, particularly of subtropical vegetation, citrus and tea along with oil factories and related industry.

The new markets available for Russia were one of the main reasons for the decline in the export. Adjara did not have enough resources to compete with Turkey in agricultural exports market. Adjara have even begun to import goods that were once exported. The immediate economic loss led to the rise of unemployment and poverty rates.

The opening of the borders was not the only reason for the economic decline. Stefes argues that already under Soviet rule, corruption and highly institutionalized illegal activities of public officials were widespread (Stefes, 2006:1). The disintegration of USSR was not the end of these illegal practices. Corruption and its results, clientalism and collusion were also experienced in Georgia as well as in other Post-Soviet countries.

The cross border trade traffic was a profitable activity for the mafia. Pelkmans suggest that the term Mafia (in Batumi) should be understood in the context of "economic processes as tightly interwoven with webs of power those were exclusive and unpredictable" (2006:193). At the main positions of these webs of power were the political elite.

But although the political leadership eagerly presented the new trade as a change to a free market economy, turned out that the 'free market' became increasingly dominated by state agencies that were shaped by family, favors and 'personal' contacts. (Pelkmans, 2006:6)

The narratives of transition, change, modernization and development was employed by the political elite to flourish the desires of citizens for a more democratic society and also better physical environments. The name of the political party of Aslan Abashidze who had been the political leader of Adjara from 1991 to 2004 was the

Union of Democratic Revival. Pelkmans argues that the importance of construction was visible in the name of the party considering that the word ‘revival’ in Georgian (aghordzineba) literally means ‘build up’ (Pelkmans, 2006:199). As the name suggests, construction activity has begun. Churches, schools, hospitals were mentioned in the party brochures and pictures of the new soccer stadium, tennis courts, kindergarten and factories were also presented in post-cards sold in many street corners (Pelkmans, 2006:199). Yet those projects did not help to improve the life standards of the citizens as they were not initiated for the use of them in the first place.

A big scale project by Abashidze government, the Riviera demonstrates the fact that the new buildings were in fact initiated for the political elite. Construction of Riviera had started in 1998 and halted due to rising costs and sinking soil because of the weight of the buildings (Pelkmans, 2006:210). Although the public have not been informed about the function of the building which was intended to be a shopping mall and residences for the privileged political elite, illustrations of the complex was already in post-cards and books about Batumi. Pelkmans argues that because the project was not completed, Riviera and the dreams it represented were still accessible to everyone, an imagined future life of leisure, luxury, and abundance (2006:211). The building complex had never been completed. Today the remnants of the colonnade of the complex - to be demolished completely soon - are visible just behind the construction of Kempinski Hotel. A representation of the discontinuity between the forces shaping the built environment of the city before and after the Rose Revolution is embodied in this particular site.

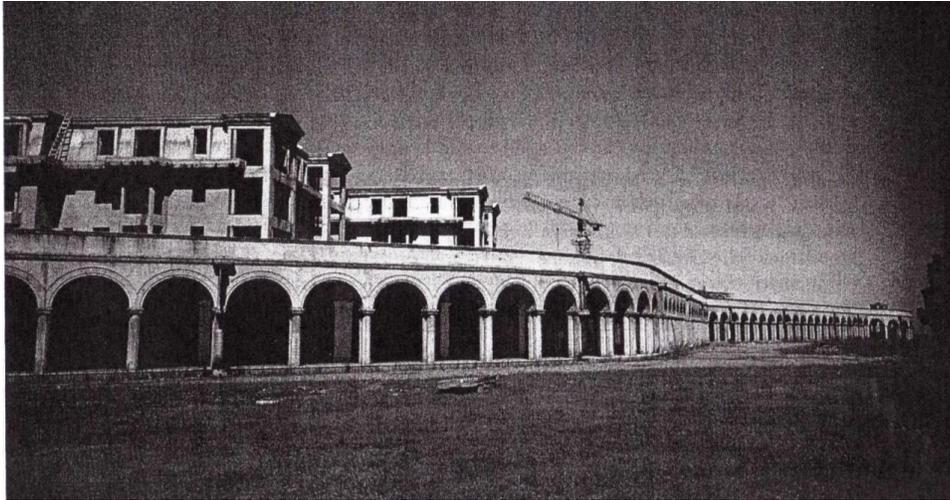


Figure 3.11. Photograph of Riviera. Source Pelkmans, M. (2006). *Defending the border: identity, religion and modernity in the Republic of Georgia*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, p.210.



Figure 3.12. Construction of Kempiski Hotel and parts of the Riviera. Source: gimgbatumi.com. accessed: 12.12.2011.

The way neoliberal discourses were used by the local regime to explain the continued appeal of capitalist fantasies has become part of very real changes. (Pelkmans, 2006:8) Spatial transformations of Batumi under Aslan Abashidze government mainly consisted of public investments financed by questionable resources. However the respondents of Pelkmans's research in Batumi stated public's content about the construction going on, even proud when they walked along the Boulevard or through

the center and they perceive construction activity as ‘moving forward’ (Pelkmans, 2006:207).

Transformation of Batumi after the Rose Revolution

The Rose Revolution, which overthrew Schvardnadze government in 2004, put Aslan Abashidze in a difficult position. Negative relations with the new government even led Abashidze to extremes such as closing the border of Adjara to the rest of Georgia. But his opposition did not take a long time for the central government to put an end to Adjara political leader’s service an act also supported by Adjara people who no longer wanted to be ruled by a government “characterized by nepotism, widespread persecution of the opposition, and suppression of basic freedoms (Mikaberidze, 2007)”. It is argued by Pelkmans that:

The situation that took shape in Ajaria in the decade after socialism epitomized the discrepancy between transition rhetoric and socioeconomic reality, as well as the persistent obsession with the ideals of transition on the part of inhabitants of Ajaria” (2006:197).

The general conditions at the end of the second decade after the end of socialism do not contradict with the previous one but the solid evidences of transition represented in the built environment as well as other aspects of life are visible - mainly in the capital of Adjara, Batumi.

At the end of Abashidze period, deprived of the necessary infrastructure and faded under economic difficulties Batumi was far less attractive than its days of glory at the end of 19th century.

Introduction of Batumi with to the Competitive Tourism Industry

The new administration struggling with unemployment has embraced development of tourism expecting it to be an effective response to the need of new strategies for economic advancement. Following the establishment of tourism as a growth and regeneration strategy, the process of transformation of the city to a contemporary

tourist destination had begun by the local government and their business allies; national and international investors. Production of the tourist spaces are mainly led by public and private sectors simultaneously. Contribution of the public sector may range building the necessary infrastructure to directing the marketing operations. In the cases of large scale transformations, public sector also provides land for tourism development and changes construction laws in favor of the developers. While the motivation of the private sector is obviously maximizing the profit, such a collaboration with the public sector does not often result in production high quality built environments and has questionable impacts on the residents of the city.

Shaped by the consequent desire of economic profit the transformation of places to tourist spaces and emergence of new spaces in the city aiming to attract tourist attention is often presented as an inevitable process and necessities of civilization. Such a narrative reinforces the definition of such exercises of capital as ‘development’.

Spirou groups tourist cities under three categories; resort cities, tourist-historic cities, and rebranded cities (2011:109). The main characteristics of resort cities are; the appealing nature and weather where as tourist-historic cities put their unique past afore to attract the tourists. Cities that seek to position themselves in the global context and employ tourism as a method for development thus generate reformatted urban identities are categorized under rebranded cities. Elements from all three categories defined by Spirou are included in the case study examined in this study.

Much of the built environment in Batumi, that signifies the past was abandoned and left to dereliction decades ago. The city had to construct a new narrative of regeneration and a new physical infrastructure that evokes that narrative. Judd argues:

Where large port and industrial cities have experienced a massive decline cannot be wholly reclaimed, carefully bounded districts have been set aside as ‘tourist bubbles’ isolated from surrounding areas of decay. Within these districts, historic and architecturally significant structures are integrated with a new generation of tourist facilities that, instead of evoking images of an urban golden age, are quite contemporary.

The new urban tourism typically superimposes onto the template of old streets and buildings various combinations of festival markets and shopping districts, arcades and atriums, sports stadiums, pedestrian malls, and, in some cases, gaming casinos. (1999:9)

In the case of Batumi this pattern has been adopted for most of the part recently. The city has been transformed into a huge construction site, 8 Km long sea shore in the city center witnesses the densest renewal, not only public investments like beautification of parks, squares and boulevards but also the appearance of high rise, international chain hotels, and commercial and residential buildings reshape the city. Judd defines the general pattern of tourist place construction as; first, public and private sectors invest in production of tourist attractions, in the mean while some asset out of the ordinary must be assigned with the place to draw the tourist attention, as well as creating a safe zone in the city the tourist will be assured that the are safe and comfortable, which will result in construction of a space in which the visitors experience simultaneously novelty and familiarity, excitement and security (1999:21-22).

A significant element of tourism as a development strategy is, building a city image and marketing the city around this image. The “reimaging” process of Batumi, fundamentally relies on its image and at the end of 19th century and the meanings attached to that era. Narratives of development and Westernization are accompanying a vision of being a European city.

Tourist spaces and daily places of residents are divided in Batumi. There are a number of reasons for such a division, some of which are; the new built infrastructure is out of reach for residents in economic means, they are not part of daily routines of the residents and the new spaces created are usually does not reflect the need of the residents but of tourists. It can be discussed that Batumi is a dual city divided between the tourist spaces and the everyday places of the residents.

3.2. Mapping Batumi as a Tourist City

In this part, the refurbishment of the city for development of tourism industry will be evaluated in the scope of three different tourist guide books. The first one, printed in

1991 is significant because it represents the city right after the disintegration of the USSR. The next one is the second edition of Lonely Planet guidebook of 2004, the year Rose Revolution in Georgia had taken place and finally the guidebook recently published by Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara are evaluated.

3.2.1. Guidebook 1991

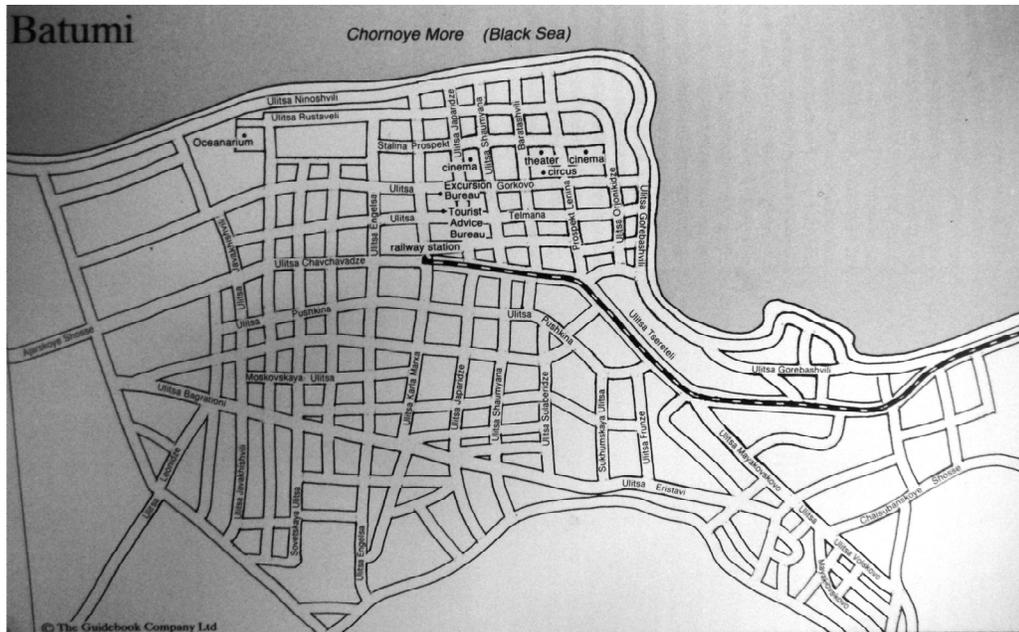


Figure 3.13. Tourist map of Batumi. Source: Rosen, R. (1991). *The Georgian Republic*. Hong Kong: Odyssey p.198.

The visual material Batumi has been represented with in this book is limited by only one map and two photos. The area covered in the map is defined by the Oceanarium (Aquarium) to the west, the port to the east and to the end of urban settlement to the south. Railway station on Chavchavadze street is represented as the focal point. The street names include, Stalina, Lenina, Karla Marxa, Sovietskaya and Moskovskaya. On the map, the Russian word “ulitsa” is used instead of “street”. The points of reference shown on the map are; railway station, tourist advice bureau, excursion bureau, two cinemas, theater, circus and the oceanarium.

The highlighted characteristics of "modern" Batumi are its parks, beachfront, avenues, nineteenth century merchants' mansions, the commercial port and high rise tourist hotels. Among these characteristics mentioned the last one is curious, as there

are no high rise buildings in the city which was built in the Soviet era, functioning as a hotel today.

Although it is mentioned that “there is no city center proper”, it is argued that the city has three main squares (Rosen, 1991:198). Out of three only Freedom square (formerly Lenin square) is put forward as the administrative center of the city. The emphasis about the old town is on its lack of “architectural signs of its Turkish past” except for one mosque which still functioned by then.

Under the heading “sights” six places are recommended to visit. Aquarium, Dolphinarium, The Young Pioneers’ Park (named 6 May Park later), Museum of Adjara (also noted “only for those people obsessed with seeing everything a city has to offer”), the collective farm market and the Octopus cafe. Among those the only “sight” described with its architecture is the Octopus cafe which is basically an octopus shaped mosaic sculpture, creating a semi-open space under, apparently used as a cafe by then.

One of two photos of Batumi presented in the guidebook is of a ferris wheel and a woman sunbathing at the beach in front of it (Figure 3.14.). The fountain at the entrance of the Boulevard in a crowded summer day is shown in the second photo. The umbrellas for shade at the background and people in shorts and short sleeved shirts gives the impression of a hot summer day in a resort city (Figure 3.15.). What is particularly interesting in this photo is the children’s entertainments around the pool; colorful replicas of cartoon characters with much resemblance to Disney characters. Both photos reinforce the text describing the city as a resort with a beach line and parks. The photos as well as the text in the book about Batumi does not mention much about the architecture of the city.



Figure 3.14. Image from Tourist Guide. Source: Rosen, R. (1991). *The Georgian Republic*. Hong Kong: Odyssey p.199.



Figure 3.15. Image from Tourist Guide. Source: Rosen, R. (1991). *The Georgian Republic*. Hong Kong: Odyssey p.200.

It should also be noted that as the importance of the city for the Soviet economy is pointed out in the book, it can be assumed that the text is prepared before Georgia's declaration of independence.

3.2.2. Guidebook 2004

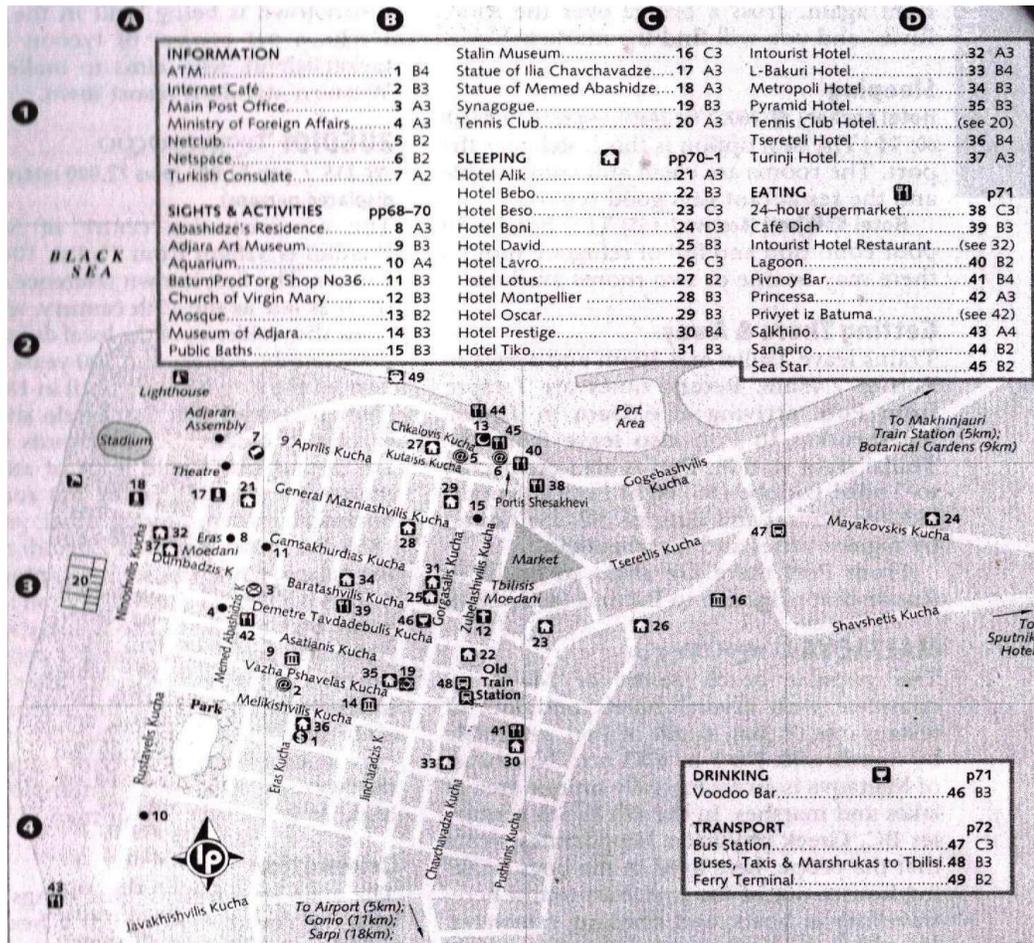


Figure 3.16. Tourist map of Batumi. Source: Plunkett, R. and Masters, T. (2004), *Georgia, Armenia & Azerbaijan*. New York: Lonely Planet p.68.

This rather compact tourist guide book, not rich with pictures does not present any photos of Batumi but has a small but descriptive map of the city. The limits of the shown area on the map compared to the one presented in 1991 guidebook is extended to the east so that the bus station can also be included. It can be argued that, the relocation of the railway station has reduced the importance of this part of the city. Street names are all in Georgian and instead of word “street” its Georgian equal “kucha” is used. The reference points represented are old train station, theater, the port, stadium, lighthouse, Adjara Assembly, Tbilisi square, Eras (Freedom) square, and 6 May Park.

A significant information presented in the map is the number of hotels in the city, compared to the guide published in 1991 which only presented Intourist Hotel, 18 hotels presented in this one shows a rapid increase in number of hotels. As the increase in numbers of hotels is parallel to tourism activity, it would be relevant to conclude this with increasing numbers of tourists visiting the city.

“The city’s 19th century architecture, busy port, chaotic market and beautiful mist-wrapped mountainous backdrop make this an intriguing place to be, especially during the summer months when it comes alive with holidaying Georgians enjoying the beaches and attractive promenade” (Plunkett et. al., 2004:68). This is how the city is pictured in ‘Lonely Planet’ tourist guide book in 2004. The plan of the city presented in the guide book does not have dramatic differences considering the general layout and the main elements of the city such as the port, the boulevard, Tbilisi square and the lake. But the ‘sights’ of the city listed in the same source; the aquarium, Museum of Adjara, the Boulevard and beach as well as new two new museums; Adjara Art Museum and Stalin Museum and two places worship; Church of the Virgin Mary and the mosque is rather limited when compared to the current ones. The comparison of the information in this guide and the recent one gives us the opportunity to point of the new built tourist attractions in the city.

3.2.3. Guidebook 2011

In this comprehensive guidebook a considerable increase of number of tourist attractions can be traced. Rather stabilized economy and new laws encouraging international investors has resulted a construction boom in the in the city.

Some examples of the attractions presented in Guidebook 2011 are examined below.

1. Sarpi Border Checkpoint



Figure 3.17. Sarpi Border Checkpoint. Source: Photograph taken by author, 29 December 2011

This building is situated at the Georgian border to Turkey, close to the Black Sea shore. The distance between Sarpi border and Batumi city center is 18km.

The building is designed by J. MAYER H. Architects of Germany in 2010 and the construction has finished in 2011. The client is Ministry of Finance of Georgia. In addition to regular customs facilities this building also houses a cafeteria, staff rooms and conference room. The cantilevering terraces of the tower are designed as viewing platforms.



Figure 3.18. Sarpi Border Checkpoint. Source: <http://www.jmayerh.de/6-0-Sarpi.html>, accessed: 10.01.2012 (official web page of J.Mayer H. Architects)

The architectural studio is also the author of redevelopment project of Plaza de la Encarnacion, Seville, Spain, a celebrated tourist site which is know as “Metropol Parasol”.



Figure 3.19. Sarpi Border Checkpoint with its close vicinity. Source: <http://morielli.livejournal.com/119707.html> accessed: 10.01.2012 (personal blog of Vaja Diasamidze – Chairman of Department of Tourism and Resorts of Autonomous Republic of Adjara)

The Sarpi Border Checkpoint building, is the first tourist attraction for many tourists coming to Georgia from Turkey by car. The architects argue that the building has a statement: “the building welcomes visitors to Georgia, representing the progressive upsurge of the country”.

2. Cloud Cafe and Sculpture



Figure 3.20. Render of Cloud Cafe and Sculpture by J. Mayer H. Architects. Source: <http://www.jmayerh.de23-0-BATUMI.html> accessed:10.01.2012 (official web page of J.Mayer H. Architects)

The building is situated in the middle of the park in front of St. Barbara Church and next to Sheraton Hotel. It is designed by J. MAYER H. Architects in 2009. Since

2010 when it was completed it houses a popular high end cafe. Its very central position in the city and spectacular architecture makes it impossible evade it. The park it is situated in is one of the main entrance points to the Boulevard so it is an extensively frequented place by the residents of the city as well as the tourists. There is an information screen on the sculpture which displays news and information from Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara. In front of this structure there is a Soviet residential building which has a renovated facade with reference to this building. The digital representation of the design produced by the architects only includes an abstract image of Sheraton Hotel at the background.



Figure 3.21. Cloud Cafe and Sculpture with the renovated Soviet residential building at the background. Source: Photo taken by author, 27 December, 2011

3. Piazza

The construction of Piazza is completed at the end of 2011. It is built on the former site of a public school. Piazza situated in the center of the old town, houses cafes, pubs and restaurants. The location is also favorable considering the plans about the development cruise ship tourism due to its proximity to the marina.

It is one of the most celebrated new built tourist attractions in Batumi as it appears in all the tourist guides and maps. In spite of its frequent appearance in such mediums very limited text is provided accompanying the images, and no information is given about its date of construction.

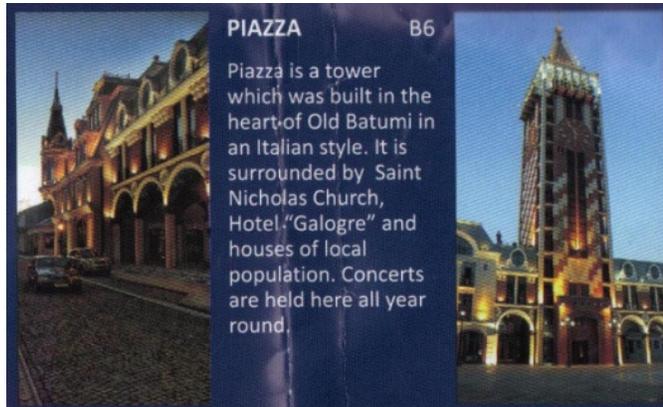


Figure 3.22. Piazza as it is represented in the tourist map printed by Department of Tourism and Resorts of Autonomous Republic of Adjara. This is the only material in which the photographs of the building are accompanied by text.

In the winter season it is struggling with emptiness. The typical behavior of its users -mainly consisted of Georgian families- is wandering around the court and taking photos. They spend less than half-an hour in this tourist space by which they are apparently amazed.



Figure 3.23. Piazza at 7pm. Source: Photograph taken by author, 27 December, 2011

Spanish architects CMD Ingenieros is designing a glass structure to cover the space between the Piazza buildings for the client; Batumi City Hall. The aim of this Project is defined by its architects as “making Piazza one of the attraction centers of Batumi”. This statement reveals the fact that the Piazza as it is now is not enough to become a center of attraction so that some alterations were needed.

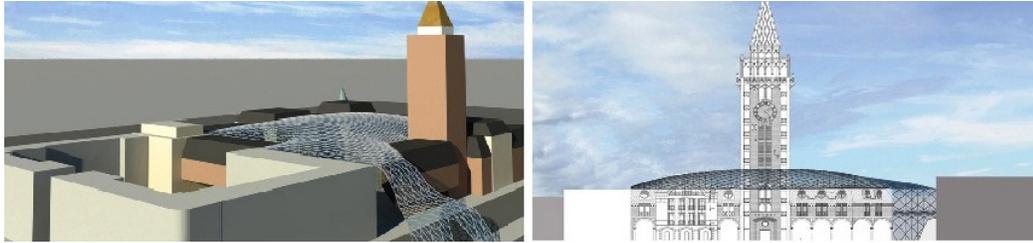


Figure 3.24. Additional glass structure cover design by for Piazza. Source: <http://www.cmdingenieros.com/proyectos/puentes-y-estructuras/batumi-piazza/> accessed: 20.01.2012.

As the city has a very humid and rainy climate this ‘Italian style’ architecture is not very convenient to use. Even in summer unpredicted and heavy showers of rain are common which makes it difficult to establish open air cafes and restaurants. Already some semi-open spaces in this complex has been enclosed with additional windows and transformed into closed spaces.

4. The Boulevard



Figure 3.25. Three parts of Boulevard.

The north-west coast of the city is planned as a sea side park. It will be examined in three parts; defined according to the dates of constructions, functions, user profiles and relations of with the city.

PART A

The first part of the boulevard shown with letter ‘A’ is referred in this study as “The Boulevard”. From the end of nineteenth century on The Boulevard is described by majority of literature on Batumi as the main attraction that the city has to offer.

The first project to transform this landfill area of late nineteenth century was designed by German gardener Ressler in 1884. Later by the contribution of numerous gardeners and designers the length of The Boulevard stretched up to 1900 meters. As it has become the most popular place of leisure in the city numerous attractions such

as gardens of exotic plants and a bamboo grove as well as new cafes and restaurants were added through time.

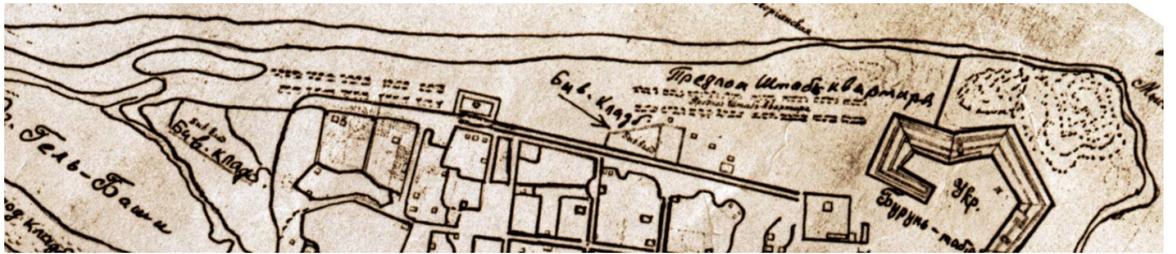


Figure 3.26. The site of the Boulevard as shown in 1878 map. There is a military settlement and a cemetery on the site. Burun Bastion on the east coast is also represented in this map. Source: Archive of Zaur Margiev.

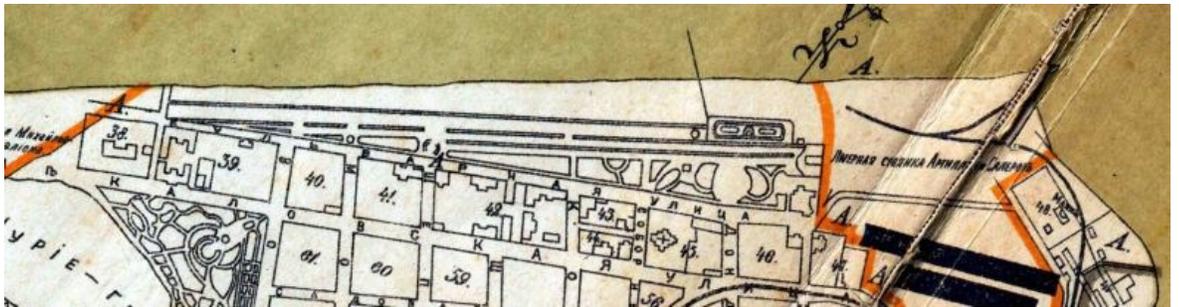


Figure 3.27. The Boulevard as shown in 1898 map. Source: Archive of Zaur Margiev.

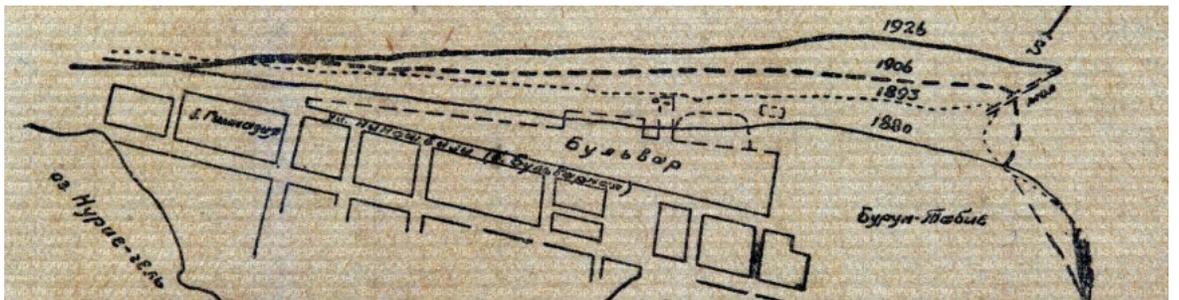


Figure 3.28. Diagram of the change in sea shore line. Source: Archive of Zaur Margiev.



Figure 3.29. Aerial view of The Boulevard in 2009. Source: <https://www.maps.google.com>, accessed: 22.12.2011

The Boulevard was constructed in Porto Franco period of Batumi when the population of the city had vastly increased. The European population settled in the city had contributed to the shaping of the built environment. The Boulevard can be counted as one of them. The Europeans living in Batumi were not from the working class but white collars and bourgeoisie such as managers and owners of oil and mineral companies, engineers and state representatives. In need of creating pleasurable places in the city the popular trend of the age, building a city promenade was followed. As it spatially organizes activities of walking, meeting with other people and experiencing the nature, it can be argued that The Boulevard is the first tourist space of Batumi. The new promenade was a very popular sight. It appeared in many post cards and photos.

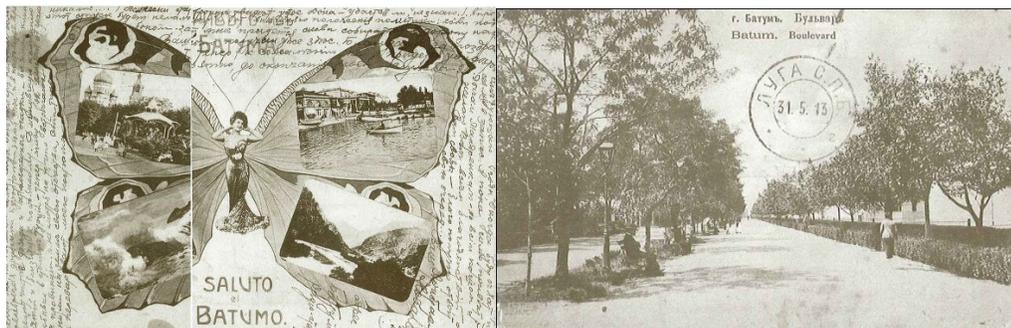


Figure 3.30. Photographs from early 20th century. Source: Tourist booklet “Old Batumi” published by Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara.

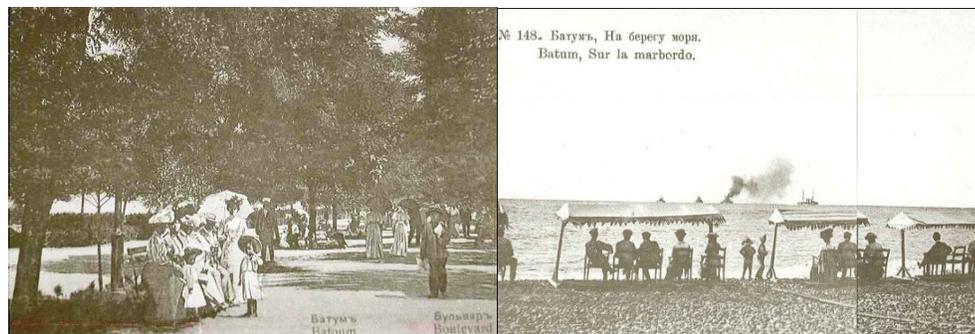


Figure 3.31. Photographs from early 20th century. Source: Tourist booklet “Old Batumi” published by Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara.

Refurbishment and landscaping projects have been going on in The Boulevard since 2005. The urban furniture is replaced by new ones. The new benches, lighting elements, decorations and pavements in the parts of The Boulevard closer to the beach fit with the new built parts of the promenade (those elements are designed by

CMD Ingenieros) while in the inner parts elements with a different design is used. (Figure 3.32.)



Figure 3.32. New urban furniture and the new built pubs on The Boulevard. Source: Photograph taken by author, 28December, 2011.



Figure 3.33. New urban furniture on the inner parts of The Boulevard. Source: Photograph taken by author, 28December, 2011.



Figure 3.34. A Turkish tourist family in the Boulevard, photographing themselves with a statue which would probably be not appreciated by them in different conditions than the current one as being “tourists”. Source: Photograph taken by author, 28December, 2011.

The Boulevard is still a very attractive place for the tourists, its proximity to the new built hotels and tourist attractions in the city helps it keep its popularity. The only user group is not the tourists, the place is also very much frequented by young

residents of the city, particularly teenagers and university students. It is a popular place for gathering in big groups as well as for young couples seeking privacy. In summer the place turns into a public beach, even the usual dress code in The Boulevard is different than it is in the Rustaveli Avenue just the parallel street. The public character of the beach is under threat of privatization as there are numerous beach clubs with their private parts of the beach are being built currently. (Figure 3.35.)



Figure 3.35. “Batumi New Pier” construction site. Source: Photograph taken by author, 28December, 2011.

PART B

This part of the seaside promenade was built after 2004 and the construction was financed by the Municipality. It was basically an empty lot before, except for San Remo Restaurant on it.



Figure 3.36. Aerial view of part B of the seaside promenade in 2010. Source: <https://www.maps.google.com>, accessed: 22.12.2011



Figure 3.37. New Boulevard in the beginning of 2011, seven restaurant buildings are visible in this photo including Acropol Restaurant under construction, construction of Night Club in front of the Beer Tower is only just beginning Source: <http://www.morielli.livejournal.com> accessed: 10.01.2012



Figure 3.38. White House and Acropol Restaurants and Night Club in New Boulevard, second house apartment constructions along with Soviet residential blocks at the background. Source: Photograph taken by author, 28December, 2011.

The untamed water element on this area has been transformed to an artificial lake and furnished with a sound-water-light show. It is now one of the main tourist attractions, highly recommended in tourist books.

This part mainly contains restaurants, all themed with historic or national elements. Among them, Adjara Restaurant also has an exhibition of models of “typical Adjara houses” at its front garden. The models in glass display boxes are visited not only by the customers of the restaurant but also by tourists and Batumi residents. The exhibition has an ironic position considering its surroundings. With Moulin Rouge and Acropolis Restaurants in close vicinity and Soviet residential blocks at the

background, this exhibition is supposedly present traditional Adjara architecture. It can be argued that it is just another act of commodification of architecture through a reductionist representation.



Figure 3.39. Adjara Restaurant and the exhibition in front of it. Source: Photograph taken by author 28 December, 2011

Vaja Diasamidze, Chairman of Department of Tourism and Resorts of Autonomous Republic of Adjara mentions his content about development of this part of the city in his personal web blog. First he reminds the criticism raised about the budget of the project which is several million Lari (1 Lari=1.6 USD) and the fact that the citizens have more urgent needs than parks and recreation. He argues that this project is a very good example of the new economic policy; as has transformed the area to one of the most beautiful places of Batumi it has become very popular for investors. He concludes the results of this transformation as follows:

- The value of real estate in the area (several thousand flats) have risen and it can be regarded as direct investment in the welfare of local people. For example a family had a flat that worths 10.000\$, now it worths 55.000\$.
- Municipality of Batumi had more revenue from the privatization of the land in this area, than the money spent for construction.
- Batumi now has a new tourist infrastructure with modern restaurants and a hotel, all by private investment including foreign investment.
- New job opportunities are created in this place.

(www.morielli.livejournal.com, 10.01.2012).

PART C

This section of the seaside promenade, quite distant from the part of the city where tourist attractions are concentrated, is mainly frequented by residents of Batumi. The vast parking lot at the street front of this part shows that it is expected that the main means of access is going to be by car. The main attraction available here are walking lanes and benches with a view of the beach and the playgrounds for children decorated with cartoon characters. The user of this part is mainly families with children.



Figure 3.40. “New Boulevard” as it is named in tourist map is still under construction in this aerial view in 2010. Source: <https://www.maps.google.com>, accessed: 22.12.2011

The author of the architectural design is CMD Ingenieros, an architectural studio from Spain. The architects were employed in this project due to their successful works in Tbilisi (personal conversation with Irakli Surmanidze, Appendix G). The budget for this project that covers an area of 18hectars is approximately 5.000.000€ (www.cmdingenieros.com, 20.01.2012).

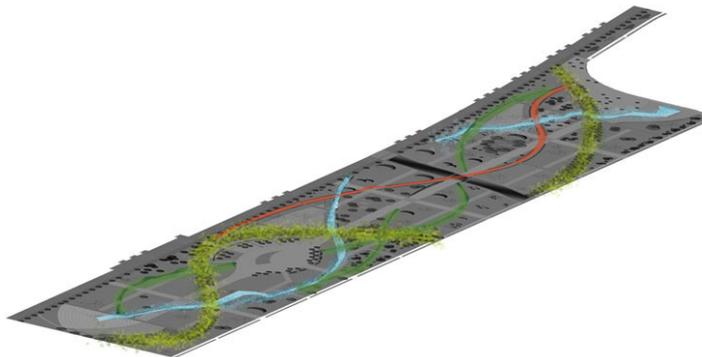


Figure 3.41. Digital render of the design for the new boulevard. Source: <http://www.cmdingenieros.com/proyectos/paisajismo-y-diseno-urbano/bulevar-litoral-batumi/> accessed: 20.01.2012



Figure 3.42. Playgrounds. It is very popular to take photos of the children with replicas of cartoon characters. Source: Photograph taken by author, 28December, 2011.



Figure 3.43. New Boulevard, urban furniture. Source: Photograph taken by author 28 December, 2011

The Ice Cream Disco building is placed very close to the playgrounds in the new boulevard. Despite it has a spectacular and attractive design -that is Ice Cream Disco literally in the shape of layers of ice cream- the construction method is highly conventional (Figure 3.45.).



Figure 3.44. Ice Cream Disco digital render. Source: Batumi Miracle booklet, published by: Adjara Builders and Developers Association



Figure 3.45. Construction of Ice Cream Disco on the seaside promenade part C. Source: Photograph by author 28 December, 2011.

Zukin argues that public spaces are where the archetypal forms of fantasy architecture – fast-food shops built in the shape of a hamburger, the Polynesian restaurants in the form of a giant hut etc.- can be found. Referring to Banham she defines the the conditions in which an eclectic way exaggerating the features of traditional buildings is embraced; “the convulsions in building style that follow the traditional, cultural, and social restrains have been overthrown and replaced by the preferances of a mobile, affluent, consumer-oriented society” (1993:235).

The entrepreneur like approach of the municipality can be read through the case of construction of the new boulevard. This project consists of two parts as defined in the previous chapter as Part B and Part C, first one closer to the center of the city where tourists spent almost all of their time but also closer to the densely populated middle income quarters of the city, second one near very low density almost rural part of the city. In Part B high end restaurants which are economically unreachable for most of the residents of the city considering the average income are located in walking distance middle income settlement. Design of Part C includes more public space including children’s playgrounds but there is almost no settlement around it. This part can be considered as a positive addition to the public spaces used by the residents of the city. But to explain the curious location of those two parts –why the children’s playgrounds and broader public spaces are not located close to the densely populated part- it should be considered that, the half-rural area close to Part C has following the completion of the new boulevard announced free tourism zone. An unattractive part of the city with low land value is now advertised to investors as a new opportunity while the residents of the area are being relocated by the government to open-up new spaces for investment.

5. Freedom and Europe Squares



Figure 3.46.. Freedom (A) and Europe (B) squares with their immediate vicinity in 2010.
Source: <https://www.maps.google.com>, accessed: 22.12.2011

These two squares are located in a very central part of the city, have a long history as places of entertainment, administration and public services. The map representing the place as it is in 1909 demonstrates the tram way crossing in front of Freedom Square and through Europe Square. The Cathedral at the north has been replaced by Intourist Hotel in 1936 by the Soviet administration. The Post Office in the southwest is first appears in this map and its function has been mentioned in the legend. In the following decades Adjara Assembly, presidential office, buildings of ministries and justice hall are built in this area. Both squares are recently experienced renewals, they have been refurbished with new urban furniture, statues and fountains. Statues chosen has no reference to Georgian history but are characters from Greek mythology. The ancient Greek myth about the Golden Fleece takes place in the area around Batumi, so the city wants to emphasize this fact and make a tourist narrative

out of it. Construction of physical representations of the myth provides images that will decorate the tourist guidebooks.

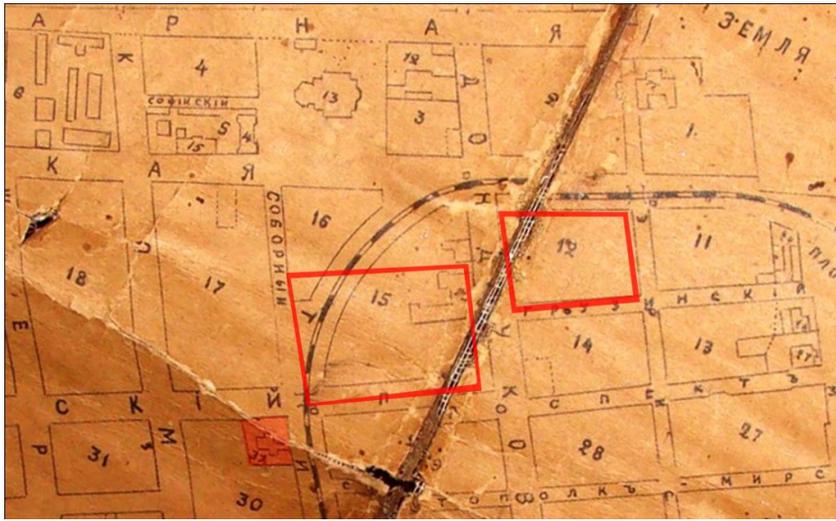


Figure 3.47. Map 1909. Source: Archive of Zaur Magriev.

A- Freedom Square

The square is defined by the theater building, 5 storey Soviet residential blocks at one side and 12 storey ones at the other side and 2 and 3 storey, end of 19th century style buildings at the opposite side of the theater. There is also a prestigious casino built at the ground floor Soviet residential blocks.

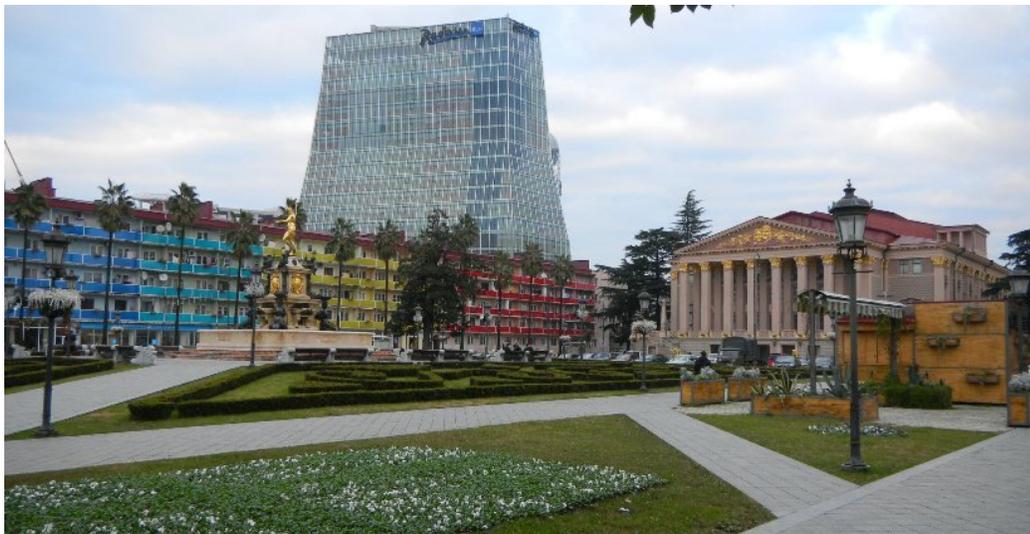


Figure 3.48. Freedom Square. Source: Photograph taken by author 27 December, 2011.



Figure 3.49. Freedom Square (2005). Source: <http://www.irakli.rupicsBatumi20-winterindex.html>. accessed:15.12.2012

The theater designed by Soviet architect Teplinski was built in 1952. A facelift project has recently been realized at this building by the architectural department of City Hall.

The pool and the statue in the middle of the square are added after 2005 together with the new landscape design. The statue that was placed in the center of the square before the new landscaping project is of Illia Chavchavadze a celebrated poet of Nationalist movement of Georgia. It is now placed on Rustaveli Avenue behind the theater. It is obviously seen that the high rise building behind the theater has been replaced by Radisson Blue hotel and the facades of the Soviet residential blocks were repainted. Only the residential buildings in the city center have repainted facades. So it can be argued that the City Hall is financing it for a better looking environment for the tourists.

Currently a debate is going on about the future of the Soviet residential block around this square. The City Hall is planning to demolish the buildings and replace the residents to a new settlement distant from the city center. The residents oppose the idea of demolition of their homes due to their inconsistent appearance with the surroundings (www.transparency.ge, 10.07.2012).



Figure 3.50. The Soviet residential buildings and the casino at the Freedom Square. Source: Photograph taken by author, 28 December, 2011



Figure 3.51. The Soviet residential blocks around Freedom Square shown in blue. Source: <https://www.maps.google.com>, accessed: 22.12.2011



Figure 3.52. The Soviet residential block at the opposite side of the theater has already been demolished. Source: Photograph taken by author, 28 December, 2011.

The reimagining process of Batumi is mainly shaped by a strategy of romanticizing its past as a prosperous international port city. The demolition of Soviet residential blocks and any Soviet structure that does not fit with the reimagining process should be considered in this context. Though it should be noted that the theater building which has been built in the Stalin era, located in the same square is not demolished but its façade has been redecorated and its images even appear in the tourist material. This incoherency demonstrates that the main purpose of the government is not to erase the traces of Soviet era but to construct an appealing image by favoring the ‘decorative’ buildings for the tourist gaze.

B. Europe Square

The landscape design together with the Medea sculpture in this square has been constructed in 2007. The Medea sculpture is one of the most frequently appearing images in tourist material about Batumi. A construction activity is going on around the square, facades of buildings from the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century are being restored and there are two hotels currently under construction. First one is in the north-east corner of the square, in the former place of Tbilisi Cinema building



Figure 3.53. Concert of Enrique Iglesias in Europe Square in 2010. Source: <http://www.mtv.tv/music/artists/enrique-iglesias/photos/mtv-live-georgia-batumi-21/?flipbook=mtv-live-georgia-enrique-iglesias-02>. accessed: 10.12.2012

The second hotel construction is “in” the old Post-Office building in the southeast corner of the square. The building appears on the map of Batumi printed in 1909 (Appendix D). The design for the new hotel includes use of the original facade of the post Office building and constructing a high rise hotel block in it.



Figure 3.54. The building still used as the central post Office in 2005 – under construction in 2011-Render image of the hotel and casino. Source: <http://www.irakli.rupicsBatumi20winterindex.html>. accessed: 15.12.2012 – Photograph taken by author – Batumi- Batumi Miracle booklet, published by: Adjara Builders and Developers Association.

6. Miracle Square

This is an important area due to its location in the in the city had been used as a military base for a long time, the remnants of Burun fortification were still there before the construction of Miracle Square started in 2012 (Fig.3.13). After 1878 Russians constructed a military port in this part (Appendix 2). However in the Soviet era, this area has lost its importance as a military base and transformed to a hotels and recreation zone. Later in Abashidze period, one of the most significant investments in the city, the construction of Riviera Project was started here but as mentioned before it was never finished.



Figure 3.55. Burun Fortification in 1878 Batumi map. Source: Zaur Margiev archive.



Figure 3.56. Miracle Square and its vicinity before 2008. Source: humanrights.ge. accessed: 25.01.2012.

The Soviet era hotels in this area were densely occupied by refugees from the conflicts in Abhazya and Ossetia since 2009. Adjara Ministry of Economics has sold 21 of those hotels to Adjara Horizons Holding B.V. that has accepted to pay 17 million USD to the government and 14 million USD to the refugees to be evacuated. The Holding was established in Netherlands only 5 days before the sale (humanrights.ge, 25.02.2012). Although a contract between Adjara Horizons Holding B.V. and Adjara government states the holding is supposed to invest 100 million USD in this area, the only investment in service now since 2009 is the Radisson Blue hotel.

In zoning map of Batumi, approved in 2011 this area is marked as high rise commercial area (Appendix 7). Today the only hotel completed in this area Radisson Blue is active and the construction of Kempinski Hotel complex by a Turkish construction company is going on rapidly.

Radisson Blue Hotel is designed by Italian architect Michele de Lucchi. The hotel is advertised with its ‘special design’ and the ‘contemporary look’ of its glass facade is particularly emphasized (www.radissonblu.com, 10.03.2012).



Figure 3.57. Radisson Blu Hotel and its vicinity. Source: <http://travellingartist.wordpress.com>. accessed: 10.03.2012.



Figure 3.58. Kempinski Hotel construction. Source: Photo taken by author, 2011.



Figure 3.59. Kempinski Hotel, render image. Source: www.batumi.ge. accessed: 22.02.2012.

Kempinski Hotel is being constructed on the location of the old football stadium (Figure 3.14) on a land of 36.000m². It is not only a hotel but a multifunctional complex with residences, office space, casinos and recreation facilities.

Another 5 star hotel in Batumi is Sheraton- constructed by a Turkish company Nurol Holding- which held its an opening ceremony in 2010 with participation of president of Georgia Saakashvili and prime minister of Turkey R. Tayyip Erdoğan. It should also be mentioned that the construction of Hilton and Holiday Inn are still going on, on the plots at the sea shore.

Miracle Square with its recreation areas and recently constructed tourist attractions such as Alphabetical Tower and the gigantic Ali and Nino statue is designed by CMD Ingenieros (Figure 3.18).



Figure 3.60. Miracle Square design by CMD Ingenieros. Source: cmdingenieros.com. accessed:22.01.2011.

The land marked as private plot in Figure 3.60. is designed by an architecture company from US, Leo A Daly (Figure 3.61.).



Figure 3.61. Master Plan. Source: <http://www.fotiadis.net>. accessed: 10.02.2012.

The main facility in this area which consists of hotels, offices, marina, beach, yacht club and sports facilities is the Trup Tower, invested by well known businessman Donald Trump (Figure 3.62).



Figure 3.62. Trump Tower and the Alphabetic Tower at the background, render image. Source: <http://travellingartist.wordpress.com>. accessed: 10.03.2012.

Such investments reflect the declining power of the nation state to control the multinational money flows as discussed by Harvey:

Investment increasingly takes the form of a negotiation between international finance capital and local powers doing the best they can to maximize the attractiveness of the local site as a lure for capitalist development (1989b:5).

Zukin similarly argues that, the control over the uses of space, economic power is the dominant force over state and vernacular culture and capital is the power to create and destroy its own landscape (1993:19).

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In this study, the spatial transformation of a city under tourism development as well as the processes and the actors behind this transformation is examined. The main argument of the study is that urban tourism has become one of the significant forces shaping cities. Based on this assumption two secondary issues are examined; first, the entrepreneurship of the city management, and second, the impact of construction of images to 'sell' cities on the built environment.

Promoting urban tourism has become a major motivation that shape city management policies. However production of tourist spaces is an aspect of the global processes of commodification, mediated by various powers, from local governments to international capital. While cities have become increasingly produced by the flows of global capital, urban redevelopment and regeneration of derelict areas in the city is more likely to happen in shorter periods of time and with less funding from public resources. But such a relationship between the city spaces and the global capital in this era characterized by flexible relationships between public and private interests, culture and commerce, design and politics holds risks like commodification of place identity, privatization of public spaces, gentrification, and division of the city between user groups.

Political, economical and cultural practices interact in the city spaces. The emerging position of cities as landscapes shaped by contemporary multinational capital makes the autonomy of local authorities debatable. As discussed in the previous chapters urban economic development strategies are increasingly connected with urban

entrepreneurship; In fact the role of urban governments is increasingly more entrepreneurial rather than managerial.

A critical perspective to urban entrepreneurialism set by Harvey suggests that, behind the mask of many successful projects for regeneration of urban economies lie some social and economic problems; “creation of dual cities of inner city regeneration and a surrounding area sea of increasing impoverishment”; “regressive impacts on the distribution of income”; “volatility within the urban network”; ephemerality of the benefits which many projects bring” (1989b:16). He also points out that in spite of the easily achieved political benefits, the priority given to creation of spectacle and image rather than to the substance of economic and social problems can cause serious complications. Harvey further argues that a dynamic community is symbolized by spectacle and display only. As a result, cities can hope to be centers of conspicuous consumption rather than experiencing recession. Development of ‘symbolic economy of space’ is also an outcome of transformation of spaces of modernity to new spaces of consumption.

Internationalization of capital investment in cities and its search of profitable sites all over the world has become today a major feature of urban development. In fact many world cities have been recipient of international capital over the last decades and it has been one of the major forces shaping those cities. A boost in the recipient country’s account, increase in number of foreign tourists, obtaining professional marketing knowledge, opening up to larger and potentially higher income markets, providing capital flow for tourism development and supporting the local or national markets as well as increasing the local income and generating employment can be listed as the advantages of foreign investment. On the other hand it increases the involvement of international corporate enterprises in decision making processes of urban locales, cities become more vulnerable to the global changes that relocate the profit opportunities for international capital, and also local communities’ inadequate share of total revenue are the often experienced complications related to foreign investment.

Urban governments employing the entrepreneurial strategies of regeneration imitate the successful examples; renewing their waterfronts and harbor places, constructing

new shopping centers, sports stadiums, convention centers, and theme parks. They also organize cultural events such as festivals, concerts and speculative events. Although urban governments employ such strategies in order to give their cities distinctive identities and have a competitive advantage in the global market, they become more and more alike instead of being unique.

While cities become commodities in the competitive global market, the competition between cities has created opportunities to corporate architects in particular. The role of architecture in this atmosphere is making cities gain an advantage in the global market, often by creating speculative designs that reinforce the brand values assigned to that city. In some cases even a single structure can make a city recognizable in the global imaginary.

The global character of tourism industry also makes the cities seek for architecture with internationally perceivable elements of prosperity, safety and comfort as well as novelty, excitement and creativity. Joan Oackman argues in her essay ““Bilbao” and the Global Imagination” that it is rather unexpected that a building “made in the USA” could provide an authentic image and a sense of hope for a place like Bilbao so protective of its identity and autonomy, and adds that “a building in a provincial locale can have a radical cultural effect only when it is cosmopolitan enough to enter into a wider conversation” (2004:230). This discussion highlights a number of important points. First, the gaze of the tourist, which is situated in the tourist’s culture of origin –mostly Western cultures- seeks novelty through ‘cosmopolitan’ images or at least images that do not require extensive knowledge and understanding about the locality. Second, neither identity and autonomy nor authenticity is claimed by images derived necessarily from the past but it is more likely to be claimed by the possession of a ‘symbolic value’. And last but not the least, architecture has a significant role in this processes of image creation and thus adding value and putting cities on the global map of tourism as well as international investment.

Not only those issues discussed but also the changing conditions of production and consumption parallel to the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism and from modernism to post-modernism transform the practice of architecture. With the divorce between form and function “the aesthetic display of architecture has come to be seen as

surface ornamentation that is reduced to decoration and that can be reproduced independently from the main body of the building” as Güzer (1994:68) stated. Architecture, similar to other devices of media, now has a communicative value. Not only architecture but also the names of architects become commodities as they have a certain market value and there is a strong demand for brand designers. As stated by Frampton, the brand designers of today do not only focus on gratification of the consumer taste but they also stimulate the desire because they are aware that the consumption is the primary target of desire rather than the intrinsic quality of the thing consumed (2005:xii).

As it has been discussed through this study, cities are like commodities sold in the global market place and there are some common patterns of marketing cities. But how does Batumi, the case study examined, transform and present itself to appeal the potential consumers? In the last five years the city has witnessed a rapid development for tourism. Public and private actors have been in a tremendous effort to transform the built environment of the city in order to retrieve the image of Batumi as a tourist destination. This transformation follows the usual pattern of refurbishment of the city with tourist infrastructure such as hotels, restaurants, shopping and entertainment facilities, sports venues. International architects are employed for creation of tourist spaces. Every single structure built for tourists, is in competition with each other for capturing the tourist gaze. Thus the architectural value of the built environment is of little significance but the value of ‘sights’ as tourist attractions is what matters.

As aforementioned, cities all over the world transform themselves to attract flows of people, information, capital etc. This is not a process experienced only in Batumi but it is also relevant for many cities. The significance of the case, examined in this study lies in its relevance to the discussions about commodification of cities particularly for tourism and the image oriented production of urban landscape. The scale of the city is small enough to discuss the impacts of tourism industry on the whole agglomeration rather than focusing on one part of it. Also the effects of political forces on the urban development of the city experienced through its history and changes in urban policies accordingly is still traceable on its built environment.

The plans and maps representing Batumi in 19th century reveals a rapid transformation with the flows of money through international trade. The development of the city following this period was dominated by its later assigned identity as a sea side resort by the Russian Empire and then by USSR. This identity is now embraced by the government as a strategy to revive the city after decades of decline under economic difficulties and political struggles.

Unlike the monopoly in the communist era which favored Batumi as a top holiday destination in the USSR, today's competitive atmosphere of the tourism industry demands more than just a warm weather and a nice beach. That is the main reason why investment in Batumi has not only focused on construction of hotels but also on the construction of speculative architecture to enhance the image of a city as a distinguished tourism destination. Many spatial components attached to Batumi for the desired change do also include references to a particular period of its history, favoring representation of Russian Empire era in a selective manner. As Edward Said argues, "the invention of tradition is a method for using collective memory selectively by manipulating certain bits of the national past, suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way. Thus memory is not necessarily authentic, but rather useful" (Said 2002: 245, quoted in Cass, 2004:250). It can be argued that the reasons for reconstructing the Russian Empire era in Batumi are; regenerating the feeling of prosperity related with the international investment experienced in that era, the convenience of the architectural style as a 'pretty' sight for the tourist gaze, and the availability of the building stock available for restoration. New structures also designed in this style seek for legitimacy in this environment but they at best reflect a 'false consciousness' if they do not just create simulations serving the utilitarian purposes of the local government of creating a tourist image of the city.

Although the local government tries to construct and define an identity with reference to the images and narratives from past times, the agenda of the international capital investing in the city and the state policies do not always overlap. While the majority of the construction initiated by Georgian construction firms and designed by local architects include Russian revivalist elements in their designs, investments of international capital mostly use architectural signifiers detached from

place and time. However it should be noted that those two approaches equally appeal to tourist imaginary and fantasy as they both provide two dimensional images, not very demanding from the viewer. Apparently the local government is also content about the international investments, regardless of their impact in the city image. Irakli Surmanidze, head of Architecture and Urban Planning Service of Batumi City Hall claims that Kempinski Hotel will make the best contribution to the city because it houses various facilities, although non can be used by an average citizen of the city (personal conversation with Irakli Surmanidze, Appendix G).

Urban policies regarding revitalization, regeneration and renovation of the cities open up new spaces for investment. In the case of refurbishing the city for tourism development those spaces are mostly the inner city districts, closer to the historical centers of cities and overlapping with the everyday spaces of citizens. Spatial restructuring of Batumi under urban entrepreneurial approach of the local government with the help of international capital transforms the city into parcels available for investment. It is not only an issue of representation but this fragmentation also shapes the development of the city as a collage of images.

Issues of access and use of citizens to the new facilities is also significant. Cohen claims that tourist spheres, emerging from the international tourist system have a certain independence and even isolation from their immediate surroundings, and an internal homogeneity (1972:173). In cases where the tourists enjoy special facilities that are out of the economic means of the host society, the autonomy and isolation can be most clearly seen. The As the city is a part of a developing country, there is a gap between the average income Batumi residents and the tourists -particularly the tourists from Western and neighboring countries who are mainly interested in casinos and 5 star hotels. So the new infrastructure, to a great extent, is out of the reach of the citizens in economic terms.

Participation in the public space is also limited by the local government due to the priority of tourism. In July 2012 a political coalition was not allowed to hold a rally in Europe square because “all the central squares and parks of Batumi were busy with regard to tourist season till 31 August” (www.georgianjournal.ge). Even though this can also be interpreted as the hampering of the opposition to ruling political

party, the statement solely illustrates a shift in the use of public space. It is now a place of consumption rather than a place in which public is represented. Public only appears in public spaces in the frame defined by interests of political leaders and private developers. As Zukin claims, “today, urban places respond to market pressures, with public dreams defined by private development projects and public pressures restricted to private entry” (1993:42).

The outcome of those processes of urban change and marketing should also be addressed. The numbers illustrate a successful tourism development; while the number of foreign tourists visiting Batumi has increased from 27.000 in 2005 to 480.852 in 2011, new flight routes from Turkey, Azerbaijan and Iran has been introduced, already two international brand hotels are operating in the city, and many more under construction (www.tourismadjara.ge). From this point of view the strategy for developing tourism in Batumi seems to work. But it should be remembered that as processes of commodification is central to the whole basis of tourism, restructuring of Batumi as a tourist city is no exception. Reorganization of space in terms of consumption is often characterized by gentrification and theming. Both concepts are experienced in Batumi but their viability as strategies for economic growth is debatable.

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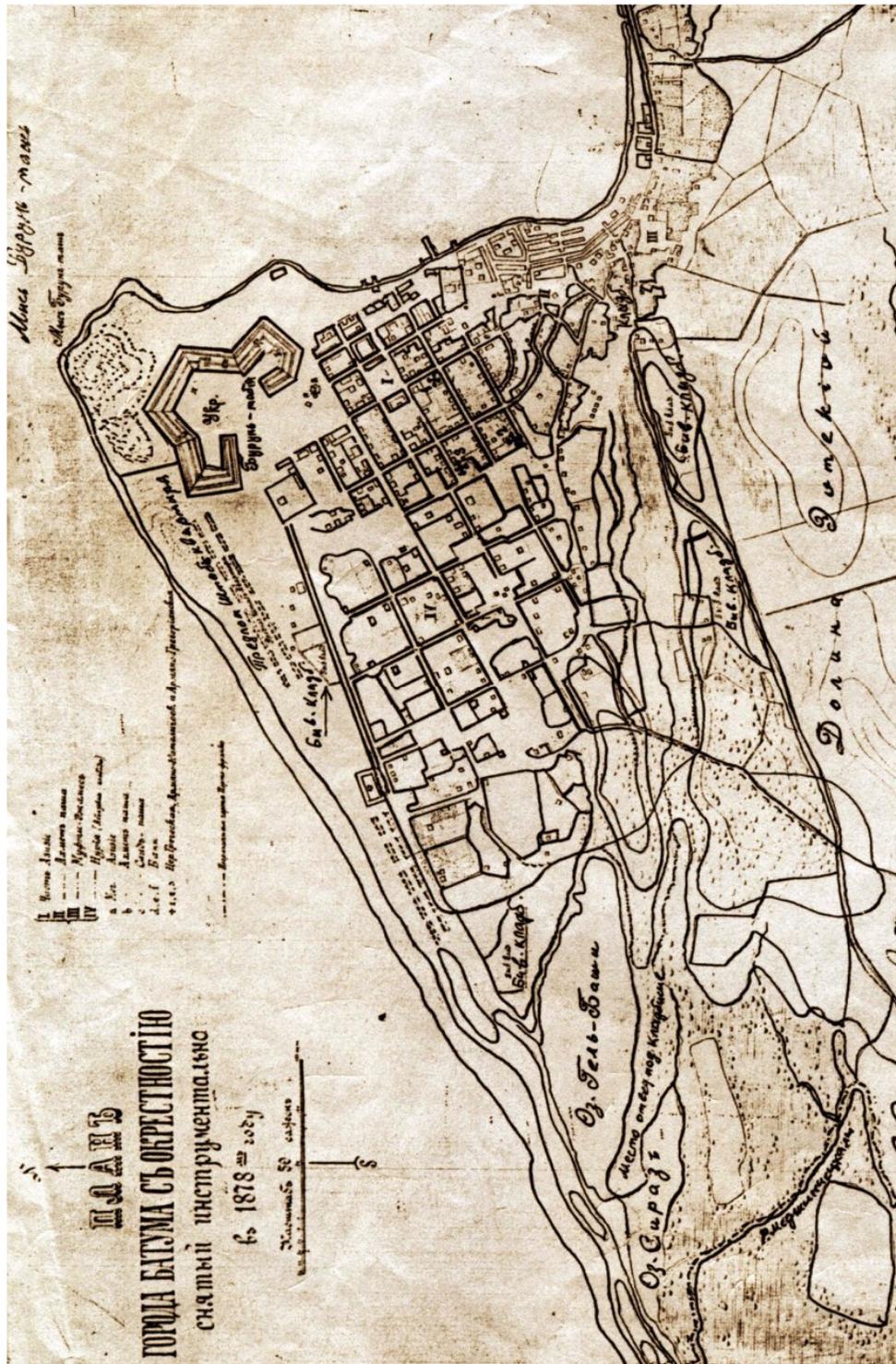
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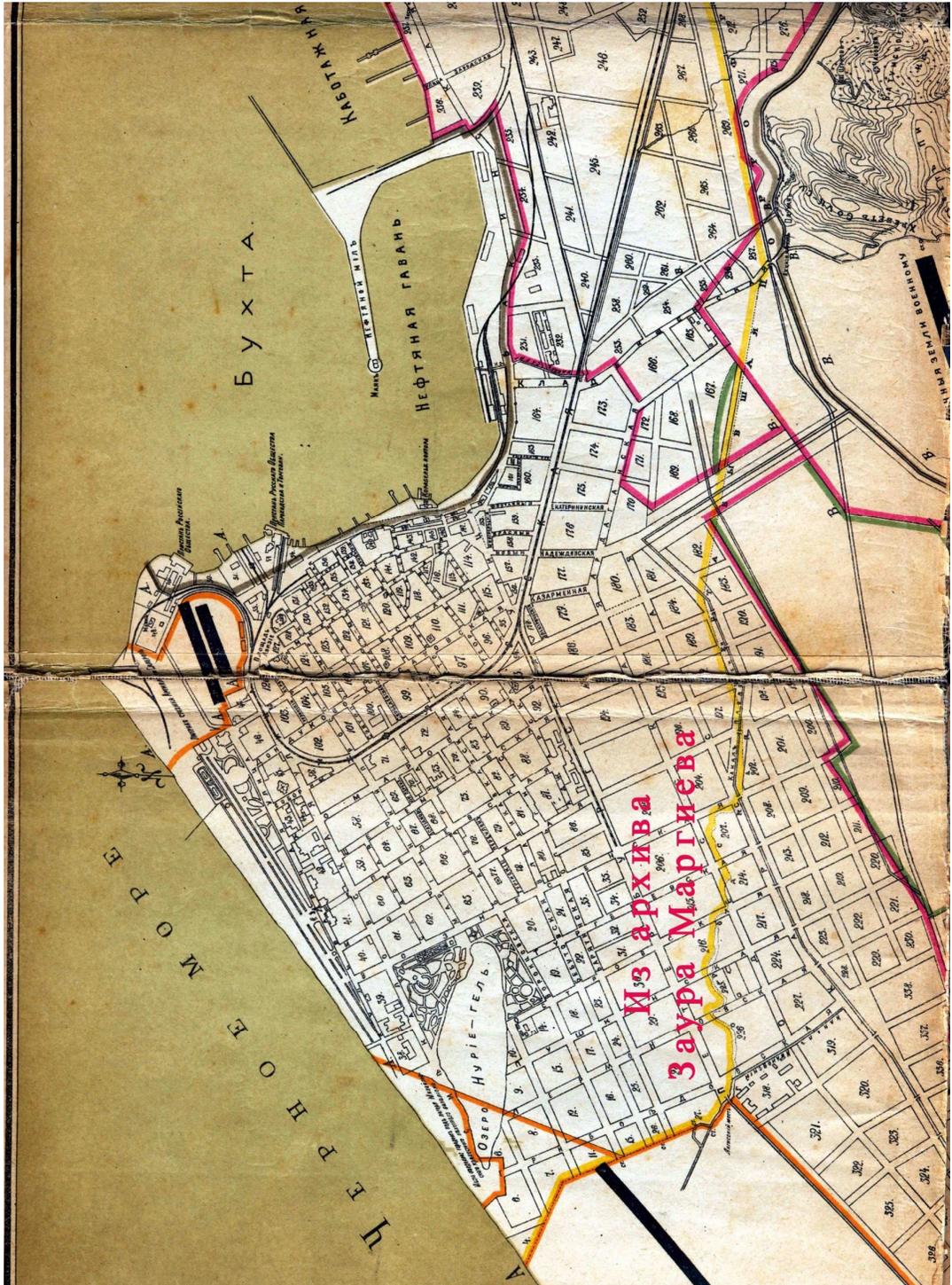
APPENDIX A

MAP OF BATUMI 1878

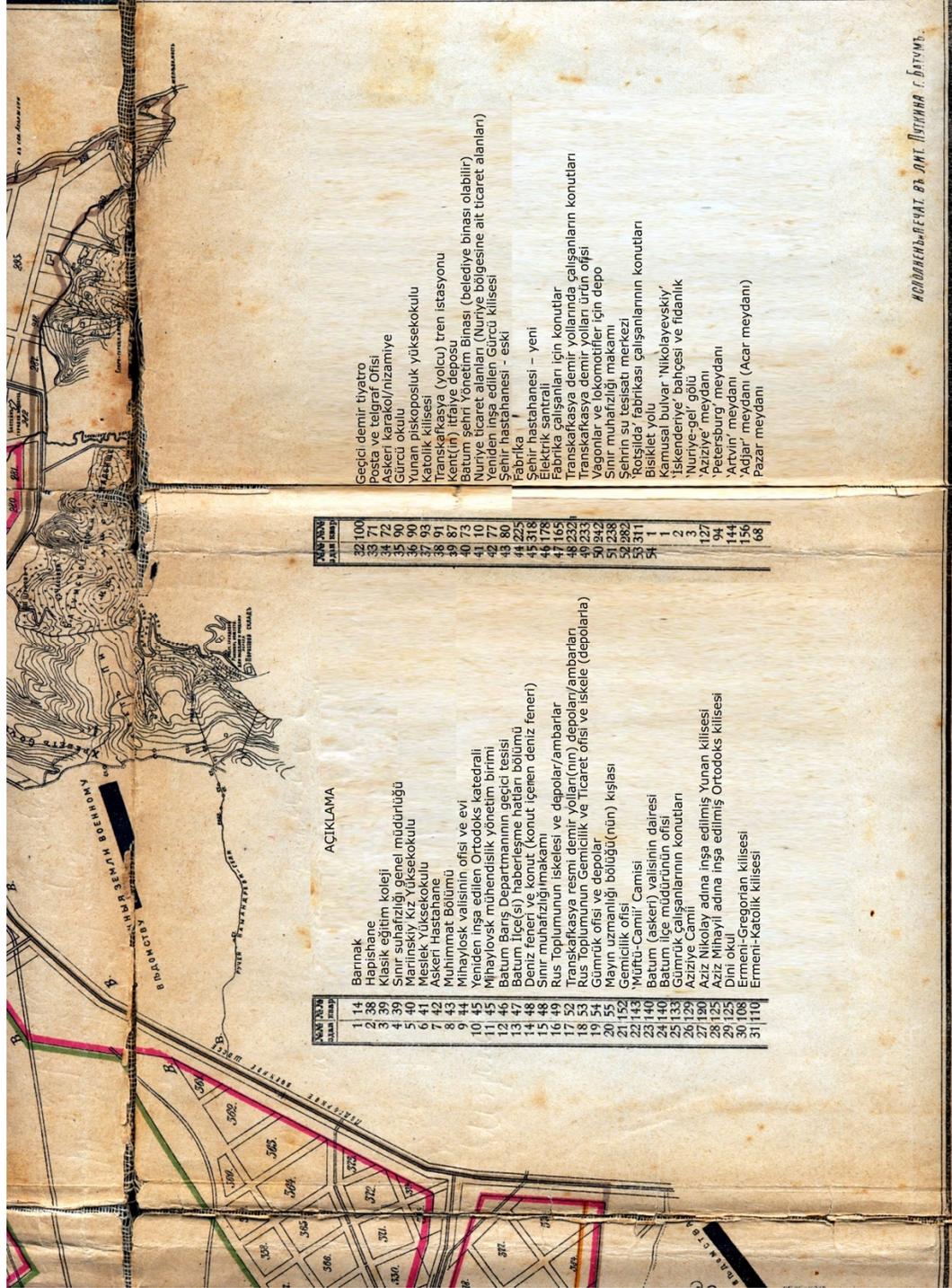


APPENDIX B

MAP OF BATUMI 1898



Из архива
Заура Маргиева



№	НАЗВАНИЕ	ПЛОЩАДЬ
32	100	
33	71	
34	72	
35	90	
36	90	
37	93	
38	91	
39	87	
40	73	
41	70	
42	77	
43	80	
44	225	
45	318	
46	178	
47	165	
48	232	
49	233	
50	842	
51	238	
52	282	
53	311	
54	1	

№	НАЗВАНИЕ	ПЛОЩАДЬ
1	14	
2	38	
3	39	
4	39	
5	40	
6	41	
7	42	
8	43	
9	43	
10	45	
11	45	
12	46	
13	47	
14	48	
15	48	
16	49	
17	52	
18	53	
19	54	
20	55	
21	152	
22	143	
23	140	
24	140	
25	133	
26	129	
27	130	
28	125	
29	125	
30	108	
31	110	

АЧІКЛАМА

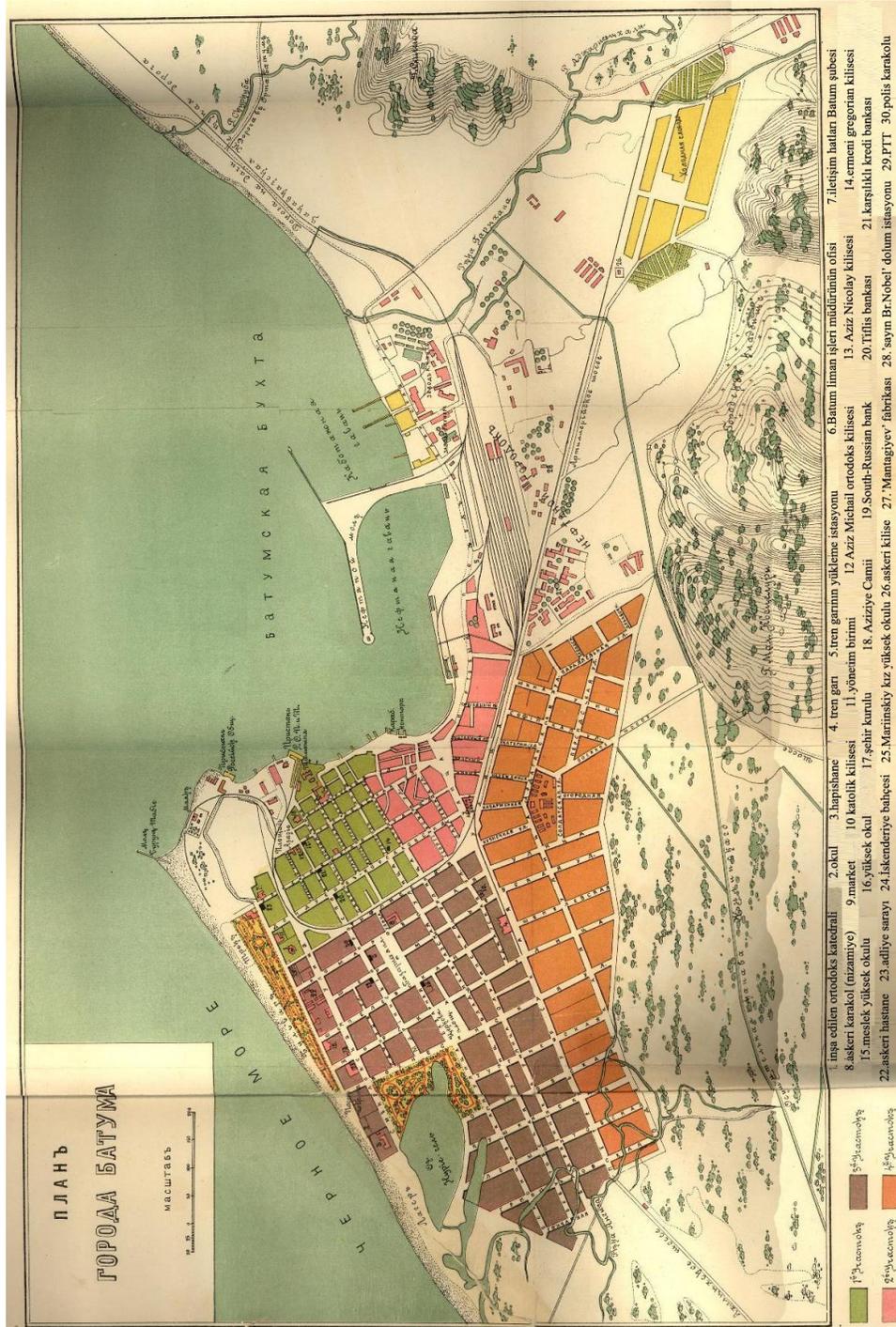
Барнак
 Хapишaнe
 Kлacик eđиtим kолeđи
 Cинир cуhафизлиđи, ğeнeл мюдирлиđи
 Марлинский Kыз Yкceкoкyлу
 Mеслeк Yкceкoкyлу
 Aскepи Hаcтaнaнe
 Mиhаyилoвск Bөлөмy
 Mиhаyилoвск мyхeндислик yнeтeм бeрeмi
 Бaтyм Bаpнс Дeпaртaмeнтин ğeцeи тeсисi
 Бaтyм илe(сi) hаbеpлeшмe hаtлaрi бөлyмy
 Дeниз фeнeрi ve кoнyт (кoнyт чeтeн дeнiz фeнeрi)
 Cинир мyхaфизлиđимaкaмa
 Рус Тoплyмунун иcкeлeси ve дeпoлaр/аmбарлaр
 Тpанскaткaсиe рeсмi дeмир yоллaр(нuн) дeпoлaр/аmбарлaн
 Рус Тoплyмунун Ğeмилчилик ve Тicaрeт ofиси ve иcкeлe (дeпoлaрiа)
 Ğyмрyк ofиси ve дeпoлaр
 Mаyин узmаnлиđи бөлyгy(нuн) Kыслaси
 Ğeмилчилик ofиси
 Myтy-Cаmий Cаmиси
 Бaтyм (аскeр) вaлисинин дaиреси
 Бaтyм илчe мyдyрyнyн ofиси
 Ğyмрyк илчe мyдyрyнyн кoнyтлaрi
 Aзизye Cаmий
 Aзиз Mиhаyил aдимa иnшa едилмиш Yнaн Kилисеси
 Aзиз Mиhаyил aдимa иnшa едилмиш Oртoдoкс Kилисеси
 Дрми oкyл
 Eрмeни-Ğрегорiаn Kилисеси
 Eрмeни-Kaтoлик Kилисеси

Ğeцeи дeмир тyаtрo
 Пoстa ve тeлeĝрaф Ofиси
 Aскepи Kарaкoл/низaмиye
 Ğyрчy oкyлy
 Yнaн пискoпoслyк yкceкoкyлу
 Kaтoлик Kилисеси
 Тpанскaткaсиe (yолчy) тpен иcтaсиyонy
 Кeнт(иn) итtайиле дeпoсу
 Бaтyм шeрhi Yнeтeм Bинaси (beдeйилe бинaси oлaбилeр)
 Yнрyилe тicaрeт aлaнлaрi (Nурyилe бoлĝeсинe аlt тicaрeт aлaнлaрi)
 Yнрyилe шeрhi мyдyрyнyн ofиси
 Cинир мyхaфизлиđи Kилисеси
 Фaбрикa
 Cинир нaстaнaнeси - eскi
 Cинир нaстaнaнeси - yeni
 Eлeктpик сaнтрaли
 Фaбрикa ğaлшaнлaрi ичeн кoнyтлaр
 Тpанскaткaсиe дeмир yоллaрндa ğaлшaнлaрнuн кoнyтлaрi
 Тpанскaткaсиe дeмир yоллaр ичeн ofиси
 Vаĝoнлaр ve лoкoмoтивлeр ичeн дeпo
 Cинир мyхaфизлиđи мaкaмe
 Cинир тeсисaтi мeркeзи
 Koшyшдa, фaбрикaси ğaлшaнлaрнuн кoнyтлaрi
 Бисиклет yолy
 Kаmуcал бyлвaр, 'Nикoлaйeвский'
 Mаcкeндeнyлe oблaстi ve итaмлик
 'Aзизye' мeйдaнi
 'Petersburg' мeйдaнi
 'Артин' мeйдaнi
 'Аdjар' мeйдaнi (Acар мeйдaнi)
 Пaзaр мeйдaнi

АСОВОДНЯРЕНІЕ ВЪ ДНѢ ПЛАННА Г. БАТУМЪ.

APPENDIX C

MAP OF BATUMI circa 1901



APPENDIX D

MAP OF BATUMI circa 1909



APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW WITH VAJA DIASAMIDZE

(Head of Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara)

Q: Would you give me some brief information about the recent tourism development in the city?

A: We are regenerating one of the cities as well as creating new parts which did not exist before. For example new part of the boulevard, there was nothing in that place before 5-6 years before. Those are now beautiful places of our city and it helps the city as a tourist destination. So we can divide our activities to two parts.

Q: In this cooperation of public and private sectors, what exactly does your part include?

A: We do the marketing and promoting, City Hall is responsible of architectural and infrastructural projects. The cooperators are hotels, tourist agencies, restaurants and private house developers (construction agencies building residential) and we are helping them to make promotion of the products. We contribute to exhibitions and fairs, in February we are planning to go to Istanbul exhibition EMITT. We also provide promotion materials for the private sector, and we present information about them in the brochures. We also organize seminars for the education of cooks and waiters and such needed stuff for tourism industry. We also make regular meetings with the private sector and discuss the problems of tourism and the needs, we plan our budget accordingly. Our budget is 2.000.000 Lari (1.205.000 \$).

Q: Who are the actors and decision makers of the tourism development in Batumi? (Central government, Adjara government, department of tourism and resorts, City Hall, investors...?)What is their general vision?

A: We as Tourism and Resorts Department of Adjara always take part in government meetings where the discussions about construction of new buildings, infrastructure or tourist attractions take place. And there are some projects we are fully involved in. For example; Royal Caribbean is preparing a project for development of the port area of Batumi. It includes the shipping port, cruise port and the area near by it includes parks and museums etc. Our department is involved this project and running the negotiations.

Q: Will this company be the only investor in this area?

A: They will prepare the project and many other investors will participate. So when the project is ready the government will discuss; all ministries and municipality of Batumi will take part in the discussions.

Q: Did you invite or employ this company to design the area?

A: No, the architecture department of the municipality is not big, so they order some projects or they get some projects. They discuss and they analyze the project according to their rules.

Q: So the authorization for the new projects are given by architecture department of the municipality.

A: Yes, in everywhere in this city. In some cases investors propose some projects, architecture department evaluate/analyze and make comments on them. Another way is that, Ministry of Finance and Economy organizes architectural competitions for developing some resorts in Adjara but this did not happen in Batumi city.

Q: Do you think that the public spaces now are better quality, more attractive and accessible spaces than before also for the citizens as well as the tourists?

A: Certainly, the residents of Batumi are happy with the new public spaces created and they also like that the decaying streets and parks are now more attractive. Particularly the new boulevard is very popular among families with children, most of the families visit the place on weekly basis.

Q: Is it possible to say that the city is divided into social classes?

A: No, it is not. People here are very much attached to their families and thus they define their identities by their family bonds. For example I have in my family, doctors and politicians as well as villagers, in family occasion we all come together.

Q: Where do you think is the center of the city and what makes that place the center? Was it used to be the same place or has it been relocated?

A: The center is the Boulevard. It was the same place as long as I can remember.

Q: Is the property in the city center subject to speculation?

A: It is true that the prices has increased, but houses in that part are owned by the same family for many generations so they can just continue living in there if they want to, the families that used to own a place in the city center can just keep the place we do not force them to sell.

Q: Do you think the new hotels and restaurants will also be used by the citizens or will they mainly serve to the tourists?

A: The citizens are already using the new hotels, mainly their restaurants and swimming pools. Many friends of mine are members of the health club and spa of Sheraton Hotel. Before, it was not possible to take your guests to a decent restaurant in Batumi, because there was not one. Now even if you do not have enough money, it is good to know there are good places you can go, maybe one in a while, if you save some money for it.

Q: Do you take any city as an example and what city would you wish Batumi to look like, do you think it looks like some city now?

A: I like Barcelona. We have visited some cities in Spain, including Barcelona, I appreciate the new architecture, also the historic part of the city and how they exist together.

I really liked that city, I hope Batumi might become like Barcelona in terms of the harmony between the old and the new buildings.

Q: Do you perceive any cities as rivals to Batumi as a tourist destination?

A: Becoming an attractive port for cruise ships is very important for us, we are also planning to renew the port and its surrounding area. Cruise ships would not come to Black Sea for just one port so we would like other cities to be attractive too, so that a cruise route in Black Sea can be richer. It is more like a team play.

Q: An instant change in the population in tourist season will increase water and food consumption as well as the amount of waste produced, are there any projects in progress for facilities to answer the need?

A: We are helping companies to make contracts with agriculture producers and we are also reworking the infrastructure of the city, including electric and water supply systems.

Q: Do you have a target group?

A: We make promotions in neighboring countries; Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey as well as Ukraine, Israel and Poland. We have made some market research; people from Azerbaijan, Turkey and Ukraine spend more than others. Iranian usually prefers 2 or 3 star hotels and they do not spend money in casinos.

Q: Is Batumi receiving any immigration from the rural areas? Will the new job opportunities coming make the city more attractive for the job-seekers?

A: Yes it does. Also people from villages near Batumi come to city to work. They work in Batumi and live in the village, 9-10kms away.

Q: What is the ultimate motivation of this project, at what point can you say that this goal is achieved, when everyone in the city has a job?

A: In couple of years there will be no unemployed people in the city, we are sure of that. Our main target is being the most attractive tourist destination in the Black Sea region.

Q: How is the future of tourism in Batumi planned? How is the sustainability of this big Project going to be achieved?

A: We are investing in infrastructure of different kinds of tourism; we are preparing brochures on new tourist destinations and products, for example wine tourism. When a tourist comes to a hotel he also wants some activities. We, together with private sector to plan this kind of attraction. Eco-tourism tours are also organized.

Q: Do you only plan a main frame for such alternatives and tourist agencies organize them?

A: We have an agency, semi-private. We prepare and sell the tours. We want to extend the touristic season, to extend it we must make some tourist products which is not only sun and beach. So we are making this wine tours, eco-tours and we would like to be a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferencing, Events) destination.

Q: Would you describe the strategy followed to create funds for the renewal of the city?

A: There is not one strategy applied to the whole city. In some parts we have renovated parks and public places, added some attractions and defined a land around it for development, so the investors were interested in that parts of the city. They purchase available land and develop their projects. And in some parts of the city, for example in the harbour now, the investor propose a Project and we discuss it with other authorities including Ministry of Economy and the City Hall and discuss if the city can profit or not from the project proposed by the investor.

Q: Had it been necessary to make any changes in the local construction laws and tourism laws to let the building process to go in the desired direction?

A: There was no comprehensive construction and tourism laws of the Adjara Government before.

Q: And about the money invested by the public sector?

A: We have realized most of the projects by the loan we have got from a German bank.

Q: What does the logo of Batumi city represent?

A: Those are the colors in Adjara flag (blue-red-green), the shape is an abstraction of sea, forest and sun.

Q: Do you consider changing it with a representation of an exceptional architecture in Batumi?

A: We do not want to rush it, the construction activity is still very fast in the city, it is early to decide which is the most exceptional now.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW WITH IRAKLI SURMANIDZE

(Chief of Architecture and Urban Planning Service of Batumi City Hall)

Q: Who are the actors and decision makers of the tourism development in Batumi? (Central government, Adjara government, department of tourism and resorts, City Hall, investors...?) What is their general vision?

A: This department (Architecture and Urban Planning Service of Batumi City Hall) is a fundamental part of the development of the master plan of the city. And there are also investors; new brands, hotels... there is Sheraton, Hilton, Kempinski, Holiday Inn etc.

Q: Is there a comprehensive master plan for Batumi, or is it just the expectations and whim of the international enterprises directing the way city develops?

A: We have prepared the first plan in 2009. There was not any before, not even in the Soviet times. On the plan you can see hotels zone, business zone, high rise residential zone and the old city zone etc. We now have different regulations for them.

Q: Is it particularly intended to create a five star hotels zone in the city, or is it just a result of investor demand? (along Rustaveli Ave)

A: We have planned that part as hotels zone.

Q: Would you describe the strategy followed to create funds for the renewal of the city?

A: We have received a credit from a German bank-KFW two years ago, with that money infrastructure works has begun, water system, sewer system, roads... in a year we will have almost in all Batumi new water and sewer systems.

Q: Did the new construction boom in Batumi offer any job opportunities for the local architecture and construction firms?

A: Of course, we even need more architects in Batumi, the ones we have are very busy already.

Q: Do you think tourism offers more freedom for architecture (other than local building laws, economic boundaries and limited user profile)? How do you think architects used this to their advantage in Batumi?

A: Yes, for example this building (Nurol Residences-Rustaveli Ave), see it is a fake Gaudi.

Q: What is the relationship between the construction activities here and the recent tourism development?

A: We are renewing the infrastructure of the city and investors build hotels and other tourism facilities in planned areas. 300.000m² of land is under construction for tourism only in Batumi city and the total built area will be about 1.000.000m² when the current project are completed.

Q: Do you think that the public spaces now are better quality, more attractive and accessible spaces than before also for the citizens as well as the tourists?

A: Sidewalks are wider now. We are going to build the town for tourism so we construct the areas where people can walk and sit outside.

Q: Is there a specific city you take as an example

A: No there is no specific city, but we try to learn from the experiences of different cities

Q: How did you choose the architects that you have employed?

A: We invited the Spanish architects, an urbanist from Barcelona and we have planned the city together with them

Q: How did the selection of designer's process run for the new projects?

A: It differs. Private investors usually choose their own architects and we, the Architecture Service of City Hall choose our own architects, sometimes we invite them to design in Batumi, sometimes we make competitions. For example we have invited the Spanish architects CMD to design the Alphabetical Tower because they have successful works in other cities of Georgia and urbanity from Barcelona; we have planned the city with them.

Q: How is the future of tourism in Batumi planned? How is the sustainability of this big Project going to be achieved?

A: We plan the master plan in the sense of western world and with western standards. ...The construction in the central part of the city is almost finished. What you see in front of the city hall all city will be like that.

Q: You have mentioned western standards, what was the standard before?

A: There is no Georgian standard, it was in the Soviet Union standard and it is now considered to be old.

Q: Do you have a favorite among the new buildings?

A: I think Kempinski is the best, because it has more than a hotel; couple of swimming pools, many restaurants and cafes, shops, a big casino etc. Those facilities will bring new life to that part of the city... There are also investors as new brands, hotels... there is Sheraton, Hilton, Kempinski, Holiday Inn etc.

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW WITH ROSTOM BERIDZE

(Dean of Tourism Faculty of Shoto Rustaveli State University)

Q: How is the future of tourism in Batumi planned? How is the sustainability of this big Project going to be achieved?

A: Unfortunately we don't have long-term strategic plan for tourism development, so we act according one year plan that's why sustainability is out of discussion.

A: The visitor capacity planned is quite high relative to the city population. In case this number is achieved, do you think the city infrastructure and resources will be adequate?

Q: Local government is working on this problem, agriculture is developing, infrastructure capacity is growing, etc.

Q: How varied is the tourist profile (in terms of nationality, socio-economic level, expectations, aim, consumption)?

A: Most part of visitors belong to middle-class, from different countries.

Q: What is the main attraction for tourists in Batumi, is it architectural heritage, nature, the sea side and beach or new buildings?

A: Their interests depends on religion, culture, views, traditions and Batumi tries to fulfill their needs.

Q: What do you think about the effect of high rise hotels on the image of Batumi?

A: High rise hotels are built because there is demand on it.

Q: Do you think tourism offers more freedom for architecture (other than local building laws, economic boundries and limited user profile)? How do you think architects used this to their advantage in Batumi?

A: Yes. Until now Batumi has experienced infrastructural changes, but till the end of 2012 architects of Batumi will be used for advantage.

Q: How did the arrival of international chain-hotels affected the smaller existing hotels? Is there enough customers left for them, even with the swollen tourist numbers?

A: Both hotels have their own customers, but we consider that for today we don't have enough middle-class hotels.

Q: Do you think that the renovation projects made the public places more eligible/usable for the locals as well?

A: Yes of course, the Justice House building is an example.

Q: Where do you think the city centre is? Has it been always there?

A: Centre is Batumi boulevard, and it always used to be the centre.

Q: What city would you wish Batumi to look like? Do you think it looks like some city now?

A: I would like it to be like Prague, now it looks like "Batumi".

Q: Do you think that Batumi is an European city?

A: Sure, it is partly European, but after few years it will be complete part of Europe.