

What Traveling Urban Types Do: Postcolonial Modernization in Two Globalizing Cities

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We have to behave more civilized than before. Hanoi is developing and I think this kind of shopping mall should be widely built²

It makes me modern to live here³

Urban forms have politics. Norms are, as we know, inscribed in forms (Rabinow 1989). However, urban forms not only reflect, but also enact, power relations. They do so through their capacity to shape and modify social practices. In other words, urban forms are urban pedagogies: they ‘teach’ their users forms of living. This was particularly obvious in the case of colonial cities when ‘travelling urban types’⁴ were imported from elsewhere, leading city users ‘from tradition to modernity’. This process has been now well-documented (Myers 2003, Hosagrahar 2005, Harris 2008, Guggenheim and Söderström 2010). In this chapter, I would like to push this line of argument further in two ways. First, by looking at modernization in contemporary postcolonial cities; and, second, by looking at travelling urban types beyond pedagogy. In the context of this book, this chapter thus critically analyzes a quite specific form of mobility: the role of imported urban types in cities of the Global South.

Drawing on science studies and governmentality literature, I argue that unpacking and analyzing urban pedagogies of modernization is central for understanding how cities globalize. These mundane transformations of cities bring globalization from a vaporous ‘up-there’ made of intangible capital flows and political ideologies, to a series of ‘in-heres’ in the shape of urban and architectural types or forms. More specifically, I look at the discipline these traveling types impose and at the resistance, domestication or subversion strategies developed by their users. However – and this is rarely studied in the literature – the power of urban forms resides not only in their capacity to discipline their users, but also in the fact that they enable them to practice the city differently and to position themselves in society by experiencing and expressing in words or deeds new senses of themselves. Therefore, the main claim of my contribution is that a critical understanding of the mobility of urban types should consider, on the one hand, how they enact and convey pedagogies and, on the other, how they provide new ‘affordances’, i.e. new possibilities of action.

¹ This chapter is based on a research project directed by the author. It was conducted together with two teams of researchers coordinated by Blaise Dupuis. In Hanoi, the team was led by Stephanie Geertman, in Ouagadougou by Pierrick Leu. The research was financed by a Swiss National Science Foundation grant ‘Mondialisation des formes urbaines à Hanoi et Ouagadougou.

² Interview with a man aged around 40 in a shopping mall, Hanoi 26.09.2009

³ Interview with a man aged around 60 in a new housing area, Hanoi 26.09.2009

⁴ I define ‘urban types’ as a larger category than ‘building types’. Building types, such as the bank or the railway station, are generic spatial patterns of buildings elaborated to host specific activities (such as taking the train). Urban types encompass not only buildings but also generic spatial patterns of infrastructures (like the road interchange) or developments of specific urban areas (like waterfronts). Urban forms, specific actualizations of urban types (like the shopping mall around your corner), very rarely literally ‘travel’ or can be said to be ‘mobile’, but urban types do. For instance, we can see how shopping malls as a type of building have been introduced in certain areas where they did not exist before. For more elaborate discussions on these different points, see Guggenheim and Söderström (2010).

These arguments stem from empirical work done in globalizing cities rather than from theoretical considerations. Doing fieldwork on newly-created places in the cities of Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Palermo (Italy) and Hanoi (Vietnam), in the context of a larger project on comparative urban globalization (Söderström forthcoming), we realized how insufficient a disciplining/educative perspective on the form/society relation was. Clearly, our interviewees were not only 'configured' by or resistant to the 'educational program' of these spaces: they also used them, sometimes quite playfully, to explore new ways of being in society. To make this point, I draw on some of this material and especially look at the uses of two types of infrastructure that were recently imported in two of these cities: road interchanges in Ouagadougou; and shopping malls in Hanoi.

There is an important literature on how homes (Blunt 2005, Tolia-Kelly 2004) and housing (Flint 2003, Jacobs and Cairns 2008) participate in shaping identities and communities. Jacobs and Cairns in particular have convincingly shown how "modernist highrise housing came to be one of the key sites through which the post-independence Singapore subject was made and made themselves" (Jacobs and Cairns 2008: 591). However, little work has been done on how other non-residential urban forms, such as the ones I look at here, play similar (or different) roles (but see Merriman 2004, Fariás and Bender 2010, Rentetzi 2008). Even less frequent are urban studies that have looked at urban forms as affordances. Drawing on and extending the literature regarding the educative function of built forms and their affordances, I therefore, in the first and conceptual part of this contribution, propose ways of analyzing the relations between urban forms and subjects in everyday situations. Subjects and urban forms are always embedded in structured contexts. The process and discourse on modernity and modernization is one central aspect of this context, especially in the cities of the South I consider in this chapter. In the narrative of their promoters (developers, state officials, designers), modernization is the 'promise' accompanying the introduction of new urban types. This narrative is also often present in users' discourse regarding urban change in those cities. I will therefore first clarify what I mean by modernity and modernization. I maintain that modernization is a form of morality and power that manifests itself in discourse, practices and material forms. I also reflect on the shifting geographies of modernity: how the reference of what it is to be modern is related to different regions and places. I then try to specify the role of travelling urban types in everyday use as both pedagogical and enabling. Shifting from this conceptual part to fieldwork, in the second part of this chapter, I look at the importation of traffic infrastructures and shopping malls in the cities of Hanoi, in Vietnam, and Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. I conclude on the necessity to further develop a critical cultural analysis of the everyday consequences of the mobility of urban types.

Modernization as morality and power

Modernity is "a normative attitude constructed in the extreme inequities of colonialism" (Hosagrahar 2005, 1). In other words, historically speaking, the very idea of modernity and modernization has been an instrument of power, legitimizing change and domination.⁵ However, Euro-American thought was for long blind to the moral content of European modernity, developing the idea that social change all over the world converges towards a similar rationality, and projecting Western cognitive categories on other societies and other periods in history (Taylor, 1995). Taylor (1995: 28) argues that we need to escape from this 'ethnocentric prison' in order to understand "the full gamut of alternative modernities in the making in different parts of the world". This call has been heard.

In recent years, a series of important contributions have deconstructed classic theories of modernity, unpacked the moral power of the idea of the modern, and explored a series of alternative processes of modernization.⁶ Chakrabarty (2000) in particular has been influential in insisting on the temporal imagination underlying the European idea of modernity. Historicism – seeing phenomena as entities maintaining their unity and gaining their complete identity through time – is, he argues, central to European modernity and should be superseded

⁵ The first uses of the term 'modern' as referring to a feature of the current period appear with the constitution of the colonial world system in the 16th century (King 2004: 66).

⁶ The idea of multiple modernities has been suggested to contest two central tenets of classical theories of modernization: the equation between modernity and the West; and the assumption that modernization leads to the convergence of societies undergoing it (Eisenstadt 2000) (for a critique of the concept of multiple modernities, see Schmidt (2006)). Arjun Appadurai has also proposed a broader conception of modernity considering the complexities of contemporary globalization (Appadurai 1996). Similarly, Shalini Randeria, has investigated the 'entangled modernities' in the postcolonial situations encountered in a country like India (Randeria 2006, Randeria 2007). See also Therborn (2003).

because it does not allow us to see non-European societies as varieties of modernity instead of societies lagging behind, hampered by a series of archaisms (Chakrabarty 2000, Epilogue).

However, the idea of modernity is also shaped by a geographical imagination. If, following Chakrabarty's invitation, we need to step out of a teleological vision of social change through time, we also need to recognize the spatial variety and complexity of modernity. Doing this implies not only looking at how modernity is conceived differently in different regions or locales, but also investigating shifts in modernity's reference points, which leads us to see how the Euro-American world should not only be provincialized intellectually speaking but *is* actually provincializing in a very concrete geographical sense. In many parts of Asia and Africa, modernity is no longer associated with Europe or North America but with Asia or the Middle East. In recent years, postcolonial urban studies have, as we will now see, contributed to further re-conceptualize modernity precisely in that direction.

Postcolonial urban modernization

Different contributions within postcolonial urban studies have shown that a simple diffusionist conception of the history of urban modernity is historically inconsistent. First, because a series of features generally considered as characteristic of European modernity, like multiculturalism, first appeared in cities of the global South like Calcutta or Jakarta and not in the North (King 2004: 74). Second, because features of urban modernity theorized in the North, such as the modern movement in architecture, did not simply follow a North-South route (Robinson 2006: 74). Thirdly, because certain colonial cities have been laboratories for European modernity and in that sense 'ahead' of cities in Europe instead of 'behind' (Rabinow 1989, Wright 1991, Bishop, Phillips and Yeo 2003). Fourthly and finally, because when modernity was not 'home-grown' in cities of the South, it was more than simply imported and copied: it was adapted and indigenized (Nasr and Volait 2003, Hosagrahar 2005).

So in brief, urban modernity from the 19th century onwards was not simply rolled out from cities in the North to cities in the South. It was multi-polar and relationally constructed. Today, urban modernity has become even more multi-polar because of the diversification of geographical references to what modernity is. Emergent economies, especially in Asia, have not only transformed global geopolitics and geoeconomics, they have also imposed new coordinates for where the avant-garde of modernity is situated. In cities of the South, modernity is increasingly seen as being located in non-Euro-American cities. If, as Robinson (2006) argues, modernity has for long been another word for 'the West' (and still is for most people in the West), it is increasingly less so in cities of the South. This is true, for instance, of lifestyles in a city like Hanoi, where young people tend to be primarily influenced by trends from South Korea (Geertman 2007). It is also true for urban policies. Kuala Lumpur's development strategy, for instance, has become a model for other Asian cities, such as Hyderabad in the 1990s (Bunnell and Das 2010).⁷

The concepts of urban modernity and modernization have thus been thoroughly revisited by recent postcolonial approaches. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss whether this has deprived modernization theory of its value as a general theory of social change altogether. I am more interested here in the persistent performative effects of these concepts outside academic debates: how they work as emic categories in the discourses and actions of developers, state officials or city users. Classical ideas of modernity and modernization indeed continue to shape their narratives and justify their actions. These ideas continue to frame urban change, especially in globalizing cities. Tools such as the City Development Strategies promoted by UN-Habitat and the World Bank since 1998 are for instance accompanied by a narrative assuming that "modern, gleaming skyscraper-filled cities, with adequate networked infrastructures in place to support them is the only and ineluctable way into the urban future" (Pieterse 2008: 108). In order to understand how modernization narratives are articulated with urban forms, it is useful to turn to governmentality studies.

⁷ These transformations in the geography of urban modernity have been encouraged by a series of political initiatives. In recent years, international organizations, such as the World Bank, or networks of local governments, such as United Cities and Local Governments, have stimulated increasing levels of South-South exchange regarding urban development strategies. Created in 2004, the United Cities and Local Governments' network has as one of its main goals the development of exchanges among its over 1000 member cities situated in 95 countries. In 2008, the World Bank Institute created the South-South Experience Exchange Facility, which has a broad development agenda.

Pedagogies and affordances in modernized urban forms

Foucauldian inspired governmentality approaches have informed a range of studies of the relations between built forms and society (Rabinow 1989, Osborne and Rose 1999, Osborne and Rose 2004). Geographers in particular have looked at asylums (Philo 1989), the workhouse system (Driver 1993), or the city as a whole (Legg 2006)⁸ as tools for governing conduct. In these historical studies, built form is seen as regulating behavior mainly within punitive and disciplining forms of government. Drawing on the work of Rose, some recent analyses have also begun to look at contemporary (Flint 2003) and postcolonial urban situations (Jacobs and Cairns 2008) showing in particular how housing consumption is framed by moral state discourses, or ‘ethopower’ (Osborne and Rose 1999), which translates into interiorized ‘grammars of living’ (Flint 2003: 614). State institutions and officials teach city dwellers how to behave like virtuous and responsible citizens through an involvement of tenants in the management of their housing. In other words, urban forms are endowed with a pedagogic (rather than a disciplining) role in a process of social modernization.⁹ In Hanoi and Ouagadougou this pedagogy acquires, as we will see, a specific meaning as the shopping malls and road interchanges are new types of built form and correspond to norms of conduct unknown to most of their inhabitants.

As a response to such ethopower, users are generally considered to be capable of developing a counter-power defined as resistance or subversion. While I do not wish to deny the importance of actions opposing the changes brought by new urban forms, or ‘action against’, I think we should pay more attention to ‘action with’, in other words to actions that use new built forms as opportunities. ‘Affordance’ is the concept that captures best this role of built forms. For the psychologist James Gibson (1979), who theorized the term, ecological reality, as opposed to physical reality, is made of meaningful things providing humans (and other animals) with affordances or possibilities to perform an action. An obstacle on a path affords a possible action of collision, for instance (Gibson 1979: 36). This simple idea opens up fruitful ways of looking into the materiality/society nexus. However, few authors in urban studies have looked at this aspect of the power of built form.¹⁰ I thus look at the shopping malls and road infrastructures of Hanoi and Ouagadougou in this light to show how they offer possibilities for forms of action that did not exist before, how they are resources for new forms of urban living and ‘arts of being global’ (Roy and Ong 2011).

Methodologically, my interpretation is indebted to actor-network theory and especially ‘script analysis’ as developed in the study of innovations in industrial design (Akrich 1992). In script analysis, technology is considered to be the materialization of a program of action that prescribes certain types of uses. Fruitful for urban studies is the principle of following a script from its conception, to its inscription in artifacts, and finally to its adoption or rejection by its users (Söderström, 1997). These perspectives on the technology-society nexus can be extended to understand how buildings and other categories of urban forms (public spaces for instance) shape human action. Here I will not systematically follow how these scripts have been elaborated, turned into material form and received by users, but rather more loosely conceive of traveling urban types as programs of action.

In brief then, my analysis draws on postcolonial urban studies, governmentality studies and actor-network theory to study a series of recent urban interventions in the cities of Ouagadougou and Hanoi.

For most of the 20th century, both cities were on the margins of the world economic and political system until they reestablished more intense international exchanges two decades ago.¹¹ With such a common history of closure and reconnection to global flows of capital, people, goods and knowledge, they constitute interesting laboratories to study processes of modernization mediated by urban artifacts. In the next sections I look at one

⁸ See Huxley (2007) for a general assessment of governmentality studies in geography.

⁹ Two recent papers have explicitly looked at urbanism as pedagogy: Simpson (2011) interprets Macao as a space where mainland Chinese learn to become neo-liberal subjects and Berney (2011) looks at the role of public space policy in Bogota in attempts of the state to reform civil society.

¹⁰ Among them, Borden shows how skateboarders use affordances of the urban environment, like sidewalks for sliding, that are not taken advantage of by other city users, in a way that “makes us rethink architecture’s manifold possibilities” (Borden 2001: 1). In another context, McFarlane shows how Mumbai slum dwellers use what they have at hand to improvise sanitation facilities (McFarlane 2011: 40).

¹¹ In 1992, with the reform of the Vietnamese constitution, and two years later, with the end of the US embargo, Hanoi’s economic development and international relations began to take off. Since economic reform and political decentralization in Burkina Faso in the early 1990’s, Ouagadougou has developed a dense web of international collaborations (Söderström et al. 2012).

specific type of built form in each city, which is in each case representative of the important recent physical and social changes in these cities. I describe how they bring both new norms and new opportunities to urban life. In the case of Ouagadougou, I focus on traffic pedagogies, while in the Hanoi case I focus on the affordances and pedagogies related to shopping malls.

Traffic pedagogies in Ouagadougou

Economic development means access to new forms of mobility: cities like Ouagadougou and Hanoi have seen a spectacular increase of motorized transport since 1990.¹² In Ouagadougou, the arrival of cheap Chinese motorcycles in the early 2000s has led to a significant increase of motorcycle traffic. In both cities, the obvious correlates of increased mobility are air pollution and traffic congestion. Other less obvious changes appear when one looks at the ‘scripts’ embedded in traffic infrastructures, and at the ways in which they are domesticated by their users. This is particularly visible in the case of road interchanges in Ouagadougou.

Ouagadougou is the capital of Burkina Faso, a former French colony (until 1960).¹³ During the socialist regime of Thomas Sankara (1983 and 1987), the capital became a central site for the government’s revolutionary project which included the nationalization of land property and a struggle against traditional chiefdoms. The head of state is since the coup against Sankara in 1987 his former ally Blaise Compaoré. First elected in 1995, Simon Compaoré¹⁴ is to this date the (very active) mayor of Ouagadougou, a city counting 1.9M inhabitants in 2011. Both the municipality and central government intervene in the planning of the capital, which doesn’t go without tension (Söderström et al. 2012). In June 2008, the Southern road interchange was inaugurated with great solemnity. It was the first of a series of interchanges planned by the state. Two other interchanges in the East and West were finished in 2010. The state’s aim with this important and costly infrastructure is to improve traffic conditions, to anticipate future developments of the city, and to improve its image.¹⁵ The system of interchanges was conceived by the Ministry of Infrastructures¹⁶ on the basis of a study done by a Canadian agency.¹⁷ However, the President himself has been involved in the conception of the interchanges, which are classified as ‘presidential infrastructures’.¹⁸ The development of the interchanges is also part of a regional competition between national capitals.¹⁹ Bamako, for instance, started constructing road interchanges in the early 2000s, and has been ahead of Ouagadougou in that respect, whereas Niamey lags behind. Funding for the interchanges in Ouagadougou comes from a series of donor countries: Taiwan for the Eastern interchange, Japan for the Western one, and Libya for the Southern one.²⁰ The southern interchange is of particular interest, as it is used by the state as an instrument of functional and symbolic change of the city (Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Symbolically, it is part of a governmental narrative of modernization. The President himself has intervened to make sure that the southern interchange would be the first to be completed. This interchange connects the new presidential palace to the south, located in the elite neighborhood of Ouaga 2000, to the circular boulevard around the city. The Memorial to the Heroes of the Nation is situated halfway along that axis, between the palace and the interchange (Figure 2). The monument was erected after three years of political unrest following the murder of the journalist Norbert Zongo in 1998.²¹ In an effort to improve his image, Blaise Compaoré decided in

¹² During the past 15 years alone, Hanoi has gone through two transitions in traffic. The first transition was from bicycles to motorcycles, the second is from motorcycles to cars. In 1990, over 80% of trips were made by bicycle. Fifteen years later, in 2005, nearly 65% of daily journeys were made on motorbikes. The constant increase in motorcycle ownership is now paralleled by a growing number of cars. In 2005, only 2% of households in Hanoi owned cars, but between 2004 and 2007, new vehicle registrations in Hanoi increased at a two-digit rate, reaching 20% over the last two years. Only ten years ago, the city still had no traffic lights (Söderström et al. 2010).

¹³ The country ranked 161st out of 169 on UN’s 2010 Human Development Index. The same year, 40% of Burkina’s urban population lived in Ouagadougou. The city’s average demographic growth rate was 4.7% per year between 2000 and 2010.

¹⁴ Despite the name, he is not a parent of the President of State.

¹⁵ Interview with the responsible of the Presidential infrastructures in Burkina Faso, 9.2. 2010.

¹⁶ *Ministère des Infrastructures et du Désenclavement*.

¹⁷ Interview, municipal official, 1.12.09.

¹⁸ Interview, state official, 9.2.2010.

¹⁹ In particular with neighboring Mali.

²⁰ Eventually, Libya covered only part of the costs (1 billion CFA instead of 12). Still, the avenue Southbound has been baptised “Boulevard Mouammar Kadhafi” as an acknowledgement of Libya’s contribution to the infrastructure.

²¹ Norbert Zongo was the director of the news magazine *L’Indépendant* and in 1989 one of the founding members of the Burkinabè movement for human rights. He was assassinated while investigating the mysterious murder of the driver of the President’s brother: Francois Compaoré. Zongo’s death triggered a strong emotional reaction in Burkina Faso and was followed by police repression of protests throughout the country.

2001 to erect two monuments – one for the Martyrs and the other for the Heroes of the Nation – as acts of contrition. The Memorial for the Heroes of the Nation was built in two phases: the first between 2007 and 2009, and the second between 2010 and 2012. It is 47 meters high and supported by four pillars representing the four periods of the country's history since the pre-colonial period.

The axis leading from the presidential palace through the memorial to the city, of which the interchange is an important part, can therefore be interpreted as symbolizing an attempt to establish a new type of relation between the head of state and the country's population in a context of political turmoil.²² This segment of road infrastructure represents the first (and for the moment, only) monumental piece of urban planning in the city since independence. Such monumental perspectives find their origins in Rome during the Baroque period when avenues were created to valorize its main churches. Considering the continuous influence of the former colonial metropole, it is likely that this axis in the south of Ouagadougou was inspired by the *Champs Elysées*.²³ This piece of urban planning can therefore be seen as a piece of European modernity, that has been 'indigenized' as the monument for the heroes in Ouagadougou is (of course) dedicated to figures of Burkinabè history and its architectural language uses emblematic local forms such as the calabash.²⁴

Insert Figure 2 about here

In Burkina Faso, this axis, inspired by prestigious European capitals, is used as a manifesto of a nationalist modernization process. The interchange in particular, has become one of the main icons of Ouagadougou, standing as a synecdoche of the city. It is present on numerous official documents: governmental publications and websites, touristic brochures and in the opening images of the news program of the national television network.²⁵ These urban forms are more than symbolic devices though. They change the ways in which cities are practiced.

Functionally, the southern interchange facilitates access of people and goods to the city center. With the interchange, access for trucks from Ghana to the city's main road station has become easier. It is also part of a road belt around the city allowing for faster traffic and transport because the bumpy and narrow streets of Ouagadougou's internal road network can thereby be avoided. For the central government, the interchange is also a pedagogical tool: through such new infrastructures users should learn how to take part in a more fluid and high-speed form of urban modernity.²⁶ To insure fluidity, only certain types of users are permitted on the interchange system. The plan was initially to ban bicycles and motorcycles from using the interchange, but ultimately only pedestrians and animal powered carts were forbidden. Former roadside users such as fruit vendors, cigarette vendors and *colleurs* (literally 'gluers': mechanics mainly repairing motorcycle tires) have also been evicted from the area, officially for security reasons.

Users are thus filtered and selected. After (rather unsuccessful) attempts to exclude them from the city center, informal activities are now being excluded at its margins. Finally, those allowed to access the interchange are actively taught how to use it: police officers are posted along the road to insure that the infrastructure is 'correctly used' and that no unwelcome activity is taking place. This was necessary since drivers often have no reading skills. In addition, a two-minute instructional video was shown on the national TV channels to explain how to use this complex new infrastructure²⁷. Interviews with users showed that accepting the new rules was not easy. Some tried avoiding the interchange by using alternative routes, some avoided using the bridge, some used

²² Interestingly, the Boulevard is a dead end: it terminates at the portal of the President's palace which no ordinary inhabitant of the city dares to approach.

²³ The French Presidential palace is situated close to one end of the Champs Elysées, the other end being the Arc de Triomphe, which celebrates the soldier-heroes of the French nation. After the Arc de Triomphe the axis continues to the North-West (as the Avenue de la Grande Armée) to the circular Boulevard Périphérique.

²⁴ On the concept of indigenized modernity, see Hosagrahar (2005).

²⁵ The news program begins with images of the globe and then zooms in to the country and to the interchange (www.rtb.bf).

²⁶ Traffic lights, another recent technology in Ouagadougou, play a similar role. They are considered as another instrument for the modernization of urban practices. The installation of traffic lights by the Commune at important crossroads is therefore ritualized via an official inauguration ceremony.

²⁷ See www.dailymotion.com/video/x5r6im_spot-echangeur_shortfilms (last accessed July 22, 2011). The video-clip, financed by the Ministry of Infrastructures, aims at facilitating the acceptance of the interchange and raising money for the other interchanges (interview, municipal official, 1.12.2009).

it in the wrong direction, while others did not manage to go where they wanted – at least not during the first months after inauguration.²⁸

Ouagadougou's new southern interchange is thus an operator of the city's modernization as much as it is one of its symbols. It helps to inscribe a form of modernity in daily urban practices as much as in the city's visual landscape. By importing an urban type that previously did not exist in the local urban environment, the state introduced a monumental grandeur' that the city did not possess. It also contributed to speeding up the pace of the city and to educating its inhabitants by separating slow and rapid users and by teaching them how to smoothly move through a 'modern' city.²⁹ The state is thus using urban infrastructures to rationalize the city and configure its users (Woolgar 1991).

Despite occasional accidents, people in Ouagadougou are progressively getting used to these new infrastructures and the forms of mobility they imply. Another transformation regarding street-use during the same years (2008-2011) has been less successful. It shows, as we will now see, that different scripts and different conceptions of urban modernization contained in built forms often compete and sometimes clash.

In 2003, the city's central market, *Rood Woko*, was destroyed by fire. Financed by the French Development Agency and conceived under the guidance of the French planning agency, the *Groupe Huit*, a new central market was rebuilt and reopened in April 2009 (Figure 3). In July of that year, barriers ensuring that the surrounding streets remained for pedestrian use only were destroyed and police surveillance sheds were set on fire by users of the area opposing the new design of the market. They were protesting against the lack of motorized access to the market and against the interdiction against using the streets for commercial purposes. Controversies around the introduction of pedestrian areas are common throughout the world, but usually take place before or shortly after the inauguration. However, in Ouagadougou it has been enduring, with continuous acts of resistance against the new regulation and continuous negotiations between vendors and the municipality. In 2011, the merchants seized the opportunity of a general contestation of the government, to reintroduce traffic and parking in the area. As a result, negotiations now revolve around the introduction of one way streets and speed bumps. In other words, the Municipality has given up the fight for a pedestrian area.

Insert Figure 3 about here

The pedestrian area was initially planned to be much larger, in order as one of the architects of the project puts it "to get people used to walk, even though it is not a city where it is easy to walk" (architect, 5.07.2012). The idea was brought by *Groupe Huit*, but embraced by their local partner who firmly believed it was a good idea:

I am shocked that there is not yet an area in Ouagadougou where one can shop, walk with one's wife and kids holding hands and where there are no obstacles. There are so many obstacles everywhere. I thought, if people taste this pleasure once, other streets would be contaminated by this approach. But I was totally wrong (Ibid.).

This controversy indicates that there was a serious gap between the project's embedded 'program of action' and many of its actual users' expectations. In this case, the importation of a design for a commercial space from France – the market surrounded by a pedestrian belt – was heavily contested. This type of design is representative of a contemporary French conception of urban modernity characterized by a concern for public space and walkability.³⁰ What happened around the central market of Ouagadougou can therefore be read as a clash between this version of urban modernity and another one related to functionalist planning and characterized by a priority on access, consumption and motorized traffic (Figure 4). The latter version has been embraced by users of the city of Ouagadougou who make a living from informal commerce in the streets of the center. As a result, the script contained in the new market area, where a series of non-human (barriers) and human (policemen) were supposed to ensure that motorized traffic was banned, became the target of contestation.

²⁸ Interviews with users conducted between December 2009 and February 2010. At the time of writing, more than two years later, the same observations could still be done.

²⁹ For an analysis along similar lines of airport spaces, see Aaltola (2004).

³⁰ The City of Lyon, Ouagadougou's main partner in urban planning over the past 15 years, has, since the 1980s, been particularly well known for its public space policy.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Globalizing cities in the South are cities where different planning cultures meet, where different scripts and injunctions related to different travelling urban forms clash with each other, or – to put it in other words – where different versions of urban modernization are entangled and played against each other.³¹ However, traveling urban forms also provide users with new types of resources, as we will now see in the case of the importation of another urban type – the shopping mall – in the city of Hanoi.

Staging new social identities in Hanoi's shopping malls

The shopping practices of globalizing cities are transformed by the rise of living standards and the investments of retail firms eager to extend their markets to new yet unexploited areas.³² As a result, supermarkets and shopping malls are built where they formerly did not exist, changing former ways of selling and buying. Like the interchanges in Ouagadougou, these urban types, accompanied by narratives of urban modernization, have a deep impact on everyday life.

A former French colony (like Burkina Faso), Vietnam declared its independence in 1945 and eventually defeated the French in 1954. Capital of a reunified Socialist Republic of Vietnam since 1976, one year after the victory against the US, Hanoi had in 2011 a population of 6.3M. The country's transition to a market economy was initiated in 1986 with the economic reforms known as *Doi Moi* (or 'renovation').³³ The most important impacts of reform in the city of Hanoi have been observed since 2000, after the end of the US embargo (in 1994) and after the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s.³⁴ These changes are to a large extent related to economic globalization and notably to foreign investments stimulated by successive measures of economic liberalization. In 2006 in particular, measures of deregulation led to a dramatic increase in foreign direct investments.³⁵ In the absence of a strong industrial base in the Vietnamese capital, these investments have primarily targeted real estate in Hanoi's central areas. The recent emergence in the city of housing high-rises and shopping malls is a direct expression of these economic changes. Like the interchanges in Ouagadougou, these urban types have been imported and indigenized³⁶ and they are related to discourses and strategies of urban modernization that have had a deep impact on the social life of the city. More easily accessible than private apartments, I will here focus on shopping malls and their scripts that can be seen as both constraining and enabling.

In Hanoi, supermarkets began to appear in the 1990s and shopping malls in the early 2000s.³⁷ Their development is not only due to the initiatives of the retail industry but also to governmental policy as, in 2007, the municipality of Hanoi launched a large project aiming at the replacement of wet markets by shopping centers and malls (Geertman 2010). Predating this policy, Big C and Vincom are among the first shopping malls in the city: the former is a lower-end mall, the latter caters for more affluent consumers. Located at an important crossroad in the rapidly growing south-western part of the city and facing the recently built National Convention Centre, Big C (Figure 5) was built between 2004 and 2005.³⁸ It belongs to Casino, a leading European retailer

³¹ On the idea of entangled modernities, see note 6.

³² Per capita income in Vietnam rose from \$220 in 1994 to \$1,168 in 2010.

³³ Vietnam ranked 113th of 169 countries on UN's 2010 Human Development Index. 18% of the country's urban population lives in Hanoi, Vietnam's second largest city (after Ho-Chi-Minh City). Hanoi's average demographic growth rate 2000-2010 was 2.3% per year.

³⁴ Employment in foreign firms in Hanoi increased by 350% between 2000 and 2007. Remittances from the Vietnamese diaspora, mainly used for consumption by parents and friends in Vietnam, went up in the same proportion during the same period of time.

³⁵ In 2006, the government removed the obligation for foreigners to invest in partnership with Vietnamese companies. As a result, Foreign Direct Investments went up by 300% in Vietnam between 2006 and 2007.

³⁶ Before economic reform, shophouses and wet markets were the traditional spaces for residence and shopping in Hanoi. It should be noted that these forms are also the result of former imports and local adaptations. The Asian shophouse, of which the Vietnamese one is a version, is related to the Dutch presence in the region since the late 16th century.

³⁷ The first shopping mall in Hanoi, Tang Trien Plaza, was built in 2000 in a very central location.

³⁸ Big C is more like a US shopping mall, with a large department store and a series of other smaller outlets around it, whereas Vincom is closer to the Asian model comprising a variety of different shops of approximately equal in size.

with more than 9,500 stores worldwide. Casino began its activity in Vietnam in 1998 and this particular Big C – designed by a Hanoi-based French architectural firm – was the first to be built in Hanoi.

Insert Figure 5 about here

Vincom (Figure 6) is a complex of three high-rise towers. The first two towers were completed in 2005 with investments from a Ukrainian company owned by a Vietnam-born entrepreneur and a large Vietnamese real-estate company. The third tower opened in 2009 and was developed by Vietnamese companies. Centrally located south of the French quarter, this shopping mall offers a large variety of shops and brands as well as cinemas, restaurants and game halls. Big C and Vincom not only represent new forms in the landscape of Vietnam's capital, but are also important mediators in the transformation of Hanoi's urban culture.

Insert Figure 6 about here

In functional terms, going to the mall implies the development of new spatial practices, especially for women. Traditionally, Hanoi women went (many still do) every day to a wet market to buy fresh food. Women shopping at Big C or Vincom buy food once or twice a week. They also tend to mix different activities in one visit to the mall: buying food, clothes, eating out, etc, and make shopping more of a family event by going with their husbands and children instead than on their own, as they did previously. In other words, changes in shopping practices imply more general changes in the spatial and social patterns of urban practices in Hanoi. Malls also change the meaning of 'doing shopping' both for the shop-users and the shop-workers.

For the users we interviewed, the idea of modernity was prominent in how they described the malls and what they do there. Our respondents used qualifications belonging to a common semantic field: the malls are described as 'clean', 'cool' and especially 'modern'. It makes Hanoi, they told us, 'more modern', 'more beautiful', 'more professional' and 'more civilized'. As in other emerging Asian countries, 'being modern and civilized' is a common trope of state rhetoric in Vietnam. It is endlessly repeated in the political posters found in the streets of the capital. This rhetoric is also recurrent in ordinary citizens' ways of talking about urban and social change. In the case of the malls, this modernity discourse frames users' experience of them: "it makes me feel more civilized", "it makes me feel more modern", 'more stylish' were the most frequent replies when we asked why people were going to these two malls.³⁹ They also told us that they come to 'learn' what is modern and 'new'. Seeing lavish shops, new brands (or just 'brands'), observing how others – more accustomed to such places or pretending to be so – go around doing shopping is described as part of a learning process. Shopping malls are, in other words, portrayed by the users as operators of the modernization of selves.

The emergence of this new urban type also has important implications for the other side of the commercial transaction: the shop-workers. Traditionally, shop-workers in Hanoi lived and worked in the same space (and many of them still do). In the shophouses of the historic center, the boundaries between public and private spaces are very fuzzy: shopkeepers often eat or take a nap in the front, or 'shop area', and not in the back, or 'house area' (Figure 7). In these traditional shops, spatial but also temporal, distinctions between work and non-work are difficult to establish.

Insert Figure 7 about here

In the malls, the situation is quite different. Spaces and times of work and family life are clearly distinct: workers commute to the malls at fixed hours during the day. Malls also modify the interaction between customers and shop-workers: fixed prices are the rule and bargaining, increasingly seen as an archaic practice, disappears. Users of Big C for instance, express distrust for traditional shops: the mall offers 'more comfort', they say, products have fixed prices and can be returned in case of problems. The shop-workers we interviewed said that in the malls they 'learned how to behave', mentioning that they are not allowed to sleep and eat in the shop or to talk to other shop-workers. They also said they learned to 'manage money', 'to know the price for good quality'

³⁹ Interviews with users in both places in September 2009 undertaken by Vietnamese researchers. The fact that interviewers were nationals shows that this discourse cannot simply be considered as being produced for foreigners.

and to interact with a wider spectrum of customers, including wealthy foreigners.⁴⁰ In the characteristic language of Hanoians, they told us that acquiring these new skills make them ‘feel more confident as individuals’.

Hanoi malls, like Ouagadougou’s interchanges, are therefore pedagogical tools. They are places where new shopping practices are learnt. However, the malls are also places of experimentation. Users come even if they cannot afford to buy, in order to get an experience of a world which is still unknown to them. This is especially true for Vincom that offers not only shops, but a variety of different activities (cinemas, game halls, etc.). For people from rural areas “a trip to Hanoi includes a visit to Vincom. These people come for all the services, eating, drinking, shopping, going to the movies”⁴¹. They tend to come once a month and stay for much longer than other users: 5-6 hours.⁴² These users explain that such regular visits enable them to meet a diversity of people and ways of being that they otherwise are not exposed to. For instance, a 22 year old student who moved to Hanoi from a rural area told us that “Coming here helps me to see how people behave, how people think, how people act and then realize how people here live”. Another respondent said that this confrontation with diversity made his life ‘more interesting’. When respondents say that they ‘feel more modern and civilized’ when they come to the shopping mall, it is therefore not only the result of interiorized propaganda, it can also be understood literally as a sensorial experience of social change: they encounter new colors, odors and sounds compared with those of more traditional areas in Hanoi and its surroundings. Malls are, in other words, perceived as places where new cultural capital can be gained.

Experimentation also includes trying out new social identities. In a paper on the uses of shopping malls in another globalizing city, Cairo, where this urban type appeared in the 1990s, Abaza (2001) shows how malls afford users with spaces where new gender roles and relations are tried out. What makes Cairo malls interesting she writes “is not shopping but rather that they are a locus and meeting place for groups of young girls” (Abaza 2001: 117) who use them for flirting or conquering the right to use public spaces without a male presence. For the groups of young people we observed and interviewed in Hanoi, Vincom and Big C provide similar affordances.⁴³ Playing videogames, wearing a branded T-shirt and ‘doing-looking cool’ (Figure 8) are ways of staging themselves as urbanites and as radically different from members of their family who often work in the suburban or rural paddy fields.

Insert Figure 8 about here

These affordances have a very material and atmospheric character. The above photograph shows a place in Vincom with undefined and flexible possibilities of use. It offers space for hanging out or flirting that traditional markets rarely provide. Moreover, a large number of our respondents, regardless of age, told us that air-con, clean air, as well as tranquility and silence (compared to Hanoi’s very busy and noisy streets) were one of the reasons they were going to the malls. Thus, the ‘atmospheric’ quality of malls is not only appreciated but supports specific (and sometimes new) social practices.⁴⁴ These young users of Hanoi shopping malls are therefore certainly interiorizing a new ‘grammar of living the city’ and are, more specifically, learning how to be consumers of mass-produced goods. But they are also accessing a wider range of urban practices and identities. Put differently, if shopping malls have scripts teaching their users to act in ways that are beneficial to their owners and promoters, they are also spaces of learning, open to ‘interpretive flexibility’ (Gieryn 2002) that thereby do more than just shaping neo-liberal subjects.

In the conclusion, I try to summarize what traveling types do to urban ways of living and how we can analyze such processes critically. For that purpose, I first return to the theoretical resources I introduced in the first part of this chapter.

⁴⁰ Interviews with shop-workers in both malls in September 2009.

⁴¹ Interview with a shopkeeper 19.6.2009.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ This part is based on 15 interviews with users, and six short interviews with shopkeepers

⁴⁴ This atmospheric dimension of places has been theorized in interesting ways by Peter Sloterdijk (2004).

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the role of the mobility of urban types in social transformations taking place in cities of the Global South. I have more specifically analyzed the introduction of road interchanges and shopping malls in the cities of Ouagadougou and Hanoi. In the first part of my text, I argued that *governmentality*, *modernization* and *script* are useful heuristic concepts for such an analysis. Together they enable the unpacking of the relation between discourse and artifacts in the practices of different types of urban actors.

In general terms, a *governmentality* perspective means looking at the organization of conduct through rationalities and technologies (Miller and Rose 2008: 15). Compared to the more narrow concepts of government or governance, governmentality ('the conduct of conduct') leads us to see that urban types and forms are technologies used by the state and private enterprise to govern society and its transformations, but also used by ordinary citizens to govern themselves. For the state and private enterprise, built forms are tools that allow configurations of new uses of the city and new subjectivities adapted to aims such as commodity consumption and the political steering of social change. The road interchanges in Ouagadougou categorize users according to the function of their transport mode and induce a speeding up of the city's everyday rhythms. Users learn how to change their practices by engaging with the infrastructure and through state-sponsored pedagogical videos and policing. Supported by the state and developed by foreign investors and companies, shopping malls train consumers and shop-workers into new forms of commercial exchange. In these new urban spaces, users get accustomed to the triggers of mass consumption: the seduction of brands and the delights of social distinction. But, as we saw with the troubles generated by the new central market of Ouagadougou, such processes of social transformation mediated by urban forms can also be resisted when they are perceived as too disruptive of former types of spatial practices.

However, to put it in the words of Osborne and Rose (1999: 740), the liberal city cannot be reduced to discipline and tactics of resistance: it is "the milieu for the regulation of a carefully modulated freedom". Modulated freedom, or what I referred to previously as 'acting with', is manifest in how many users self-consciously use shopping malls as spaces where to encounter and experiment ways of life or to try out new social identities. In other words, in these new urban spaces, users are shaped and governed by exterior forces, but they also use them as occasions of self-government and learning.

Although heavily criticized in recent social theory, the concept of *modernization* has helped me here to understand both the rationalities behind urban change and how this change is experienced by city users. Outside academic debates, the rhetoric of modernization, justifying change in the name of progress, remains a powerful narrative. Not surprisingly therefore, in Ouagadougou and Hanoi, modernity and modernization are ubiquitous in governmental discourses accompanying the construction of malls or road infrastructures. However, in neither city do ordinary citizens buy into that rhetoric in the way the state assumes they will. Respondents in Hanoi tend to celebrate the introduction of new building types and systematically associate urban change with positive values: beauty, civilization, modernity; whereas respondents in Ouagadougou are generally much more critical.⁴⁵ In Ouagadougou, several urban development projects have thus been contested during the past 20 years (Biehler and Le Bris 2010). The ambitious modernization of the city center in particular, has been the target of different oppositional actions led by civil society since 1995.

Moreover, as postcolonial critiques of modernization theory have insisted, we should consider the different 'geographies of modernization'. These differences between the two cities also illustrate, as Africanist Ferguson (2006) has argued, that Asian and African popular attitudes towards modernization tend to be quite divergent: they are associated in the first case much more than in the second with hopes for a better future.

Finally, the notion of *script* has been used to understand the relations between 'rationalities' and 'technologies' (in this case, new urban types). In this perspective, interchanges and shopping malls are seen as materialized

⁴⁵ The successful mobilization of Hanoi's civil society against the construction of a Disneyesque entertainment park in the large and centrally situated Thong Nhat Park in 2007 shows, however, that some sectors of the population are progressively becoming more critical and more vocal. On this controversy and more generally on issues of public space in Hanoi, see Söderström and Geertman (forthcoming).

programs of action and their physical shape as tools for channeling their uses and users. The power of such scripts becomes particularly visible when developments are contested, as in the example of the barriers and police sheds built to make sure that users acted according to plan in Ouagadougou's new market area, which became the main target of protesters. In this case, protesters were contesting scripts that had travelled (from France) to Ouagadougou with a new urban type for that city: the pedestrian area. So, one of the important things traveling types do is to transport social norms from one place to another and this may create tensions as the conditions of production and acceptance of such norms vary from place to place. French uses of public space as embodied in French public space design are not easily transferred to other parts of the world. More generally, a focus on scripts leads us to consider that globalizing cities are cities where different planning cultures meet and where different injunctions related to different travelling urban forms clash with each other.⁴⁶ The scripts embedded in traveling types are therefore not perfect predictors of how urban forms are used. They are resisted, as in the case of the Ouagadougou market, and open to interpretive flexibility, as we saw with the ways in which groups of young people use shopping malls in Hanoi.

In summary then, traveling types shape new uses of the city and new forms of subjectivity. In globalizing cities such as Hanoi and Ouagadougou, they are technologies which make everyday urbanism more amenable to business and economic growth. Most of the new forms related to imported types – malls, interchanges, but also high-rise office towers or the creation of heritage streets – can be seen as enacting a progressive micro-scale and business-friendly process of cultural change. A critical cultural analysis of mobile urbanism should therefore consist in detailed studies of the pedagogical programs of traveling urban types and their local consequences. However, I have insisted in this chapter on the fact that this is not enough. A careful and nuanced critical analysis of urban form change should also show how traveling types provide urbanites with new affordances and possibilities for autonomous action and self-reflection.

⁴⁶ With numerous international partners for different aspects of its urban development, Ouagadougou is a particularly interesting example of such phenomena. For more developments on transnational urbanism in Ouagadougou, see Söderström et al. (2012).

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