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Urban Rituals in the *longue durée:* Permanence and Changes

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Abstract: What does the perspective of the *longue durée* bring to the anthropological analysis of urban rituals? In this essay, I will propose an approach to European urban rituals based on historical anthropology. Such an approach aids in analyzing the different types of rituals through history, but also to study the evolution of the social representations of the city. In the *longue durée*, historical anthropology enables one to focus on permanence as well as on changes. Using different historical and ethnographical examples of urban festivals, I will present, on the one hand, some major invariant structures of European urban rituals, and on the other hand, some of their modern transformations. The notions of play, authority and social structure will be questioned first in order to understand the age of some rituals. The notions of mobility, rationality and cultural economy will then be used to trace back the major contemporary innovations in the field of urban rituals. Comparing older and newer features of European urban rituals will eventually relate to the general evolving perceptions of the seasonal annual cycle.

Keywords: city, rituals, history, anthropology, factionalism, social structures

Introduction

In this essay, I would like to introduce and question the notion of *longue durée* which originally comes from history, but which can also be useful for European ethnology, especially when studying rituals and city rituals. This notion was popularized by the French historian Fernand Braudel in his work on the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages (Braudel 1958).

The *longue durée* was first an expression used by the French Annales School of Historical Writing to designate their approach to the study of history. It gives priority to long-term historical structures over what the previous generation of historians called *histoire événementielle* ("event history", the short-term time-scale that is the domain of the chronicler and the journalist). The Annales School decided to concentrate instead on all but permanent or slowly evolving structures.

The *longue durée* is part of a tripartite system that includes short-term events and medium-term conjunctures (periods of decades or centuries when more profound cultural changes, such as the Industrial Revolution, can take place).

The *longue durée* acquired its legitimacy during a debate with Claude Lévi-Strauss, who used to oppose long-term anthropological "structures" to short-term historical "events" (Lévi-Strauss 1958). For his part, Braudel showed that history had different times: structures at a long-term scale, conjunctures at a middle-term scale and events at a short-term scale.

Here, I would like to suggest that the *longue durée* perspective can be very useful when studying European ethnology. In this respect, this discipline is sometimes closer to cultural history and historical anthropology than to exotic social anthropology. European societies, where writing and history have occupied a prominent position for centuries through the centuries, desperately need the help of historians to investigate the past beyond the immediate memory of the people the ethnographers can question in their present fieldwork, for instance, through interviews. The *longue durée* then offers the possibility to make some hypotheses on the past of some contemporary cultural practices. To make it clear, I think that in our disciplines, the help of historical sources is of major interest in fieldwork, which I will try to show through different examples concerning European city rituals.

Let us define 'city rituals'. Here, I will not discuss the notion of ritual itself. This notion has prompted a considerable amount of literature, and I have presented elsewhere a synthesis of the different theoretical positions in the field of European ethnology (Fournier 2008). To quickly summarize the different possible interpretations of rituals, I would oppose the Durkheimian approach within which rituals are understood as an objective means to maintain collective order and to reinforce pre-existing social hierarchies (Durkheim 1912), the symbolist approach according to which rituals would be connected to ideas, myths, or beliefs which pre-existed in the different communities (Frazer 1911, Griaule 1966, Leach 1982), and the performative approach conceiving rituals as specific dynamics managing to build a special unity and to articulate gestures, speeches and objects (Austin 1962, Tambiah 1979, Schechner 2003). I usually like the performative approach and I use it myself in my research on traditional games where performances take a great part (Fournier 2009), but in this essay, my perspective will understand rituals in a more classical way, as helping the regulation of the relations between

the different groups in the community (Turner 1969) or as a means to solve social conflicts (Gluckman 1954).

In fact, the nexus of my questioning will not be in the term "ritual" itself but more in the expression "city rituals" and in the idea of urbanity. Indeed, the *longue durée* perspective seems especially productive to look at in this field of studies. What is a city ritual? How did European city rituals change through history? Did some ritual features remain the same? And what do these evolutions or changes owe to the changes of the European cities themselves? Working in the *longue durée* will enable us to question some permanent features as well as some contemporary changes in a more and more urbanized world. In this essay, I will progressively shift from historical to more recent examples, using different cases, from different European countries, and more specially focusing on the case of urban festivals, which of course are only a special case of rituals, but which I will nevertheless consider here as representative of rituals in general. Comparing older features and new tendencies will eventually lead to a questioning of our own position as ethnographers or folklorists today.

1. Factions and Divisions

In the first part of this essay, I would like to focus on some historical examples, some of which I have taken from the literature and some others I have found out through my own fieldwork. Presenting these examples will enable us to point out some of the permanent structures of European urban rituals.

According to many historians, one major feature in urban or city rituals in the past was their relation to factionalism. Factionalism is a widespread phenomenon which also concerns non-European cultures. John Perry, for instance, has provided an enlightening analysis of factional antagonisms in modern Iran (Perry 1998). Between the 16th and the 18th centuries, he says, European visitors in Persia were struck by the fact that all the cities were divided into two halves or factions called *Haydari* and *Ne'mati*, which fought regularly in street fights, without any apparent reason. Perry explains that the factions gathered the young men from traditional gymnasiums for wrestling and around the guilds which took part in the religious processions. These factions followed territorial logic, considered their enemies impure, did not marry their sisters, and used to fight against each other every week or sometimes only a few times a year during religious festivals. Perry connects this practice of street fighting with the importance of the guilds in a strong Nation-State. The Safavide dynasty in the 17th century united the political and religious system, giving more freedom to the guilds within which local antagonisms could be expressed. Other reasons connect factionalism with the fact of becoming adults and

with the local struggle for prestige. Moreover, in many cases, the factions recover the divisions between Shiites and Sunnis.

Quoting Perry: "For festivals and other public meetings, one of the two parties attacked the other one in order to have the precedence, and the rest of the time wrestlers and young people from each party would challenge those from the other side. Sometimes, pitched battles then took place in the old square of the town, with hundreds of people fighting on each side. The participants were always from the working classes, and although they only fought with sticks and stones there were always a few killed and a lot injured" (Perry 1998: 109–110).

The example of Iranian factionalism is an interesting one to understand the local dynamics of violence, but I will use it here only as a starting point for a comparative overlook of similar customs in Europe, or in other times. Perry himself compares the Iranian example to Byzantine factionalism. Alan Cameron, in a great book on "Circus factions", shows how important factionalism was in Rome and Byzantium at the Hippodrome (Cameron 1976). In this context, "blues" and "greens" would support their chariot and would regularly continue the fight after the spectacle. If Cameron understands factions as sporting associations, different authors have stressed their relation to different urban districts or residential areas. A study of the literature enables one to find a lot of comparable phenomena, for instance in the Italian Renaissance with the "Guelphs" and the "Ghibellines", or in Medieval Andalusia where stick fights were commonplace in the city of Grenada, as a French historian Christine Mazzoli-Guintard documented it a few years earlier (Mazzoli-Guintard 2013).

In France too, the same sort of factionalism has been documented in smaller places during pilgrimages. A Provencal example concerning pilgrimage violence has been reported by a historian, who mentioned, in the village of Brenon, near Castellane in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence district, *lou roumeiragi deis cops de batoun*, the stick-fight pilgrimage (Froeschlé-Chopart 2014: 56). This pilgrimage was called so because "the young people of the neighboring villages came armed with sticks and fought for the honor of stealing the instruments during the ball: this fight often occasioned murders". Again, in this example, struggles and provocations among youngsters were regularly happening during local pilgrimages, showing the importance of factions in the structuration of collective life.

Another example in Seillans (near the city of Draguignan in the same region in Mediterranean France) was *lou romeiragi deis pesseguis durs*, the festival of hard peaches (Froeschlé-Chopart 2014: 64). This pilgrimage traditionally ended with a stone-fight around the Saint-Arnould chapel. In this case, "those of Seillans" fought against "those of Bargemon", a neighboring village. In the beginning, it's all dances and jumps for the ball, which accompanies any festival. "But soon the spirit changes; a dispute opposes an inhabitant from Seillans and another one from

Bargemon. The spirits heated by the dances and often by the wine burst into flames and the theater of pleasure becomes a collective stone-fight with the big heaps of stone lying around. These people run after each other for miles. When the people from Bargemon are not enough to fight, the quarrel begins between the peasants and the artisans of Seillans. They fight against each other and throw stones even in town. (…) We are not able to explain the reason for this frenzy (…). The wounds, the procedures, the most severe forbidding, nothing has changed this practice, nothing has abolished it" (C.-F. Achard, quoted by Froeschlé-Chopard 2014).

According to these historical accounts, there would be some sort of necessity to fight in these collective occasions. In the last case, the struggle is well organized and concerns the people of Seillans, if the people of Bargemon are not enough. In this case, the territorial divisions between the villages are not at the center of the struggle anymore: the social divisions between peasants and craftsmen become central. The pilgrimage, because it happens beyond the boundaries of the village, in an open space, becomes a moment when we meet otherness but also the perils represented by the other. In the context of traditional communities, characterized by their endogamy and xenophobia, this exceptional situation brings great excitement. In the beginning, the people look at each other with defiance, then they fight. At the same time, in the pilgrimage context, violence as a transgression of the law is conceived as homage and as a sacrifice for the Saint who is protected against those considered as not legitimate enough to honor him.

In my own works, I have investigated the traditional football games in England and Scotland and I have found out how important the representations of conflicts were in the small cities where these sorts of games were performed. For instance, looking at the folk football game in Kirkwall, Orkney brings another evidence concerning the importance of factionalism in the structuration of urban identities (Fournier 2009).

Each year, on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, a very spectacular sportive game is organized in Kirkwall, in the Orkney Islands, in the north of Scotland. This game, known as *the ba' game* – from "ball game" – belongs to a broader set of games known as "mass football", "folk football" or "old style football", which have often been considered as archaic forms of our rugby and football games in the history of sports (Jusserand 1986: 265–283, Guttmann 2006: 177–179, Hornby 2008: 18–35).

A bronze tablet fixed by officials on Kirkwall's "Mercat Cross" in front of the Cathedral, on January 1st, 2000, gives the first information on the game:

> *"The ba' has been played in one form or another annually on Christmas days and New Year days for at least two centuries here on the Kirk Green and over the streets of Kirkwall. A cork filled leather ba' is thrown up from the Mercat Cross and is contested by Up the Gates and Down the Gates in widely supported boys and men games. The event knows no social barriers and is an*

important part of Kirkwall's heritage. Its origins lies in mass football at one time played throughout Orkney for weddings and during the festive season, and still celebrated in a local form in the Borders of Scotland at Fasternse'en and in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, at Shrovetide".

Unlike contemporary sports which need a separate ground, the ba' game takes place in the town itself. The ba' is thrown in the centre of the town near the Cathedral, by a neutral official. The Uppies, coming from the upper part of the town, have to bring the ba' to their own camp and make it touch a wall at the southern gate of the town, near the ruins of a castle, whereas the Doonies have to bring it to the north and to sink it in the water of the harbor's dock called "the basin".

The game looks like an enormous rugby scrum, which may involve 200 contestants or more, depending on the year. With neither uniforms nor identifying signs, the teams are supposed to know everybody individually. By pushing or pulling, by making use of powerful pressure on the center of the scrum, the contestants who are on the fringe of the group try to manage the game.

The Scottish ethnologist Emily Lyle comments on the classical analyses and brings additional elements to explain the antagonisms of such seasonal rites as the ba' game (Lyle 1990). By comparing the ba' game example with other seasonal competitions during Ancient times or in the Amerindian world, she reveals the existence of complex systems of opposition and correspondence. They are expressed during festivities: between the seasons (winter versus summer), between the natural world or cardinal points (land versus sea, south versus north), and between different types of goods (fruits, crops, and ground animals versus fishes and seafood). The structuring of systems of opposition revealed in the seasonal celebrations should be understood as archaic attempts to explain the different seasons as being mythically interconnected (Lyle 1990: 168).

Indeed, our research has shown that the apparently chaotic scrum of the ba' game hides a series of structural oppositions between the two teams of players. The Uppies and the Downies are not only enemies in the game, but they also represent opposite principles: the land and the sea, the cattle breeders and the fishermen, the Earls of Orkney and the English Bishops, etc.

2. Authorities and Social Structures

In the previous section, the examples I have developed show the importance of divisive ritual games in the structuration of city identities. The cities ritually divide into factions fighting against each other, a feature we can trace to modern sports, taking, for instance, the opposition between Celtics and Rangers in Glasgow today.

Now I will show that this divisiveness is counter-balanced by the presence of different sorts of authorities which have historically shaped and organized the European city rituals. Usually, these authorities are discrete during the divisive rituals, but they can be more visible on other occasions. However, I suggest that it would be a misinterpretation to oppose the two sorts of rituals. Rather, the unanimous rituals shaped by the authorities complete the divisive rituals in the course of the local ritual year cycles.

Here, another series of examples is needed, documenting the importance of authorities in European city rituals. The classical model is given by the Emperor's triumph in Roman times, when the leader presented to the urban crowd (plebeians) the fruit of his military victories. The triumph represents the evidence of the political order and of the Emperor's power in the streets of the city. This model will be handed down and imitated through centuries and it will be revived during the Renaissance through the tradition of the "Royal Entries" (Lévy 2015). During such "Entries" the keys of the city are solemnly given to the King by the local authorities. The streets are richly decorated. The King and his suite go through the streets on parade in their finest costumes. It is an occasion for everybody to show his wealth and his power. The tradition of the "Royal Entries", I would say, is extremely important in the structuration of urban rituals in the *longue durée*. It is connected with the representation of the different social orders that go in procession through the towns. But it consists of entering the urban space and showing the power in the centers of the cities.

Another interesting ritual, which is also connected with the raising consciousness of urbanity and urban identities, is the custom of periodically visiting the boundaries, the external limits or *limes* of the town and of its territory. In this case, the identity of the town is defined by its outskirts, not by the penetration of an overarching power inside the town. The custom of inspecting the limits of a town's territory is commonplace in Western Europe. In Germany, it is known as the *Grenzgang* (Bimmer 2004), and in Scotland, I have studied it in the city of Jedburgh under the name of "Common riding" (Bogle 2004). The Jedburgh ritual consists of "riding the commons" or "riding the marches" which is a cavalcade to the different boundaries of the territory, where the common lands used to be in the past. According to historians, this ritual had a functional value in the 17th and 18th centuries, which consisted of verifying that nobody had encroached on the common lands. In a time when the limits between the different countries were mobile, it was important for the people to see with their own eyes these limits. The townspeople went in procession around the fields and checked the stones fixed at different points of the boundaries. They could then see that nobody had taken possession of their land.

During the Entries as well as during the *Grenzgänger*, the rituals were organized by the local authorities. Even small cities were granted the status of towns by the King if they had the capacity to be organized, which meant having a militia and a governing body. Besides the aristocrats who could be related to the king's family and who usually had some connections with the court, the European cities have kept municipal governments since Antiquity. Historians have documented the presence of consuls or mayors who represent a very old and important European heritage in France, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands. The terms consul and mayor both come from Latin and represent annually elected local authorities. In Medieval times, it is interesting to note that the end of the Roman Empire didn't end this type of local urban organization. Even in the darkest ages, when the Visigoths invaded Western Europe, from the 6th to the 10th centuries, this local political structure survived and kept shaping the local political life. The municipal institutions of the consuls (usually 2 per year) and of the mayors have survived until today in the terms "councillor" and "town council" in English, *mayordomos* in Spanish, *counse* (for mayor) in Occitan.

From the perspective of the longue durée, I suggest that these urban political institutions are extremely important to understand the organization of local rituals. All over Europe, the city rituals have been worked out by the local authorities, giving birth to a specific folklore. With the "giants and dragons" processions, which were nominated by UNESCO on the Intangible Cultural Heritage representative list in 2005, we have a good example of a long-lasting European urban ritual. Let me present this set of urban festivals through the UNESCO website presentation:

> *"Traditional processions of huge effigies of giants, animals or dragons encompass an original ensemble of festive popular manifestations and ritual representations. These effigies first appeared in urban religious processions at the end of the fourteenth century in many European towns and continue to serve as emblems of identity for certain Belgian (Ath, Brussels, Dendermonde, Mechelen and Mons) and French towns (Cassel, Douai, Pézenas and Tarascon), where they remain living traditions. The giants and dragons are large-scale models measuring up to nine meters in height and weighing as much as 350 kilos. They represent mythical heroes or animals, contemporary local figures, historical, biblical or legendary characters or trades. St. George fighting the dragon is staged in Mons; Bayard, the horse from the Charlemagne legend, parades in Dendermonde; and Reuze Papa and Reuze Maman, popular family characters, parade at Cassel. The performances, often mixing secular procession and religious ceremony, vary from town to town, but always follow a precise ritual in which the giants relate to the history, legend or life of the town" (UNESCO website, consulted September 9th 2019: https://ich.unesco.org/fr/RL/geants-et-dragons-processionnels-de-belgique-et-de-france-00153).*

Giants and dragons enliven popular festivals where they are the main actors at least once a year, as each effigy has its specific feast day. They act out historical scenes and dance in the streets to the accompaniment of fanfares and costumed people. The crowd follows the procession, and many participants help in the preparations at different stages of the festival.

In the south of France, in Provence, the festival I have studied within this set of "giants and dragons festivals" is the festival of the Tarasque, in the city of Tarascon (Fournier 2011). Here, the dragon bears the name of the town and mythically represents the pagan times before the Christian foundation of the city. The annual procession of the Tarasque, according to anthropologist Louis Dumont, represents the ritual embodiment of the local foundation myth, and Dumont traces the origins of the ritual back to the Early Middle Ages (Dumont 1951).

In several cases, the municipal authorities do not take charge of the urban festivals themselves. They manage the "serious" everyday businesses and give the young people the responsibility to organize the profane part of the festivals, whereas the religious part is taken charge of by the Church. All over Europe, folklorists have documented the importance of the young people corporations in traditional urban life. The young people, traditionally unmarried men, take part in the militia and have different customary rights. During the wintertime and Lent, they go around the country singing songs and collecting money or different edible things like eggs or flour. They can court the girls and offer them flowers during the spring. In the summer, they organize local festivals and actively participate in dances and collective games. In Central France, Nicole Pellegrin has investigated the *Bachelleries*, which, according to her, means *bas-chevalier* (Fr.) or "low-chivalry" but is also related to the term "bachelor," the single-man, and to the French *baccalauréat*, the exam the young generation gets before entering the university (Pellegrin 1983). In other towns, similar institutions have been documented by historians and folklorists, such as the *capitanage* or the Youth Abbots in Provence, the "Callants" or the "Hornets" in Scotland, and in any case the "Kings of Youth" or *princeps iuventutis* in the Latin tradition. Interestingly, several historical records show how the young people involved in these roles very often become "true" consuls or mayors afterward, which means that their role is not only a mockery.

All these examples of local urban authorities and of their involvement in the festive rituals enlighten a different facet of our question. In my first part, I focused on the disorder and on importance of customary divisions in the building up of the urban social order. In this second part I was more interested in the role played by the authorities in the shaping and the structuration of urban festivals. In both cases, however, what is at stake is the importance and the permanence of the social structures in the *longue durée*. It is then time to consider the changes which have occurred in more recent times.

3. Changes in recent times

Looking at our modernity from the perspective of the *longue durée* supposes some sort of relativism. From this perspective, modernity is already quite an old lady, if you consider its early outspread in the late Renaissance. Indeed modernity, in the historians' eye, begins with the conquest of the new world, in the 16th century and with the conceptualization of the *ratio individualis* by the French philosopher René Descartes, leading to the affirmation of the importance of human progress, the Enlightenment movement in the 18th century and the universal declaration of human rights during the French Revolution of 1789. Today, at a time when our disciplines, European ethnology, and socio-cultural anthropology are more and more assimilated within social sciences, sociology, and political sciences, I find it important to reaffirm the importance of history and of the "Humanist" point of view, anchoring modernity in the last two or three centuries more than in the last two or three decades.

Interestingly, the study of urban rituals and their changes through modernity brings evidence that the notions that were invented in early modernity, from the 16th to the 18th centuries, have lasted until now and continue to shape our contemporary urban rituals. Here I will simply insist on three aspects of modern urban rituals: rationality, mobility, and cultural economy.

Let's tackle rationality first. Modernity has introduced the idea of city planning, meaning a rational structuration of public spaces and streets. Neo-classicist architecture became fashionable in the 18th century and culminated in the 19th century to build new towns that corresponded with the ideals of modernity. The streets are made larger, and right-angle grid layouts appear. Michel Foucault, retracing the history of madness in Occidental Europe, suggests that modern cities do not admit dark corners and winding streets anymore (Foucault 1972). He shows how modern institutions like hospitals, prisons, schools, and factories all follow the new rationalist ideals. Festivals do not escape the rule, and historian Mona Ozouf has shown how the Revolutionary power in Paris shaped new rituals fit to adapt the new order (Ozouf 1976). Weeks are replaced by decades, old religious cults are suppressed and replaced by the cult of virtues or abstract notions such as liberty, equality, the union of the people, etc. In such a context, new festivals appear under the rationalist banner, and they must follow a rational order. New city rituals are invented, even if older forms survive, like the processions of the town officials. From the 19th century onwards, modern urban festivals and rituals were closely connected with the new political order, supposedly embodying a new rationality in itself. When the traditional political regimes, the aristocrats and the kings, drew their powers from the sacred, the ancestors, or other forms of otherworld, the new revolutionary elites and their republican descent are supposed to hold their power

from the people's choice, through regular elections. Rationally elected, they invent new rituals and new festivals in the context of the modern nation-states. New national holidays appear in connection with historical events, armistices, Labor Day, or other occasions corresponding to the new values and the new rational ideals of modern nations.

Another important feature of modern urban rituals is their connection with mobility. In traditional societies, the festivals were usually centered on the community itself. Of course, as we have shown before, some rituals could be divisive while others could be more unanimous when welcoming some external powerful character. In the modern context, things change because there is no reason to conceive the local community as an organic whole. Inventions such as the compass and the sextant in the 17th century, as well as a huge progress in map drawing and in the measurement of time with clocks and watches, have deeply influenced the conceptions of space and time and enabled better control of communication paths. In the 19th century, the apparition of trains and motor cars had a decisive impact on the cities, which dramatically changed the nature of the rituals and festivals. With the spread of tourism and modern leisure mobility, the city rituals will meet a significant series of changes. New forms of festivals like the urban carnivals in Nice or Viareggio appear and try to attract tourists, while technical progress makes it easier to go from one city to another to attend different fashionable urban rituals. Such a trend continued until today with the acceleration of public transportation and the reconfiguration of the urban festivals map at a global level. Today, looking globally at urban festivals opens up a specific "ritualscape" or "festiscape," just to paraphrase Appadurai, made of specific "musts" where tourists have to go and who build up a global offer of envied destinations (Appadurai 1996).

The last feature I would like to underline concerns the cultural economy. During the last two centuries, the notion of culture has been considerably extended. Once limited to the fine arts and the historical monuments, it now encompasses intangible cultural heritage. Due to this dramatic extension, rituals and festivals become a more and more important stake in territorial marketing. Urban planners pay attention to the traditional festivals which may become new cultural amenities if properly marketed and commoditized. Interestingly, at the beginning of the Modern era, Enlightenment philosophers like Rousseau or Montesquieu sharply criticized traditional festivals as an obstacle to human progress, a time when rational work was forbidden and when a man would be badly driven by his passions. The modernists then met the moralists. Two centuries later it is generally admitted that festivals and rituals take a significant place in the cultural economy. In a post-industrial world, they provide an alternative resource when they are revitalized as tourist destinations. They can give the best image possible of a given territory, and

moreover, they play a role in entertaining people. They then become a viable way for smaller or poorer cities to engage in development projects.

Conclusion

I would suggest that the three features I have underlined in the last part of my essay, rationality, mobility, and cultural economy, are essential because they enable in the *longue durée* to oppose the traditional and the modern city rituals in Europe. Of course, traditional rituals had their own rationality, they had some special functions but they were not rational in the same way because they were always caught in some overarching order, being performed to comply the gods or the ancestors more than in connection with the individual modern reason. They also featured mobility, undoubtedly, but the communities were more self-centered, and their conception of space was somehow concentric, not linear. And even if they had a link with the economy, if you think about fairs and markets, for instance, the notion of the cultural economy was not extended to the festivals by then.

In conclusion, I would stress the fact that things change a lot if you look at them through the *longue durée* lens. The problem which remains is, however, that such a lens only enables one to grasp the general tendencies. It doesn't encourage thinner or thicker ethnographies. It nevertheless leads to some interesting perspectives. As we have seen, city rituals have some features in common: they express factional divisiveness, as well as long-term authorities and social structures, and they all face some global changes regarding their relation to rationality, mobility, and cultural economy. Last, but not least, they are distributed in the ritual year cycle in a way that deserves attention: city rituals are not cut off from nature but rather reflect the ways urban populations imagine it. Marcel Mauss, in his work on the Innu seasonal cycle, has already shown how the modern rhythm of life has led to a new duality between the winter,when everybody lives in town, and the summer when the people go on holidays (Mauss 1904). Just to come to an end, I regret I couldn't be more precise concerning the different types of city rituals (from the town festivals to the neighbor's intimate celebratory drinks and from the enterprise rituals to the parks socialization…), but this was due to this *longue durée* perspective. As an analytic tool, it is interesting because it forces us to have the historical times in sight, but as a descriptive method, it is, of course, too limited regarding the taste we have for fieldwork and dense ethnography.

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