**Constructing mass tourism**

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# Constructing mass tourism

## introduction

Mass tourism is premised on the social and economic changes associated with the advent of modern, mass society. It is distinctive to modern society culturally too – the need to escape the city to the liminal space of the beech perhaps (Preston-Whyte, 2004), to spend one's wages earned from an employer on consumption beyond necessities, to utilise free time (away from wage labour) and holiday entitlement (Urry, 1990). It comprises a commercial, now global, industry, and it caters for the expanding desires of the masses and their growing ability to afford to indulge these desires. Its growth is a good metaphor for modern development itself – the growth of technology, infrastructure, personal freedoms and mobility central to tourism have been intrinsic to modern society.

'Mass tourism', then, can simply be a morally neutral reference to this growth of modern tourism.

But it is more than this. Williams observes that 'there are in fact no masses, only ways of seeing people as masses' (1958: 289). Williams is referring to mass society as far more than numbers. The mass is made up of individuals with agency, something that can be lost when the aggregate becomes our point of reference. Some theorists of mass-society 'fear that the transformation of people of various backgrounds into a generic mass may end up dehumanizing everyone' (Macionis, 2009: 498). Indeed 'mass' is commonly defined as, 'a large number of human beings […] viewed as forming an aggregate in which their individuality is lost' (OED, 2008).

The 'ways of thinking of people as masses' Williams refers to has been contested. This paper sketches conceptions of the masses and mass tourism over the last 200 years and identifies several themes, continuities and changes in the way mass tourists are regarded, ways that speak to a view of the individuals who constitute those masses. It addresses Butler's call for historical perspective on the term 'mass tourism' (2015), and heeds Wright's (2002) argument that a research agenda is needed that looks beyond generalisations about mass tourism, tourist typologies and behaviours that dominate.

Taking modernity as its frame of reference, themes and periods – not precise and certainly overlapping - are identified as a provisional framework within which to discuss continuities and change in the assumptions accompanying mass tourism. The paper is exploratory, written as an invitation to develop and challenge these themes and periods. Notably, the lack of agency and individuality of mass tourism's masses remains a consistent theme, articulated in ways that exhibit continuity with, and change from, the past (Vainikka, 2013). The paper is designed to generate further debate around a broad, historical and highly pertinent issue.

## the 1800s: mass tourism out of mass society

Industrialising countries were transformed in the nineteenth century by a 'dual revolution': materially by the industrial revolution, and ideologically by the ideas of rights, democracy and progress associated with the Enlightenment (Hobsbawn, 1989). Mass tourism emerged as a commercial industry, drawing upon modern technology and catering for the increasing number who could pay. The steam driven industrial processes that were key to the industrial revolution powered the train and

the steamship, both key to the growth of mass tourism. Thomas Arnold commented that, with the advent of the railway, 'feudality had gone forever' (cited in Bradley, 2015:13).

Whilst the UK was the pre-eminent economic power of the century, the developments there were evident – in different ways and at a different pace – throughout the industrialising world. France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy were amongst those to soon follow Britain's example. In the USA, 1862 saw the completion of the first railroad to Coney Island, enhancing its popularity as a resort for day visitors from New York, a city rapidly filling with its '…huddled masses yearning to breathe free'.[1]

Thomas Cook is regarded as the 'father of the package holiday' – most strongly associated with mass tourism - in the UK (Brendon, 1992). Cook had his equivalents in other industrialising countries, such as the Stangen brothers in Breslau, Germany (now Wrocław in Poland), who from the 1860s operated holidays initially all over Europe, and soon after to global destinations.

**Conceptions of mass society, circa 1800-1945**

In this period a fear of the supposed degeneracy and irrationality of the new urban masses influenced elite attitudes and systems of moral and physical coercion. For Edmund Burke the French revolution had unleashed the 'swinish multitude' into politics, a mass acting without rationality outside of existing forms of authority in a destructive fashion (Burke, 2012 original 1790). Throughout the nineteenth century major thinkers on democracy and society such as De Maistre, De Tocqueville (who coined the term 'the tyranny of the majority', and Mill addressed the potential irrationality of the masses.

Events such as the 1815 Peterloo Massacre in the UK, the European revolts of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1872, and also the growth of mass unions and popularisation of socialist ideas, showed that elites had good reason to fear the democratic and material aspirations of the masses (Hobsbawn, 1988, 1989).

A developed fear of the masses is evident from the late nineteenth century. Not only did the working class pose a threat to social and political order, but western societies also struggled to assert a shared moral and political vision to cohere their populations and guard against a dissenting mob (Bramson 2015; Furedi 2007).

Williams captures the prevalent view associated with the mass at the start of the twentieth century:

> Yet the masses was a new word for mob, and the traditional characteristics of the mob were retained it its significance: gullibility, fickleness, herd-prejudice, lowness of taste and habit. The masses, on this evidence, formed a perpetual threat to culture. Mass-thinking, mass-suggestion, mass-prejudice would threaten to swamp considered individual thinking and feeling.

> (1958: 288)

Le Bon's influential *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* is indicative of the commonplace *fin de siècle* assumption of a homogenised mass (Le Bon, 1995, original 1895). He theorized the psychology of the masses, postulating that when grouped together in a crowd they could easily revert to an irrational mob and undermine social stability. For Le Bon, 'An individual in a crowd is a grain of sand amid other grains of sand, which the wind stirs up at will' (ibid: 52-53). The crowd was not restricted

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[1] From the poem by Emma Lazarus inscribed on the Statue of Liberty. See https://www.heartofconeyisland.com/west-brighton-coney-island-history.html

to specific groupings and specific times, but was effectively a metaphor for the mass: an entire nation could act as a 'crowd'.

Negative conceptions of the masses were not only expressed as fear of irrationality. Romantic sentiment involved a sense that it was precisely the *rationality* of organised industrial society that diminished individuality, establishing a theme that has, albeit in quite different ways, been reprised often since. Romanticism was not necessarily against modern rationality *per se*, and the individualism it championed had been a component part of Enlightenment thought (Lukes, 2006). Yet Romantic poetry, art and literature reflected an impulse to champion individual imagination and expression in the face of modern industrial society. Mass society and the masses were, by contrast, associated with a homogenisation and stifling of individuality (Ferber, 2010).

Yet for others the masses were a progressive force for democracy and social transformation. For Marx the mass, in the form of the working class, was the prospective motor force of history, the progressive class who could liberate themselves and humanity from the fetters of capitalism (Marx and Engels, 2004: original 1848). Others saw mass society as a crucible of creativity and new forms of industrial and urban solidarity. Such humanist sentiments were shared by unions and early socialist movements who wanted the fruits of the masses' labour to accrue in fairer measure to its producers (Thompson, 2013).

**The critique of mass tourism**

Some of these wider hopes and fears associated with the masses were reflected in attitudes to leisure mobility. First, mass tourists were negatively regarded by critics who drew upon Romantic sentiment to present tourism's growth in negative terms (Withey, 1998 Brendon, 1992). Famously, in the UK Wordsworth wrote a letter to the *Morning Post* in 1844 protesting the building of the Kendal and Windermere railway in the picturesque English Lake District, fearing the impact on the human experience of solitude once tourists started to arrive in numbers (Brendon, 1992). 'Is there no nook of English ground secure from rash assault?' he wrote.

Criticisms of mass tourism subsequently retained a romantic edge. This has often been portrayed in terms of the romantic traveller as unique individual, with agency, immersed in nature and versed in culture, counter posed to the mass tourist, rendered uninterested in culture, damaging to nature and without agency (Fussell, 1987).

Second, criticisms of mass travel were commonly an unqualified assertion of *cultural superiority*, sometimes accompanied in the nineteenth century by insinuations of the racial inferiority of the lower orders, the masses (Malik, 1996). Unguarded derogatory references to tourists as 'sheep' and 'insects' betrayed this view, widely held in Victorian Britain (Fussell, 1982). Critic Reverend Francis Kilvert records in his dairies in 1970 that: 'Of all noxious animals too, the most noxious is a tourist' (cited in Fussell, 1982: 40).

Some 50 years later, in G.K. Chesterton's story *The Poet and the Lunatic: Episodes in the Life of Gabriel Gale*, the main character neatly expresses the sentiment with slightly more subtlety: 'They say travel broadens the mind; but you must have the mind' (Chesterton, 2016, original 1929). These prejudices were not only aimed at the industrial working class. The growing 'clerk' class of white-collar workers were also regarded well into the twentieth century as part of the less capable mass by many of the contemporary arbiters of culture (Carey, 1992).

Third, the idea of 'rational recreation' infused leisure and travel in Victorian Britain and had its parallels elsewhere in Europe and in North America. Rational recreation was a paternalistic movement for self-improvement for the masses involving raising their fitness through abstinence, their moral level

through education and attachment to the church (Zuelow, 2015; Brendon, 1992). It was in this spirit that the carefree and drunken behaviour of holidaymakers was frowned upon by supporters of temperance and self-improvement (Cook's first tour featured a temperance rally (Brendon, 1992)).

Whilst the masses posed a threat to social and political order, they were not separable from the urbanism, technology and growth that together constituted a progress that was lauded by elites in industrialising countries. So whilst tourism was subject to anti-mass prejudice of elites, it was also celebrated as a constituent part of progress, a progress that wider sections of society were able to benefit from (Brendon 1992; Withey 1987).

Cook himself was not only a moralist, but reflected a typically Victorian optimism with industrial progress – he was a staunch champion of leisure travel for the masses. Whilst some of his Victorian peers viewed the newly mobile masses as spoiling a beauty they could not appreciate, Cook celebrated holidays for 'the million' who could 'o'erleap the bounds of their narrow circle, rub off rust and prejudice by contact with others, and expand their sails and invigorate their bodies by an exploration of some of nature's finest scenes' (Cook, cited in Withey 1997: 145).

**mass society and mass tourism post-1945**

The post-1945 world witnessed the onset of economic growth and technological advance. New possibilities for middle and working class people resulted from increases in paid holiday and a shorter working week, a result of the capacity of trade unions to win pay increases, and also parliaments amenable to the interests of the often recently enfranchised masses.

Growing levels of disposable income meant that greater numbers of people had the  means to become international tourists for the first time. For example, in West Germany, real wages tripled between 1953-73, and continued economic prosperity in West Germany and subsequently Germany has enabled Germans to be the most prolific of international holidaymakers (Judt, 2010). International tourism proved to be income elastic – people with growing wealth wanted to travel – and the industry grew rapidly. They had more time in which to do so, too - by 1960 most employees in Europe had two weeks paid holiday (with three in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and France) (ibid.).

International tourism was to grow in the next 40 years to become a leading global industry. Rising incomes, growing technology and greater holiday entitlement have enabled people to satisfy a growing desire to travel, thus 'democratising' foreign travel (Butler, 2015; De Santis, 1978).

Mass society became associated with mass *consumer* society in the West in this period– the ability of the majority in advanced capitalist societies to engage in conspicuous consumption, consumption based on want and desire rather than need. Consumption became increasingly associated with freedom: from toil, to experiment with lifestyle, with fashion and with playfulness. The decade of the 1960s is iconic in this respect (Miles, 1998; Marwick, 1989). Judt describes the new 'mass' with disposable income thus: 'Like everyone else, the new workers not only made things; they bought them. This was something quite new' (2010: 337). International tourism was increasingly one of the things they bought.

Coach companies, charter airlines, holiday resorts, theme parks, camp sites and hotels have been amongst the beneficiaries of these advances. International tourism became a part of the leisure culture of affluent societies, alongside cars, TVs, eating out, and later computers and mobile phones (Judt, 2010; Zuelow, 2015). For many in wealthier societies, a holiday abroad plus short breaks and days out have become less luxury and more cultural expectation.

For Europeans the package holiday abroad became iconic and closely associated with mass tourism. In the UK, entrepreneurs such as Freddie Laker and Vladimir Raitz were prominent amongst those pioneering foreign holidays as something the average family could enjoy. For many tourists travelling with Raitz's *Horizon Holidays* tour operator or via Laker's *Laker Airways* air charter operation in the 1960s and 1970s, a cheap package holiday was thrilling (Bray and Raitz, 2002).

Mass car ownership was associated with the new freedom to travel for leisure (Zuelow, 2015). 1960s New York advertising executive Don Draper from the US TV series *Madmen* put it well : 'Happiness is the smell of a new car'.[2] For North American families the car trip to natural and patriotic sites became a staple of growing middle class leisure through the 1950s and 1960s, and throughout the developed world car ownership opened up new possibilities for leisure travel (Zuelow, 2015).

There was also a mood of anti-elitism after 1945 (Judt, 2010). Overly pejorative conceptions of the masses were less acceptable in the public realm. Having fought and died in their millions in two world wars, the masses were less likely to accept "their place" or the poverty that many experienced in the interwar years. Strong support for Socialist and Communist parties after the war was motivated by the promise of a fairer settlement for the masses.

The joy of mass tourism in the post-1945 decades is evocatively captured in Arthur Fellig's (known as 'Weegee') and Harold Feinstein's photographs of Coney Island, New York (Fellig, 2002; Feinstein, 2016).[3] A recent exhibition of seaside photography from Britain's coastal resorts (Shepherdson and Williams (eds.) 2019) does likewise.[4] They remind us that the caricatures implicit in some critiques of and commentaries about mass tourism miss the *individual* within the mass.

This optimistic view of mass society is theorised and captured in the work of US sociologist Edward Shils, in a way that is apposite for the growing possibilities for the masses to travel for leisure. For Shils:

> '[M]ass society aroused and enhanced individuality. Individuality is characterised by an openness to experience, and efflorescence of sensation and sensibility, a sensitivity to other minds and personalities. It gives rise to, and lives in, personal attachments: it grows from the expansion of the empathetic capacities of the human being. Mass society has liberated the cognitive, appreciative and moral capacities of individuals. Larger elements of the population have consciously learned to value the pleasures of eye, ear, taste, touch and conviviality. People make choices more freely in many spheres of life, and these choices are not necessarily made for them by tradition, authority or scarcity. The value of the experiences of personal relationships is more widely appreciated'.

<div align="right">(Shils, 1960: 290)</div>

For Shils, mass society and individual agency are not in opposition, but complimentary. This is perhaps the single most underrated and ignored proposition in social science writing addressing the cultural consequences of mass tourism.

**the post-1945 critique of mass society and mass tourism**

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[2] Madmen, 'Happiness' episode https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9rrhKgusYs
[3] See: https://www.haroldfeinstein.com/ and https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/weegees-day-at-the-beach-132824534/
[4] See associated repository: https://www.seasphotography.org.uk/

Yet alongside the relative optimism and progressive cultural changes that accompanied greater wealth and freedom to travel simply for leisure, a tradition critical of mass consumer society became an established part of intellectual and cultural life. This tradition has shaped debates about mass tourism.

The post-1945 stability and growth in the West took place at a time when capitalism, and liberalism itself, were compromised, principally through the experience of two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century (Bell, 2000 (original 1960); Furedi, 2007). The alternative of Communism, attractive to many following the Second World War, yielded to the unedifying reality of Stalinism. Bell's *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (2000) argued that the main ideological currents of modern society of liberalism, Marxism and conservatism appeared exhausted, with their purchase on contemporary consciousness in decline even by the 1950s.

Despite this the period was to witness renewed ideological divisions, their parameters informed by the Cold War, anti-colonial struggles and the capacity of the working class to achieve material gains through voting and union organisation (Furedi, 2007; Judt, 2010).

These ideological divisions often focused on a cultural deficit associated with modernity rather than capitalism *per se*, and consumption rather than the basis of production. A variety of thinkers developed a sustained critique of post-1945 mass consumption based on its role in shifting the focal point of moral and political life from reflection on the basis of society towards the consumption and advertising of things (Miles, 1998). This cultural critique gained ground with the demise of the politics of class, but nonetheless remained linked to competing ideologies of Left and Right up until the 1980s (Furedi, 2007).

Whilst conservatives bemoaned the rise of 'pseudo-events' (Boorstin, 1961), the more influential criticisms of consumer society came from Left intellectuals (Sassoon, 1996). Their criticism of mass society, as one would expect, is quite different from the overtly elitist tone common in the nineteenth century.

Playwright and veteran of the trenches, J.B. Priestley, had in 1955 coined the term 'admass', referring to the way he regarded the masses shaped by advertising and consumption. For Priestley, admass kept the population fed and in work, but 'that is all that can be said in favour of it', the rest being 'a swindle' (cited in Fagge, 2012: 94).

For the Frankfurt School, mass consumption involved 'the production of culture' and shaped the consciousness of the working class profoundly (Adorno, 2001; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1973). They argued that seeking betterment and selfhood in the realm of consumption negated class consciousness. Marxist politics had been premised on a recognition that capitalist relations of *production*, rather than consumption, held back human liberation. By contrast the tenor of many post-1945 radical theories tended to focus upon the role of culture and consumption in negating class consciousness and promoting political passivity (Brown, 2017).

In 1964 Marcuse wrote *One Dimensional Man* (1992), arguing, in the spirit of 'admass', that the scope of human consciousness was being narrowed by the central role of mass consumption. Marcuse argued that consumers are shaped by the advertising industry to be cogs in the modernist machine rather than free individuals. He held that in being persuaded to buy happiness and fulfilment, we lose dimensions of our humanity. *One Dimensional Man* was very influential amongst radicals, who began to see neither capitalism nor communism *per se*, but modernity, as oppressive. Indeed, the Frankfurt School implicated the Enlightenment project itself in a stultifying instrumental rationality characteristic of modern life (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: original 1944).

The perspectives of critics such as Priestley and Marcuse were mirrored in writing on tourism and tourists. US sociologist MacCannell in his *The Tourist: a New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1999: original 1976) argued, in the spirit of Marcuse, that 'our kind of society has the capacity to develop beyond the point where individuals can continue to have a meaningful place in it' (15). He was later to describe the period as the 'most depersonalised historical epoch' (1992: 160). Tourism could constitute a search for authenticity in a world in which capitalist social relations negated authentic human ones. He saw that this search could be in vein, as tourism itself commercialises and distorts intercultural encounters – 'staged authenticity' the result.

In the 1970s Cohen, in similar vein, noted a typology of tourists in search of authentic selfhood, defined by the extent to which they sought to 'spiritually centre' themselves either within their own culture or in a different one (1979). At one end of a spectrum of disillusionment with modern mass culture are '[t]hose most deeply committed to a new 'spiritual' centre [who] may attach themselves permanently to it and start a new life there by 'submitting' themselves completely to the culture [...] they will desire to 'go native'' (Cohen, 1979: 190).

As per the Frankfurt School, the analyses of Cohen and MacCannell were critical of mass consumer society: its supposed emphasis on instrumental rationality and the role of the cash nexus in shaping and distorting human relationships. Importantly, the search for selfhood takes place through interpersonal cultural encounters. MacCannell explains that his emphasis on intercultural encounters was a product of what he saw as the decline of the political potential of the masses, the working class, in bringing about a more humane society (1992).

So the shift to cultural terrain in critical thought, focusing on mass consumption, laid the basis for the problematisation of mass tourism as the intercultural industry *par excellence* (Crick 1989). This shift both anticipated and laid the basis for an emphasis on the private, behavioural character of ethical tourism advocacy (Krippendorf, 1987), and of meaning making through tourism in general (Minca and Oakes (eds), 2011) from the late 1980s.

The analyses sketched out above constituted an influential cultural critique of the masses on their holidays. This critique was reflected in the following vignettes, pitting anti-consumerism against bourgeois luxury and a perceived conservatism of mass tourism.

During the May 1968 student protests, Situationist inspired graffiti appeared outside *Club Med*'s offices in Paris: 'Club Med: A holiday in other people's misery'. A distaste for bronzing bodies, luxury and carefree days for some, during the horror of the Vietnam war for others, inclined the protestors to see *Club Med* as emblematic of bourgeois, imperialist society. The graffiti was to be reprised ten years later - more in the spirit of nihilistic anti-politics than the idealism of the *Soixante-Huitards* – by the punk band *The Sex Pistols* in their hit *Holiday in the Sun*.

The targeting of the iconic *Club Med* is ironic. Its founder's principles were far from a celebration of elite luxury disdained by the protesters. Gerard Blitz had been a part of the resistance to the Nazis, and founded *Club Med* on idealistic, egalitarian lines, inspired by working at rehabilitation centres for holocaust survivors in the French countryside (Furlough, 2009).

The 'hippy trail', albeit practiced by few, is iconic as an alternative, anti-mass and anti-materialistic expression of tourist culture. Here travellers sought spiritual understanding through travel, embracing eastern mysticism as a partial antidote to western rationalism and modernity. The rejection of the American way, and the search for the sacred 'it' through experimentation with life, drugs and 'jazz style' writing by Kerouac in the 1950s morphed into a more explicit aversion to mass society and embrace of the 'natural' in 70s hippy culture (Turner, 1996). Despite the small number of people who

undertook the hippy trail itself, its status as a cultural reference point relies on its role as an emblem of the wider counter culture - a rejection of mainstream values of nation, family and work coupled with a willingness to experiment – influential amongst the youth (Marwick, 1999).

Elsewhere more mainstream tourism culture was changing with the times, sometimes with more than a hint of disdain for family and mass culture. Zuelow describes how '[t]he family ideal of the 1950s was eclipsed by the culture of cool, where Peter Fonda's *Easy Rider* (1969) […] was hip, and the family road trip was definitely not' (2015: 172). In 1975 rock band *The Who*'s rock opera *Tommy* satirised the mass appeal of UK holiday camps such as Butlins (Zuelow, 2015). Zuelow argues '*The Who* sought to expose the emptiness of the mass culture in which individuality was subsumed in endless group activities' (ibid: 173) taking place in "Tommy's Holiday Camp". The shift was apparently from themes of nation, family and community, towards individuality through cool, self-consciously experiential holidays (McGuigan, 2009).

The notion that the masses on their package holidays lack individuality has endured. Yet whilst some were expressing discontent with consumerism, the mass package holiday boom was transforming the Mediterranean coast. Whilst many UK holiday camps closed in 1970s and 80s, this was principally due to the affluence of their erstwhile customer base facilitating travel to warmer climes rather than the influence of hip anti-consumerism amongst the masses. Sassoon, points out that the post-1945 battles against the consumer society were 'as hopeless as the Luddites of yesteryear against machines' (1996: 196). Critiques of mass consumption were yet to obtain the purchase they were to acquire from the 1980s.

**Contesting tourist agency post-1945**

Despite important articulations between the two schools of thought (Kellner, 2002), 'Cultural Studies' has provided a counterpoint to the Frankfurt School view of mass culture, the former emphasising the potential in popular culture and consumption for agency of the individuals within the mass. Modern cultural studies has some shared roots with writers such as Raymond Williams and EP Thompson who humanised aspects of mass, working class culture in the context of radical thought through publications such as *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) respectively.

The focus on the role of consumption and popular culture in how we give our lives meaning opened up intellectual terrain that has influenced subsequent accounts of mass tourism that seek to question deterministic narratives and the stereotypes that sometimes attend them.

Minca and Oakes, introducing their edited volume *Real Tourism Practice, Care, and Politics in Contemporary Travel Culture* (2012), emphasise tourism as a 'constitutive force in the social world' (ibid: 1) and seek to 'put to bed the lingering structuralism of much writing on tourism' (ibid: 2).

From cultural geography, Vainikka provides a clear exposition of the contestation of the tourist agency of the masses. She sets out two broad orientations as 'deterministic' and 'flexible' respectively (2013). The former has a 'judgemental and restrictive' tone and refers to 'a static view that […] is inherently about a homogenous mass, driven by the forces of production' (ibid: 280). However, the 'flexible discourse' sees the meanings associated with mass tourism as 'historically contingent', and insists on considering them 'from within' rather than superimposing conceptual schemas (ibid.).

Vainikka's analysis does tend to take at face value the notion that mass tourism was deterministic in the past and is now more flexible in an age of customised, tailored holidays. This also chimes with the view that modern, mass society itself may in fact be a thing of the past, replaced with postmodern, fragmented identities partially expressed through consumption of such holidays. This latter

perspective was developed by cultural sociologist Maffesoli in *The Time of the Tribes The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society* (1995). He sees mass society as fragmented into postmodern 'little masses'– effectively identity groupings based around reciprocity and solidarity. Importantly, in these 'tribes', consumer culture (even branding) is important alongside civil society and localism. It is a view that resonates with Vainikka's 'flexible discourse' and contemporary attempts by companies and individuals to strike a distinctive cultural or ethical position from the marketing and consumption of niche holidays (Novelli, 2004).

Authors in other fields have also sought to consider mass tourism 'from within' and challenge a perceived neglect of agency. For example, Wright (2002) has argued forcefully against the presentation of the experiences of mass tourists as uniform and lacking individuality. Historians looking at the post-1945 period, notably Zuelow (2015), have also implicitly challenged the deterministic view of mass tourism through social history that captures the experiences of tourists themselves. The same is true for other periods too (Zuelow, 2015; Withey, 1998).

Social anthropologist Andrews' analysis views mass tourism's relationship to narratives of British identity and masculinity, and is distinctive as an ethnography of tourists, rather than their hosts (2011). It considers young revellers on holiday in two Mallorcan resorts through a close analysis of their behaviours and how they explain them. From such a perspective stereotypes and unexamined assumptions that suggest package holidaymakers are passive recipients of mass culture can be confronted, and their agency considered.

**Fordist holidays, niches and the individual.**

A central feature of modern mass society, featured heavily in the post-1945 critiques, has been the growth of 'Fordism'. Derived from Henry Ford's early twentieth century car plants (it was said of his standardised, production line Model T cars that "You could have any colour as long as it is black"), Fordism refers to modern, efficient, standardised production that benefits from economies and scale and scope (Watts, 2006). Mass, cheap production, incorporating the technology of the production line and economies of scale, was the corollary of mass consumption.

Fordism was recognised as shaping culture and politics as well as economics – mass production is inextricably linked to mass consumption, the latter seen as profoundly shaping the post-1945 masses. In the 1930s Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci had already discussed Fordism as a potentially progressive development as it showed the potential to liberate the working class from a life of toil, and facilitated thinking about the world beyond artisanal production (Clarke, 1990). By contrast, and setting the tone for radical post-1945 critiques of Fordism, Adorno and Horkheimer identified it with the instrumental rationality of modern society that 'produced' culture in such a way as to narrow the scope for critical thought and class consciousness (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1973).

Mass tourism has grown in part due to the development of a *holiday Fordism* based on efficient, mass, integrated production, standardisation and economies of scale. The mass market foreign package holiday has involved constant innovation, building upon the legacy of Cook. Combined with the rapid development of hotel accommodation and infrastructure, it grew rapidly from the 1960s and became for many in Europe the means by which they travelled abroad for the first time, and indeed regularly thereafter. The business model kept prices low and contributed to a democratising of international leisure travel.

Yet there is a cultural reaction to the standardisation and rationality associated with holiday Fordism. In recent decades tourism has moved towards niche tourism brands that seek to appeal – sometimes self-consciously - to niche, ethical and individual preferences (Novelli, 2004). These niches are often

presented not simply as matters of individual preference, but are linked to ethical 'life political' projects (Giddens, 1991), and inferences about the type of person who would take such a holiday (Butcher, 2003).

University texts give intellectual credence to the moral claims of niche tourism, and sometimes present an unflattering caricature of mass tourism. For example, one marketing book argues that mass tourism is 'consumed *en masse* in a similar, robot like and routine manner, with a lack of consideration for the norms, culture and environment of the host country visited' (Poon, 1994: 4). Another text regards such tourists as '... in general, conforming – and complacent in their conformity – to the expectations of their role and the programmes of their holiday organisers' (Chaney, 2002: 145).

These caricatures betray a certain dehumanisation of the mass tourist through a removal of their cultural agency – a theme throughout negative portrayals of the mass tourist. However, the quotes indicate a different tone to that of the cultural elites of an earlier period. Rather than the unguarded loathing of the pleasure seeking masses of the past, here mass tourists have come to be portrayed as unthinking – they 'conform' and consume in a 'robot like manner'. This lack of thought is deemed to have ethical implications, as the tourists act in such a way as to damage the cultures and environments they visit. The widespread advocacy of ethical tourism from the 1990s has as its counterpoint Fordist mass tourist.

However, the non 'mass' niches are premised precisely upon the gains of mass Fordist production. It was jet technology, economies of scale and scope, and economic growth in general that underpinned the growing geographical range of tourism opportunities through which an individual could nurture identity and display individuality. Today the highly standardised budget airlines offer a Fordist opportunity to travel independently to a wider variety of places and broaden experience of the world. The Fordist "holiday from the assembly line" sounds pejorative, but in fact is highly liberating.

The liberating character of mass Fordist production for individuals was noted by Gramsci in his analysis of the new (at the time) Fordist methods.

> 'The term "quality" simply means …. Specialisation for a luxury market. But is this possible for an entire, very populous nation? …. Everything that is susceptible to reproduction belongs to the realm of quantity and can be mass produced … if a nation specialises in "quality production", what industry provides the goods for the poorer classes? … The whole thing is nothing more than a formula for idle men of letters and for politicians whose demagogy consists of building castles in the air'

(Gramsci, 1971: 307-8)

It is notable in passing that Gramsci refers to "quality" in inverted commas, taking up critics who see something intrinsically lesser in mass production. This adjective is often used today to refer to tourism that is promoted as personalised, ethical and smaller scale rather than 'mass' (Gilmore, 2017).

From the 1980s it has been widely argued that Fordism has been eclipsed by post-Fordism in western societies, due to the demise of semi-skilled and unskilled employment caused by the twin pressures of automation and global relocation of production, and the parallel growth of service employment (Mowforth and Munt, 2008). The new consumers are increasingly drawn from an expanded middle class employed in the post-industrial service economy (ibid.). They provide the basis for Poon's 'new tourists' (1993) who reject mass produced leisure in favour of tailored, individualised holidays. They are often associated with ethical consumption, which in turn comprises the 'moral turn' in tourism (Caton, 2012).

**From the 1980s to the present - the moral turn and mass tourism**

The collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War brought into stark relief the moral and political exhaustion of the grand narratives that had shaped political consciousness and movements (Lyotard, 1984; Furedi, 2007; Jacoby, 2000), including intellectual movements such as the Frankfurt School. Shorn of their link to wider political and ideological projects of Left or Right, critical conceptions of mass society and the masses themselves turned increasingly towards a more explicit critique of individual consumption.

In cultural studies, Kellner and Lewis note 'a widespread tendency to decenter, or even ignore completely, economics, history, and politics in favour of emphasis on local pleasures, consumption, and the construction of hybrid identities from the material of the popular' (Kellner and Lewis, 2007). An emphasis on changing the structures of society associated with the earlier critiques shifted to a focus on the lifestyles of individuals within it as a part of the cultivation of ethical or unethical identities, with mass tourism most often in the latter category. This change has been referred to approvingly as the 'moral turn' (Caton, 2012), and disapprovingly as 'the moralisation of tourism' (Butcher, 2003), the latter implying that it involves *moralising* rather than morality.

From the 1980s, arguments for ethical consumption started to become influential in political and social discourse (Harrison, Newholm, and Shaw (eds), 2005). This opened new apparent possibilities for making a change in the realm of lifestyle. But this was foregrounded by the narrowing of substantial political options, and increasing disillusionment with organised, official politics (Littler, 2011). J.B. Priestley's view from the 1930s – 'you think everything is opening out when in fact it is narrowing and closing in on you' – was a prescient summary of both the attractiveness and limits of the politics of ethical consumption (cited in Fagge, 2012: 94).

Gidden's coined the term 'Life Politics' to describe attempts to act in the public sphere in ways hitherto associated with private lifestyle and consumption decisions (1991). The new life political tourism options with prefixes such as 'volunteer', 'eco' and 'community', are often portrayed in academic writing and popular culture as ethical counters to the deleterious effects of mass tourism. Poon sees this as an ethical imperative: '[T]here is a crisis of mass tourism that has brought social, cultural, economic and environmental havoc in its wake, and it is mass tourism practices that must be radically changed to bring in the new' (Poon, 1994: 3).

Krippendorf's 1987 influential *The Holiday Makers* was a watershed, reflecting the changing character of the critique of mass tourism in line with the growth of ethical consumption and life politics generally. He sets out in unequivocal terms the perceived need for tourists to think hard about where they go, what they do and the assumptions they carry, all in personal ethical terms. Krippendorf sees forms of behaviour as directly ethical or unethical according to how far they buy into a personal project of ethical selfhood. Ten years after *The Holiday Makers*, Krippendorf's outlook had become an orthodoxy for a new movement of ethical tourism advocates seeking to morally regulate mass tourism (Krippendorf, 1987).

For Krippendorf and those who have adopted his circumspection, mass tourism does not represent tourism for the unworthy mob, nor is it principally a symptom of a one-dimensional, dumbed down society – often the assumption of earlier critics from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively. Instead tourism is *itself* the problem. The ethical niches are often presented as attempts to address the deleterious cultural and environmental impacts caused by the choices of the mass tourist. Market niches such as ecotourism and volunteer tourism have become markers of moral intent at a time when consumption appears as a valid arena for moral and even political agency (Butcher, 2003).

Stavans and Ellison provide an interesting perspective related to the 'moral turn' in their argument for a 'community of travellers eager to reaffirm meaning' (2015: 5). It is a noble goal, but also one that explicitly assumes that it is mass society that has robbed us of meaning and diminished our culture, with mass tourism complicit. They argue that 'hubris and stupor […] is perfectly embodied in the modern tourist', and that mass tourism is built on a 'myth of abundance' (ibid.). Their theme, that meaning can be reclaimed and selfhood nurtured through lifestyle, is commonplace (e.g. Giddens, 1991). Yet Stavans and Ellison counter pose this to mass tourist culture, the latter labelled with little reservation as hubristic and dumb, lacking in reflection and agency.

Wheeller describes the counter position between mass and the 'alternatives' well, whilst criticising its basis: 'The traveller is preferred to the tourist, the individual to the group, specialist operators rather than the large firms, indigenous accommodation to multi-national hotel chains, small not large — essentially good versus bad' (1991: 19). He also points out that this division of tourisms - good and bad, ethical and unethical - is mainstream: 'Tourism practitioners, the media and many academics are now advocating 'alternative tourism', otherwise known as soft, green, eco, gentle, appropriate, responsible, sustainable, (etc) tourism' as a way to lessen the damaging effects of mass tourism (1992: 140). Mass tourism is being constructed as the damaging kind, with niche or alternative tourism the putative, albeit problematic, solution.

The moral turn in tourism has not gone unchallenged. Wheeler coined the term 'egotourism' to argue that attempts to move away from the assumptions associated with mass tourism were a product of narcissism rather than meaningful commitment to the environment or humanitarianism (1993). Whereas Poon wants 'new tourism' in place of mass tourism, for Wheeler, all tourism is mass tourism.

Mowforth and Munt somewhat cynically describe tourists' attempts to differentiate themselves from the mass as 'trendies on the trail', pointing out that such attempts are generally attempts by those who can afford it, to differentiate themselves from mass tourists (2008, ch.5).

Today's critics of mass tourism's critics do so often in a spirit of irony, pointing out hypocrisy and contradictions (Wheeler, 1993; Mowforth and Munt, 2008), but far less often defending the future growth of mass leisure mobility nor championing its cultural legacy. A notable exception is Aramberri, who celebrates both the legacy of mass tourism and looks forward to its growth with some optimism (2017).

**Conclusion**

Raymond Williams points out the limits of 'the masses' as a descriptor for others whose cultural habits some may disdain:

> 'In our kind of society, we see these others regularly, in their myriad variations; stand, physically, beside them. They are here, and we are here with them. And that we are with them is of course the whole point. To other people, we also are masses. Masses are other people.'

> (Williams, 1958: 289)

Mass tourism, in context, is more than empirical. Invoking it often involves a judgement of the Other. As with any judgement of the cultural practices of others, it may reveal assumptions and prejudices of the judge. Travel journalist Anthony Peregrine's comment that '[d]isdaining tourists is the last permitted snobbery, a coded way of distancing oneself from the uncultured classes' (2019) certainly contains some truth.

The disdaining of the tourist masses no longer takes the form of unguarded and racially inflected loathing of cultural inferiors associated with the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century.

The post-1945 package holiday revolution brought mass overseas travel to many, but coincided with a radical critique of mass consumption. Whilst the Fordist provision of cheap holidays abroad or out of state in the developed countries was, for some, 'one dimensional', for many tourists it was liberating.

In the last three decades grand critiques of society have faded, replaced by an apparently immovable neoliberal edifice coated with a post-modern sheen of lifestyle-oriented consumer politics. In the post-Cold War world of diminished ideological commitments, the critique of mass consumption focuses more on the consumers themselves - it is more often a critique of the apparently thoughtless masses engaging in consumption and behaviour deemed to be unethical than any wider comment upon society and politics.

A consistent theme is the questioning of the autonomy and agency of the mass tourist. They are: too uneducated or incapable of understanding; objects of the cultural industries rather than autonomous subjects or, most recently; unethical due to their lack of awareness of their impact or willingness to view their consumption as a moral focus of their life.

Evidently invoking the masses in 'mass tourism' involves constructing something out of individuals. There is a need to look critically at the social construction of mass tourism, perhaps with a more sympathetic eye for the individuals who comprise the mass.

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