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The question raised in this issue of *Mondes du tourisme* focuses on tourist imaginaries and practices in the USA, notably by emphasizing their economic and territorial impacts on the country. This issue results from critical reflections that began during the international conference entitled “Tourist Imaginaries and Mobility in the United States”, organized on February 6-7 2020, in short, and coincidentally only a few weeks prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic which led to the border closing, and prevented any kinds of travel, touristic or others, ironically shedding a bright light on the question of tourism. Some of the conference papers led to the publication of an issue of the *Revue française d'études américaines* (RFEA), entitled “Imaginaires et pratiques touristiques aux États-Unis : enjeux identitaires et mémoriels” (Croisy et al., 2021). As a follow-up to the latter, this issue of *Mondes du tourisme* provides further insights into US tourism as a field of study, one that has been extensively explored by French academia already but that still deserves more scrutiny.

Research on tourism in the US: context and stakes

From the 1970s onwards, and more specifically and emblematically since 1973 with the creation of the *Annals of Tourism Research*, the US has seen the rise of tourism studies, a quite prolific interdisciplinary field rooted in humanities and social sciences (Réau, 2017).

In the United States, and more broadly in the English-speaking world, most research in the field has aimed to theorize the tourism question, often—but not exclusively—based on the US example. Among the landmarks underlining the transformations of both tourism and western societies, we may highlight the rise of a “touristic” middle-class—
the practice of tourism proving to be a social marker—in post-industrial societies (MacCannell, 1976), the shaping of the life cycles of tourism territories (*Tourism Area Life Cycle, TALC*) (Butler, 1980), the hybridization of social practices about the tourism practice (Urry, 1990) and the emergence and rise of a mass culture in tourism (Mackintosh, 2018). By the 1980s, Mitchell (1984) could emphasize the vast diversity of this field of research and the idea that it was necessary to establish a consistent theoretical strategy. This “scientific eclecticism” applied to the study of tourism in the US is confirmed by the vast array of topical studies including the impact of the development of the *entertainment industry* on New York’s attractivity for tourists (Fainstein and Stokes, 1998), the influence of tourism activity over strategies of economic development and urban change (Judd and Fainstein, 1999), the importance of tourism activity in urban change and the structuration of the labor market in New York and Los Angeles (Gladstone and Fainstein, 2001), the implementation of environmental regulations to contend with the development of camping activity (Young, 2018), the resilience of ski resorts impacted by climate change (McCourt and Perkins, 2018).

French scholars have largely contributed to this extensive field of research. A sample of their work is published here, addressing a variety of topics and objects of study, such as the interactions between urban change and the development of leisure and tourism stemming from the example of Baltimore (Gravari-Barbas, 1998), the implementation of a heritage policy—including both private and public sponsorship—likely to promote tourism (Tobelem, 2007), the link between the development of tourism and the unique American policy of protecting natural spaces and the regulation of their use as recreative spaces (Depraz and Héritier, 2012), the impact of the gambling industry on tourist attractiveness and the urban transformation of Las Vegas (Nédélec, 2017), the development of new social practices in Los Angeles (Devienne, 2020), or yet again the practice of urban exploration, AKA urbex, in the cities of the *Rust Belt* based on the case of Detroit (Le Gallou, 2021). Alongside these works, some scholars have produced syntheses on the issue of tourism (Bailly and Dorel, 1992; Andreu-Boussut, 2012; Zaninetti, 2012). These syntheses—all the more interesting as they are scarce—highlight the major poles of attraction for tourists (Florida, California, large cities, natural spaces), emphasizing on the one hand the unique relation between Americans and nature, and on the other hand their national history. In addition, they underline the ability of the US to produce original spatial models in the shape of what has been referred to as tourism enclaves: national parks, amusement and theme parks, “party-towns” whose model expands into casino cities. While such surveys possibly remain too broad in scope, they remain nonetheless quite useful in order to build a conceptual framework for a range of research topics, thus offering a better understanding of the many issues involved in tourism as a field of study in the US, whether they be social, cultural, related to identity, political, environmental, territorial or economic.

Few studies nevertheless offer a general examination of the economic and geographic dynamics of tourism in the US; all too often, they rarely attempt to consider the ways in which tourist imaginaries and practices influence such dynamics. In that regard, whether or not there are specific imaginaries and practices in the US compared with Europe for instance, remains undetermined. In other words, why should we examine the issue of tourism in the United States? To what extent does tourism enable the creation of a unique link between nature and the vast American spaces on the one hand, and with objects of memory (notably memory linked to slavery and the Amerindian experience) on the other hand? Meanwhile, in what ways does the
American context contribute to the emergence of an original, and truly industrial, form of tourism as an economic sector? More generally, what does the example of the United States allow us to understand about the challenges involved in the rise of tourism on the economy and the geography of the country? By emphasizing the question of imaginaries and tourist practices, this issue of *Mondes du tourisme* aims to consolidate our knowledge of economic and space dynamics related to tourism in the United States, drawing from this vast literature as well as an interdisciplinary approach, all the while disclaiming to put an end to the eclecticism mentioned earlier.

The question of tourist imaginaries in the US: geographical challenges

Following the groundbreaking work by Knafou on the development of ski resorts in the Alps (1978), followed in the 1990s by Cazes’s work on the geography of tourism (1992), and Dewailly’s and Flament’s on the geography of tourism and leisure (1993), tourism activity has prompted growing interest in the humanities in France. Along with—and perhaps in the wake of—geographers whose work has played a crucial role in the emergence of tourism as an object of study in the humanities (Stock, 2004; Knafou and Team MIT, 2008, 2011; Violier, 2008; Lazzarotti, 2011; Fagnoni, 2017; Stock et al. 2017; Duhamel, 2018), economists (Caccomo, 2007; Schéou, 2009) and specialists in management (Callot, 2013), sociologists (Viard 2006; Christin, 2014; Cousin and Réau, 2016; Guibert and Réau, 2020) and anthropologists (Urbain, 2002), lawyers (Jéguouzo, 2018; Lachièze, 2020) and historians (Bertho-Lavenir, 1999; Boyer, 2005; Hagimont, 2022) have all contributed to the understanding of the major issues—whether they may be social, cultural, economic or environmental—raised by the worldwide expansion of this increasingly important aspect of contemporary life. These various works from various fields showcase the diversity of approaches to tourism as a field of study, oscillating between economist, planning, environmentalist or culturalist, and political methods (Stock et al., 2021). The issue of tourist imaginaries has not been neglected in this vast scientific exploration, and has even stood out as an original and necessary approach, since they allow to grasp the socio-cultural mechanisms and the deeply ingrained motivations of tourism practices (Amirou, 1995; Gravari-Barbas and Graburn, 2012, 2016), and as a result, to better make sense of the reasons for the development of a powerful economic sector and the “touristification”—or “touristified places”—of an increasing number of regions.

From a meta-cultural point of view, one may consider that tourist imaginaries are integrated into a modern, western “imaginary order” conducive to the commercial development of the tourist experience, associating romanticism and consumerism (Harari, 2015); though the recent emergence of a genuine “tourist morality” in the relationship to the “Other”, amends this kind of primal western hedonism (Mostafanezhad and Hannam, 2016). More prosaically, tourist imaginaries in the United States and elsewhere have emerged from material images (maps, advertising posters, magazines and specialized journals, media reports and documentaries broadcast on traditional media, movies and TV series), miscellaneous immaterial forms (travelogues, speeches, fantasies and prejudices, but also slogans, logos and expressions like *Only in San Francisco*, *What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas* or *The Big Apple*, or yet again clichés and stereotypes such as the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, the Eiffel Tower in
Paris or the inescapable gondola ride in Venice), as well as new forms whose advent since the second half of the 1990s relies on the creation and the development of the Internet and new technologies. In fine, tourist imaginaries and marketing tools relying on an iterative process shape actual territorial brand names—just like there are commercial brand names—which catalyze the identification and the marketability of tourist destinations in a very efficient way (Keller, 1993; Marchat and Camelis, 2017).

While these imaginaries are conjured up ahead of the tourism practices and stand as a primary form of mobility in space, they fully partake in the tourist experience, contributing to the emergence and popularity of top tourist destinations as much as discarding and marginalizing places which come to be seen as places of little interest, even repulsive, whether this assessment is based on facts or not. Such imaginaries are never completely fixed and, on the contrary, may be dramatically turned upside down by the power of the new multimedia tools for instance. They also shape a contrasted cartography of movement, flows and areas turned into tourism spaces, which, in turn, fuel neverending tourist wanderlust, longings for distant places, working, in the way of a self-realizing prophecy, in a potentially endless (virtuous or vicious) circle.

Tourist imaginaries about the United States highlight a few rather appealing spaces. Thus, they foster a geography of tourism that brings out four major territories on the map. There are first the large cities including New York⁵, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Boston, Chicago or New Orleans. Second come the vast “wild” open spaces, notably renowned national parks such as Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Yosemite or the Everglades. Also embedded in nature, third come beaches, and especially Hawaii and Florida’s warm waters, which have triggered new body imaginaries resulting from sports practices, such as surfing, and the cult of tanned bodies (Coëffé, 2010). Fourth and finally, prominent are the amusement parks, which symbolize “tourism bubbles”—in other words a form of “enclave tourism”, or, from a different perspective, a pretend tourism (“tourisme de simulacre”, Zaninetti, 2012)—born in the United States, and which may be dated⁶ or more recent, and are often backed by the sector and territorial strategies of corporations (like Disney, SeaWorld or Six Flags), and casino cities (such as Atlantic City or Las Vegas).

Nevertheless, these names, rooted in a vast diversity of imaginaries, implicitly illustrate that the geography of tourism markets is unbalanced and divided. Hence, tourist imaginaries contribute to structuring mobilities and flows, to produce “empty spaces” and “busy spaces” on the tourist’s map, each with distinct market characteristics. Hence, influenced by global marketing, international tourists, who are drawn to places that benefit from strong media coverage, do not visit the same places as U.S. nationals, whose geographical interests and temporality are more diffuse. Similarly, the latter, who grow up with stories of the American West (Massip, 2018) and its vibrant wilderness (Strigler, 2013), are inclined to practice leisure activities that favor the outdoors, including outdoor tourism, near or far from home. In that regard, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (12.1 million visitors in 2020⁷), situated at the heart of the Appalachians and accessible all year long, is ideally located to tap the eastern market of the country and its large cities, and is thus marked by an overwhelming number of national visitors, while, on the contrary, other parks such as the Grand Canyon National Park (2.9 million visitors)⁸ and the Yellowstone National Park (3.8 million visitors in 2020⁹) benefit from a more massive intake of foreign visitors (Billard and Chevalier, 2012).
Because of the vastness of their territory, but also the idiosyncrasy of their social and cultural history, the United States offers a wide range of territorial resources that may stimulate imaginaries and tourism practices: natural resources (for instance landscapes, open spaces, ecosystems with often protected endemic flora and fauna); anthropological resources (modern and large cities, small ghost towns of the American West, the countryside of the Old South, heritage sites, iconic monuments and places, cultural spaces like museums and amusement parks). The vast offer, advertised extensively in the media at home and abroad, generates an important economic activity confirmed by statistics. In that regard, in 2019, tourism activity generated about 15.8 million jobs in the United States, among which 9 million direct jobs (about 7.9 million of those are linked to domestic tourism, and about 1.2 million linked to international tourism) and 6.8 million induced or indirect jobs (US Travel Association, 2020). In 2017, the total revenue/turnover from the tourism industry amounted to 1,199 billion dollars, in other words 6.1 % of the GDP. The volume of activity is unequally shared between an overwhelming domestic tourism activity (86%) and a minor international tourism activity (14%) whose impact is nonetheless non negligible, not only in terms of jobs and revenues as previously stated, but also in terms of the image and prestige, hence soft power, that is more difficult to assess. Indeed, the majesty and grandeur of the vast American space and large cities have been largely relayed abroad by media like National Geographic in particular and have contributed to bolstering fascination and attraction—and consequently the idea of power and due respect—that the United States has sparked in the imaginaries of many people around the world. In the end, in 2018, with 79.6 million international visitors, the United States ranked third behind France (89.4 million) and Spain (82.6 million), and before China (62.9 million) and Italy (58.2 million). Additionally, this attractiveness generates a favorable trade balance, worth about 59 billion dollars in 2019.

What is more, in a context of economic prosperity and substantial population growth, the development of the tourism market has led to the successful founding of a few multinational corporations in the hospitality business (Hilton, founded in 1923; Marriott, founded in 1927), the entertainment business (Disney, founded in 1923) and in air transportation (United Airlines, founded in 1926). In other words, as early as the 20th century, tourism would give rise to an industrial sector whose expansion would only keep growing and a global tourism system which has since gathered many protagonists dedicated to the production and consumption of tourist products.

The specificities of US tourism: a framework

Tourism in the United States falls within the frame of national specificities which, on the one hand, impact demand with consumption practices, and on the other hand, supply with the planning and development of the territory as well as the creation and growth of specialized businesses. As examples of these distinct features, what comes to mind are notably four original and crucial dimensions of the American experience: the “pursuit of happiness”, the Protestant work ethic, westward expansion, slavery and the Amerindian question along with the trauma of the Vietnam War. These distinct features most certainly constitute the bedrock of America’s uniqueness when it comes to the question of tourism. To some extent, owing to these distinct features, the United States initiated a new tourism model based on the growing use of cars, the fragmenting
of tourism and leisure time, the creation of multiple “tourism bubbles” and the industrialization of the activity itself.

14 Derived from the sacred founding document, the Declaration of Independence, the “pursuit of happiness” is at the heart of the American ethos. Focusing on the quest for individual fulfilment, this basic tenet of American identity impacts the tourism and leisure industry by developing a form of tourism based on entertainment, good time and enjoyment, in other words, fun. In that regard, these practices are very different from the French ones for instance, which are usually more culturally oriented and tend to focus on “authenticity”¹⁵. This entertainment culture prompted the creation of amusement or theme parks and the development of the territories they are built on, namely Orlando, Florida or, to a lesser extent, Vallejo, California, located north of San Francisco and which hosts a Six Flags amusement park. This hedonic culture also shows in the American yearning for tourism and leisure practices linked to water, a specific kind of outdoor tourism: nautical activities (at Lake Powell for instance), cruising (from Miami, Fort and Port Canaveral more notably), marine wild-life watching (whale watching along the Californian coast), entertaining on parks like SeaWorld (in San Diego for instance), or yet again the practice of some form of scientific tourism (such as the one in the Monterey Aquarium, California), or tourism related to history (the Maritime Museum in San Francisco for instance), hence practices closer to the educational and cultural approach.

15 Tourism practices fundamentally pertain to social time that is not subjugated to work. However, as American culture—namely here the Protestant work ethic—establishes work as a fundamental value, labor law tends to limit time outside work, unlike in France for instance, hence reducing the time dedicated to leisure tourism.¹⁶ The cultural and legal framework thus exerts a strong pressure on tourism and leisure practices. It results in two trends. The first one is the tendency toward a fragmented practice of tourism, especially when compared with France: it means that American tourists will go on more trips but for a much shorter time, but it also quite possibly means that they will be more inclined to choose entertainment and more playful and/or intense activities. Along with the culture of fun referred to earlier, this trend prompts the development of intra-city amusement parks, located at the geographical core of the market, in the way of the first Disneyland that opened in Anaheim, California, in 1955. The second trend tends to excessively focus on retirement that allows—one once one stops working—longer stays outside the daily routine. The phenomenon has led to a migratory movement of retirees known as Snowbirds, who migrate from the north of the United States (and Canada) to the south, and especially Florida or Mount Ozarks, Arizona or southern California. This trend sometimes leads to the creation of specific gated communities, also known as Retirement Communities (Pihet, 1999).

16 The epic tale of westward expansion invigorates imaginaries of a direct contact—and, to some extent, confrontation—with nature and the wilderness, of adventure, discovery and learning about the environment. The relationship between Americans and nature stands out as constitutive of American identity, with rippling effects on tourism and leisure practices as it leads to high rates of trips to natural and wild spaces where “becoming an American” is at stake, and particularly becoming an American man, as it is strongly linked to a manly father-son relationship (Young, 2017). This epic tale also stimulates imaginaries of mobility, travel and nomadic adventures, that stand for the
original tourist practices facilitated by the development of Recreational Vehicles (Forget, 2012). The much-talked-about Route 66, linking Chicago to Los Angeles (Santa Monica) has emerged from this unique history, and from the development of wandering, a way of life chosen by a fair number of Americans, and defined by the diversity of its stakeholders and by a codified moving process\(^\text{17}\). In addition, wandering contributes to the development of stops and stopover towns which are not truly isolated for they are always located near consumption markets scattered along the road and where, as a result, the much-needed tourism infrastructures have developed. Oftentimes, the limited interest of these stopover towns lies in their geographical location between two tourist destinations, such as Lee Vining (Mono County, California), a small town of 200 inhabitants, east of the Sierra Nevada, located halfway from Los Angeles, Yosemite and Mono Lake and as such offers several motels to host tourists passing through. Sometimes, these stopover towns possess a tourism interest of their own. Such is the case of Yachats (Lincoln County, Oregon), a quaint little town of 800 souls, located along the Oregon coast, which connects the city of Portland to the north of California, via a breathtaking scenic road. The town thus offers an impressive number of hotels. Alternately, these stopover towns play the role of a gateway to major tourist attractions, as is the case for Sedona (Arizona, 11,000 inhabitants), which has become a tourist destination in itself owing to its dramatic natural landscapes, but also as a major stopover town located on the main road to Grand Canyon National Park.

\(^{17}\) The idea of many American pasts and a myriad of socio-cultural presents, contrary to the monolithic concept of the WASP model, emerged during the protest movements of the 1960s. From integrating “Indian memory” into American history, such as Tahca Ushte’s memoirs\(^{18}\) (1977), to the rise of slave narratives or stories about enslaved people, especially by means of an increased number of feature films, to the historical and literary exploitation of controversial war memoirs (such as the Vietnam War for instance), the fragmentation and complexification of American history have prompted the emergence of a new collective memory (Halbwachs, 1950), which does not stand as a uniform and imposed centralized historical narrative, but rather emphasizes a multifaceted American historical reality, including that of the Amerindian genocide, slavery and racial segregation (legal in Southern states between 1896 and 1954). Consequently, the United States has seen an increase in the attractiveness and popularity of tourist destinations constitutive of this diversity, comprising Southern plantations or recreated Amerindian villages or encampments. The development of these sites of memory (“lieux de mémoire”; Nora, 1997) has contributed to the rise of an idiosyncratic type of tourism, namely memory tourism, which has become a powerful catalyst of American tourist mobility. This form of tourism holds a performative dimension (Connerton, 2004), as visiting a plantation or experiencing a memorial representing long-silenced memories, the mythicized and sometimes distant and fixed past, becomes palpable and flexible. Visits turn into rites and, paradoxically, what used to be fragmented and forgotten reintegrates the national collective memory. Yet, how can these various memories be reconciled, as they simultaneously expose the fractures and falsities of the fundamental values of the United States heralded by the Declaration of Independence, namely “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”? Interestingly, these emerging tourist spaces contribute to that. As these sites of memory have fueled a range of new tourist mobilities since the end of the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century, they have simultaneously posed private, political, and economic challenges. Admittedly, while African Americans were not allowed to travel freely across the American territory
during segregation, as illustrated by the “Negro Traveler’s Green book” published between 1937 and 1967, they have benefitted from changes in the tourism industry, which now take into account cultural diversity as well as their representations and their past, as evidenced in the development of sites of memory offering a complex history of the American people. That being said, and as Alderman (2013) argues, the question of the normative power that frames the tourism market (and American society still today) and the under-representation of African Americans and tourism planning still needs to be addressed.

**Imaginaries and tourist practices in the United States: new insights**

18 In the early 20th century, thanks to the impressive prosperity of the Gilded Age (1865-1901) fueled by a booming industrial growth, the United States was a wealthy nation on the verge of becoming the leading world power. Fueled by the prosperity and the development of big corporations, “business tourism” emerged in the United States. This “business tourism” would continue to develop throughout the 20th century, leaving its mark on many large cities where convention centers and resorts were built to become an integrating part of the urban landscape, all the while creating financial, urban but also social and political issues. More importantly, in the wake of prosperity, the demand from the upper middle class of the North-eastern cities stoked the rise of “family tourism”, signaling early mass tourism in the United States. Soon enough, at the end of the 19th century, the expansion of this market led to the tourism development of new territories: national parks, Niagara Falls, new rivieras (Florida or Southern California); among many other territories, including large cities (Cocks, 2001). This emerging market soon drew the attention of tourism entrepreneurs. The most blatant example is certainly that of Henry Flagler, who, very early on, anticipated Florida’s potential as a land of opportunity for tourism (Violier and Duhamel, 2009). That is why for two decades (1885-1905) Flagler invested in the construction of a railway line (the Florida East Coast) and hotels, thus contributing to the development of Jacksonville as well as the basic installations critical to the cruise business in Miami that would further expand in the first decades of the 20th century. In addition, the United States superseded Great Britain by becoming the spearhead of international tourism. Driven by the search for their European roots or by an urge to seek out cultural or leisure hubs, Americans did indeed practice early international tourism; thus as early as 1900, 20% of foreign tourists visiting Nice were American citizens (Vanneph, 2017).

19 Such remarks about early tourism in the United States during the Gilded Age do not close the discussions on the background nor the timing of the development of tourism in the United States: bien au contraire! The expansion of tourism has to be framed within the historical transformations of American society, punctuated by a few events worthy of further investigations as to their articulation with the transformations undergone by tourism: the 1920s prosperity followed by the Great Depression of the 1930s and the New Deal, the post-World War II economic and urban expansion associated with the democratization of automobiles and suburbia, the desegregation of the 1960s and the beginning of the development of an African-American middle-class, the 1970s economic crisis followed by neoliberalism in the 1980s, the rise of a cultural and cognitive
economy, the acceleration of international integration in the 1990s (following the end of the Cold War); but also, more recently, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the 2008-2010 recession or the economics of Donald Trump’s “America first” and the nationalist policies of his administration.

The transformations suggested above raise a few questions as to their links with tourism. Some of them may be discussed. Hence, to what extent are tourism practices—along with the places visited—by the African American community—or rather communities—distinct from the white population, or yet again the Hispanic and Asian populations? What are the impacts of the events industry, whether they be sports events, organized by such major protagonists as the National Football League (NFL) or the National Basketball Association (NBA) that require colossal equipment and means, festivals including among others the Aspen Music Festival (taking place in Colorado and inspired by the festival of Marciac in Southern France), or the Burning Man (organized in Nevada and which has become an international event), on tourist circulations and hosting places? Has the blossoming of the museum offer in some cities, like in San Francisco, become key to tourist attractiveness? What is the impact of the film and multimedia industry (major Hollywood studios and distribution platforms) on the global dissemination of landscapes associated with certain urban or non-urban territories, and in return, on the popularity and the subsequent attractiveness of these territories? What is the scope of the “back to downtown” phenomenon—unless it is, in reality, about residing in two places—for some suburban populations belonging to the middle and higher classes, and what are the repercussions of this phenomenon on downtown areas? Is mass tourism a problem in some areas, what have been the voices standing up against it and how do major key players deal with it locally? How do American tourists view potential tourist destinations abroad (allies or foes) and in what ways do these views influence their international mobility? Conversely, how do foreign visitors see the United States, depending on the incumbent president; more specifically, what has been the impact of the Trump administration on the United States’ attractiveness for tourists? These questions make for vast possibilities of research, and as such, the present issue of *Mondes du tourisme* does not intend to answer them all. Nevertheless, we will try to discuss some of them, through the articles we have gathered here.

In his article, *Stephen J. Whitfield* narrates the chronicle of a death foretold. Drawing from many literary and journalistic references, he describes the different stages of a metamorphosis bound to a fatal outcome. In the second half of the 19th century, Florida was a minor underpopulated American state, nonetheless possessing a lush and unique natural environment, which only a few well-off travelers could enjoy. In the first half of the 20th century, Florida’s population grew, mostly as a result of the booming car industry. Urbanization has since endangered this paradise, soon beleaguered by millions of American and foreign visitors alike, in search of pristine nature and landscapes. These extraordinary spaces have been gradually and heartlessly wasted away and destroyed, in the wake of mass tourism generated by theme parks such as Walt Disney World. The financial and economic windfall has thus exerted tremendous pressure on Florida’s natural environment, dooming the state to become a paradise lost.

*Mathieu Schorung*’s article offers a substantially documented contextual analysis of an unexpected phenomenon in 2010 Florida: the development of Brightline, a high-
speed railway line. The privately funded project will serve major tourist attractions in the state once it is completed. Schorung first details the major stages of the transformation of Florida into a tourist hub—by both American and foreign visitors—, then reviews the decisions made by the local authorities to develop infrastructures promoting car and airplane travel especially as of the 1950s, thus emphasizing the formidable challenge taken up by the firm investing in Brightline: reintroducing the train in the urban and tourist landscape of the state, as well as recreating tourist imaginaries associated with this means of transport via a market targeting strategy.

In his article entitled “Slavery and Plantation Tourism in Louisiana: Deconstructing the Romanticized Narrative of the Plantation Tours”, Melaine Harnay aims to analyze the various mechanisms and strategies of plantation tourism in Louisiana. Harnay relies on the notable cases of Houmas House and Greenhood Place, whose strategies focus on white America, opposing them to Oak Alley, Evergreen and the Whitney Plantation which have opted to reclaim slavery. The paper thus examines these choices and in particular whether they only reflect flexibility in the face of an evolving market or offer actual counter-historical narratives whose purpose is to make silent voices heard.

The first part is dedicated to the plantation-museums which have created an idealized and glorified past, akin to Gone with the Wind, to draw in visitors, mostly from North America. Hence, the author explores their strategies and perspectives which lead him to define these places as outgrowths of the “Lost Cause” and a mystified approach, all at once witnesses and products of the legacy of the Confederacy. The author evidences that the ploys used manipulate the representation of history by inviting to a form of nostalgia that negates the very conditions of the enslaved. Harnay further demonstrates that some of these institutions have become as though altars erected to the glory of the South, posing as collectors and offering to gather artefacts related to Southern history, such as the confederate statues removed from public spaces. However, Harnay also observes that a certain societal pressure to acknowledge and render visible African American history has triggered notable changes in the strategies of some plantation-museums, which have opted for a display of a plurality of voices in order to present a more realistic image of the South. These institutions thus provide an alternative perspective and rely on different practices, placing slavery and the enslaved back at the center. However, reinterpretation is not homogeneous as some institutions propose optional tours of the slave quarters while others display memorials and plaques dedicated to the enslaved, attesting to tangible memorialization and inclusion. As a result, what these plantations-museums offer today oscillates between sacred territories of a mystified South and inclusive and polymorphic spaces of memory, thus underlying the various reasons that lead visitors to travel to these plantation-museums.

In “An analysis of Southern Advertising from the Jimmy Carter Era: The Origins of the Fragmented Image of the Tourist South”, Giuliano Valenzani examines tourism in the South of the United States. Relying on the fact that, for twenty years, the tourism industry has gained traction, especially in this region, Valenzani highlights the importance of Southern identity and its issues, shaped by images and myths. The author draws from the advertising strategies of four states from the Deep South, namely Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and South Carolina, perceived as the essence of the South, and he argues that they are meant to draw tourists but also to create, or recreate a Southern image and identity. It leads him to consider a presumable evolution of this image which, until the 1970s, significantly relied on the “Old South”,...
that of the Belles and the Lost Cause. The author argues that the 1970s marked a turning-point, that would prompt a change and in particular, a search for new myths. Governors understood that quite well: tourism is a financially promising industry and as the time of family vacation is no longer, the offer range must expand, an evolution that reckons on the perceptions of the territory. Valenzani hereby explains the creation of Civil Rights trails and tours, and by and large the development of what was at first hesitant African American tourism, which would encourage these states to rehabilitate their image. The range of tourism products and services has indeed expanded, from Blues to Amerindian history and legacy to, far more recently, local cuisine. As a consequence, Valenzani argues, these states have created a fragmented image that is displayed in the many images and photos in the brochures, guides and other advertising contents. If this fragmentation occurred then, it has accelerated since: the author illustrates how the offer has multiplied, aiming to highlight the variety and infinite possibilities of experiences, far from a monolithic vision of the South as the land of plantations. Valenzani thus concludes that while the “Old South” has remained a major attraction, the promises of modernity have been increasingly present and strategies have become more global, in order to lure more visitors.

In “Access to Labor and Leisure in Cars: Early Black Motorists’ Automotivity in Miami”, **Helen Gibson** analyzes the impact the automobile had in the early 20th century on the identity development and social liberation processes within the African American community, and most notably in the segregationist South. Gibson first proposes an analysis of the racialization of mobility and leisure in the United States (especially in the most visited parts of Florida), by highlighting the road as a historical place of humiliation and terror perpetrated against African Americans. She then examines the African American community’s experience of the automobile, highlighting the fact that despite the lethal dangers of the road, they took ownership of the car turning it into a tool to represent themselves and gain access to the world of work and leisure. In particular, the author refers to the significant case of Miami, which was at the heart of Florida tourism at the beginning of the century but also a place of fierce southern racist violence, and where claiming cars as their own meant accessing public spaces, whether for work or leisure. Studying the responses of the black community to the white community’s systematic and violent attempts to forbid access to the automobile to the black community in the city, Gibson evidences that, as of the 1920s, the black community’s resistance to these bans led to the weakening of the racialized economic system in Miami and the rise of the car as the preferred means to socio-economic progress for African Americans.

**Terence Young**’s article entitled “Outdoor Imaginaries: The Emergence of Camping in Modern America” analyzes the social, cultural and technological issues at the heart of camping practices in the United States. Following its advent as a recreational practice at the end of the 19th century, camping established itself as a preferred practice in the context of American modernity at the beginning of the 19th century, which was especially defined by the antimodern movement; while this school of thought did not entirely dismiss urban realities and their mixed attractiveness, it mostly emphasized the values of the American wilderness as a source of regeneration for the city-dwellers trapped in a morose daily life, through their artistic productions, and especially literary ones. This movement also historically restored the pre-modern link between Americans (of European origins, let us not forget) and nature. The revival of Jefferson’s agrarian vision and the past romanticized imaginaries about the frontier and the
American wild west, which are central elements of the white American antimodern movement, have been on display in guides, brochures and other various advertisements, emphasizing camping as pertaining to the pioneering spirit. Young evidences that past and present campers, being involved in the antimodern movement, link history and stories and emerge transformed by the experience that strengthens their sense of belonging to the nation. In his social and cultural history of camping practices, the author emphasizes racial issues that have contributed to their development as well as the technological progress that effectively participated in the alteration of the practices.

The role of communication and advertising campaigns as tools of differentiation and self-assertion of the identity of a tourism area is fundamental. In that regard, Pascale Nédélec's “‘What happens here, stays here’: origines, cristallisation et recomposition des imaginaires touristiques de Las Vegas” provides an analysis of the undertakings of tourism entrepreneurs driven by the fame and attractiveness of Las Vegas. As such, the author argues that local leaders, operators and tourism developers have fashioned their communication so as to turn Las Vegas into a worldwide recognizable tourist destination that benefits from a distinctive image. By doing so, they have contributed to the creation of specific tourist imaginaries and practices that are largely based on gambling, entertainment, and even excess. Nédélec relies for a large part on the “What happens here” campaign to identify the marketers’ objectives, but also the way tourists receive, perceive and internalize these strategies of area branding. Retracing the origins of Las Vegas tourist imaginaries, the author demonstrates how the exposure to sources of information produces images that strongly influence the choice of a tourist destination. Nédélec thus raises a few questions related to communication strategies. Referring to an earlier question, Nédélec also reflects on what impact cinematographic images, such as those found in the movie *Hangover* (2009), can have on Las Vegas’s tourist imaginaries? In the end, one may also consider whether imaginaries are fixed or flexible. But is it possible to reshape a tourist brand name?

Aude Le Gallou’s paper, entitled “Imaginaires de l’abandon et pratiques touristiques à Détroit : des marges urbaines entre stigmatisation et valorisation”, deals with a new niche market tourism practice. This practice, known as the exploration of abandoned places (or “tourisme de l’abandon”), at the crossroads of urbex (urban exploration) and more conventional tourism, has been growing since the early 2000s in the United States and elsewhere. A symbol of 20th century industrial capitalism, the city of Detroit provides a perfect case study to work out a definition of this practice—both positive and negative. The author first surveys the history of Detroit, marked by a long period of growth, followed by decades of decline. This history has left deep scars both in the built environment and in the heart of its inhabitants, particularly those who have been hit by deindustrialization. She then explores the idea of “negative imaginaries”, fed by this industrial, social and urban history. Le Gallou shows how, because of the global spread of aesthetic images of the ruins of Detroit on the Internet, tourist imaginaries about the city have turned from an industrial city facing decline into an alluring object for those looking for a unique and somehow morbid, tourist experience. Incidentally, this market niche practice has offered economic opportunities for innovative entrepreneurs who set up—otherwise illegal—visiting tours. The author also evidences how racially structured this “exploration” is, as white entrepreneurs mainly offer white tourists tours in African American neighborhoods. In this regard, Le Gallou further
demonstrates how this practice is perceived. While some inhabitants are quite indifferent, others look at it as violently intrusive (going as far as naming it Ruin Porn). As for the local authorities in charge of the attractivity of Detroit, they aim to promote a renewed image of the city.

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NOTES

1. Conference organized by the University of Versailles Saint Quentin (UVSQ), sponsored by the Centre d’histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines (CHCSC), the Maison des sciences de l’homme (MSH), The University of Paris-Saclay and the Institut des Amériques (IDA).

2. Here, “US territory” must be understood in a broad sense: the 48 contiguous continental states, the two peripheral states of Alaska and Hawaii, the five insular Pacific territories (Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa) and Caribbean territories (Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands), the nine US Minor Outlying Islands. Needless to say, these territories are not on an equal footing when it comes to tourism.

3. Let us note that in France, alongside geography, sociology has played a major role in the development of tourism and leisure studies, especially with the work of Joffre Dumazedier on the emergence of a “civilization of leisure” (1964), or yet again with that of Jean Viard on “social time,” AKA vacation (Viard, 1984).

4. See pages 140-146.

5. If New York City stands out as the main urban pole when it comes to international tourist attractiveness, it also exerts a major domestic attraction. Hence, in 2018, NYC hosted 65.2 million visitors, among whom 13.5 million foreigners and 51.6 million Americans. They generated $16.1 billion in revenue for the local economy in 2017, compared with $13.5 billion for the city of Paris the same year (Gradt, 2019).

6. See in particular, among the first amusement parks: The Pike in Long Beach, opened from 1902 to 1979, or Luna Park on Coney Island, opened from 1903 to 1944.

7. Source: National Park Service (https://www.nps.gov/)

8. However, the 2.9 million visitors in 2020 represent a dramatic decrease, linked to the specific context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent limits on international travel. Indeed, the Grand Canyon National Park usually ranks second in terms of visitation of national parks. Thus, in 2018, 6.4 million visitors travelled there, tailgating the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (11.4 million visitors), and ahead of the Rocky Mountain National Park (4.6 million visitors). Conversely, the increase in the number of visitors at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park
between 2018 and 2020 (from 11.4 to 12.1 million visitors) seems to illustrate the impact of a transfer of tourist mobility in the domestic market.

9. The Yellowstone National Park visitation also decreased (from 4.1 million visitors in 2018 to 3.8 million in 2020), yet to a lesser extent than the Grand Canyon National Park.

10. To which one may add the turnover of induced activities, meaning 1,182 billion dollars. It represents 2,381 billion dollars in total for the overall tourism sector in 2017 (1,199 + 1,182); Source: US Travel Association (https://www.ustravel.org/). As a result, we estimate that the tourism activity represents 12.2% of the GDP (2,381/19,540 billion dollars, 2017 GDP).

11. According to our estimate (1,199/19,540 billion dollars, 2017 GDP).


13. Travel exports (255 billion) - travel imports (196 billion) = 59 billion; source: US Travel Association (https://www.ustravel.org/).


15. However, one needs to be more nuanced as in the United States, the concept of “authenticity” has emerged, leading to the recreation of Amerindian villages or the opening of Southern plantations.

16. A few indicators allow to compare France and the United States based on differences in labor law (except for specific agreements linked to labor agreements or local regulations): the number of hours in a week (35 hours in France versus 40 hours in the United States), paid leave (25 days in France versus 9 days in the United States); national holidays (11 days versus 10 days). In 2020, on average, French workers worked 1,402 hours, while Americans worked 1,767 hours (source: https://fr.statista.com/).


18. In 1977, Tahca Ushte (AKA John Fire Lame Deer) published his autobiography with the help of historian and journalist Richard Erdoes. Partaking in the new literary movement of the Amerindian renaissance, it both criticizes colonization and highlights Amerindian philosophies, especially the Lakota culture (Sioux). The French version was published in 1989 by Pocket (collection “Terre humaine”), under the title De Mémoire indienne. La vie d’un Sioux, voyant et guérisseur.

19. Because of the transformations they may engender in the areas where they happen, such urban operations may raise major criticisms. As an example, we may quote the case of South of Market (SOMA), downtown San Francisco, and the Moscone Convention Center, which was eventually inaugurated in 1981 despite tensions caused by the impact of this urban project on the inhabitants of a working-class neighborhood (Hartman, 2002).

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