In 1949, French officials at the Chicago consulate issued an urgent memo to Henri Bonnet, the French ambassador, about the consequences of new French and American programs aimed at promoting transatlantic tourism. Americans, the consul warned, “think that France, and particularly Paris, is becoming the playground of America.” Paris, the consul continued, was perceived essentially as a tourist space, a place “where the citizens of the United States can free themselves of all constraints.” He wondered how the American public would ever be able to understand the “difficulties of life faced by the mass of the French population.”

This study examines the promotion of American tourism to France during the period of the Marshall Plan, 1948 to 1952. It addresses two sets of questions. The first relates to policy issues. How did French and American officials and tourism promoters develop and implement policy, and what goals did the program hope to achieve? What was their assessment of the program at the conclusion of the Marshall Plan?

A second set of questions concerns the relationship between the tourism program and the so-called Americanization of France. To what extent did promoting American tourism contribute to this? Did the French tourism industry resist or desire Americanization? Americanization, of course, is a contested concept, and the use of the term by postwar critics of the United States further
complicates its use by scholars today. However, recent scholarship has bolstered the term’s analytical value by linking it with the concept of globalization. If globalization, following Philip Gordon and Sophie Meunier, refers to “the increasing speed, ease and extent with which capital, goods, services, technologies, people, cultures, information, and ideas now cross borders,” then Americanization refers to the centrality of the US in this process, which has been prominent at specific historical moments. As Henry Kissinger has put it, “What is called globalization is really another name for the dominant role of the United States.” Polls indicate that it is the threat of Americanization that makes the French most apprehensive about globalization. Furthermore, the concept of globalization has a distinctly post-Cold War ring to it. Americanization is useful because it reminds us of the existence of other, competing models such as the Third Way or the Soviet Union. For historians studying postwar France—a time of unparalleled US influence on policy, economics, and culture—Americanization remains an important concept.

The Marshall Plan programs to promote tourism offer an arena for examining the relationship between Americanization and globalization. The marketing of tourism has long been seen as a quintessential form of global consumerism. As anthropologist Jon Abbink has argued, tourism serves as an “avant-garde” of globalization because it advances the creation of a global and globalizing consumer identity. Transatlantic air travel, moreover, which as we will see gained impressive ground during the Marshall Plan era, is arguably the paradigmatic example of time/space compression for globalization theorists. Likewise, tourism has figured prominently in debates over cultural homogenization as a product of globalization. Because tourism entails the commodification of the travel experience it is often seen as a homogenizing force. But at the same time, much of the appeal of tourism lies in its capacity to expose travelers to cultural distinctness and notions of cultural authenticity. French and American planners were aware of this tension, I argue, and attempted to balance homogenization and distinctness. Gordon and Meunier argue that mainstream French leaders have embraced key economic aspects of globalization while resisting the very cultural changes these economic transformations entail. My analysis of American tourism in France provides a historical case study of how French leaders responded and adapted to globalization with an American face, that of a tourist.

**Rebuilding Tourism in Postwar France**

Public officials on both sides of the Atlantic promoted the development of international tourism in response to the tough challenges of economic recovery in France after the Second World War. Economic imperatives compelled the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA, the administrative body of the Marshall Plan) and the French government (specifically the Commissariat
Général du Plan) to develop programs to increase the number of American tourists in France, especially the "nouvelle clientele"—middle-income Americans. After the war, tourism figured consistently as the largest dollar-earning industry in France until it was surpassed by military aid during the rearmament years of the Korean War. In addition, American tourists spent more in France than did any other group of international tourists. Indeed, tourism seemed a faultless way to close the so-called "dollar gap" between the United States and France: not through aid, but by the physical importation of dollars into France via the pockets of tourists.

US planners’ enthusiasm for the potential of tourism was equaled only by their preoccupation with the dollar gap. As the comments of this US commerce department official demonstrated, tourism was perceived as an almost magical solution to economic woes:

The exploitation of the travel resources of a country lead to an increase in these resources rather than depletion as in the case of coal, oil, and other extractive industries. The more travel service is used, the larger it grows. Once seen and enjoyed, the people, scenery, art and culture remained unimpaired to be appreciated again and again.9

These remarks conceal the Faustian nature of tourism. The development of transatlantic tourism had economic, cultural, and environmental consequences. The Marshall Plan made the attraction of American tourists and the dollars they brought the central goal of French tourism. This had consequences not only for the character of the French tourism industry, but also for the perception of France abroad.

The tourism program had cultural as well as economic goals. American policy makers stressed the cultural impact of tourism. As Senator J. William Fulbright argued in 1950, “A measure, and one which is often overlooked, for breaking down the barriers of ignorant prejudice between ourselves and our allies is tourism.”10 For French officials, tourism offered an “efficacious instrument” for ensuring international prestige.11 Officials in the French and American tourism industry argued that cultural barriers needed to be overcome for tourism to be successful. In order for transatlantic tourism to be successful, the French tourism industry needed to learn about American tourists. It was the task of both American and French planners to prepare the French public for the influx of American tourists.

Several essential conditions made it possible for Americans to travel in France with “the tourist’s gaze” in the period of the Marshall Plan.12 ECA and French tourism officials created tourism infrastructures that facilitated American visits.13 Three delegations of French hotel and restaurant owners were brought to the United States in an effort to educate the French about the habits of American tourists and key features of American hotels. No less important, officials and entrepreneurs created the Parisian Salon du Tourisme, first held in 1950, as a way of fostering transatlantic tourism. The Salon hosted a large dis-
play by the ECA detailing the benefits of American tourism to France as well as the likes and dislikes of American tourists. These efforts demonstrated that the process of preparing the locals (or at least the tourism professionals) to receive the tourist was essential for the creation of transatlantic tourism.

French and American planners also sought to shape the tourist experience itself. Tourism had long been associated with the cultural capital and social prestige that visitors were assumed to acquire as a result of their vacation in France. Yet, most of the new middle-class consumers of the French travel adventure were unfamiliar with the country’s history, culture, and language. American and French officials thus worked to ensure that American tourists would not feel like fish out of water. They sought to domesticate the exotic, and in so doing they made French vacations a part of American consumer culture. To the extent that they succeeded they may have undermined one of their principal goals: making tourism a vehicle for enhancing Franco-American understanding. In turn, the structure required to receive and profit from American tourists influenced the development of the French tourism industry. Through pamphlets, press releases, visitor centers, and advertising campaigns, Americans were told what to say and what not to say to the French, where to go and stay, what to see, and how to recognize “communist lies.” This is not to say that the tourist’s experience was somehow less authentic than everyday life. Responding to this traditional elite criticism of tourism, John Urry and Scott Lasch point out: “What is consumed in tourism are visual signs and sometimes simulacrum; and this is what is consumed when we are supposedly not acting as tourists at all.”

The drive by French and American officials to attract large numbers of middle-class American tourists was predicated on appeals to consumer values. France had long been the destination of the American elite. In their publications and publicity, French and American tourism officials exploited the popular image of France as the travel destination of the elite, and as the world capital of high fashion and art. The American perception of Paris as the playground of the rich and expatriates dates from at least the inter-war period. A French publication noted in 1918 that “family vanity” was the main reason for a French tour by Americans. The transposition of this meaning to the culture of mass consumption was a characteristic of postwar tourism. American and French planners portrayed French vacations as an opportunity to increase one’s cultural capital, allowing the middle-class person to be an upper-class tourist. Analyzing tourism in 1958 Hans Magnus Enzensberger noted, “The last stage of the tourist endeavor is the return, which turns the tourists themselves into the attraction.” Another important element of French vacations as consumer goods was their portrayal as special periods of recreation, what Ellen Furlough describes as “the time in parentheses.” Middle-class American tourists were consumer-pilgrims seeking not blessings but the bestowal of social and cultural capital. The implications for transatlantic tourism were significant.
The French dimensions of the program as a component of the Monnet Plan began in 1948. World War II had destroyed the tourism industry. Hotels missed by shells and bombs were damaged by German and Allied occupations. In 1948 a report by the French authority on tourism, the Commissariat Général au Tourisme, presented the French plan for reconstruction. It called for a substantial investment program. By 1952 it hoped to attract more than three million tourists bringing the equivalent of $450 million annually. The Marshall Plan’s financial contribution to this program was significant. For example, the 1950 contribution, known as counterpart funds, to Monnet Plan tourism development projects amounted to over two million dollars. In addition, the US approved the use of over five million dollars of counterpart funds in the form of private loans to the tourism industry. American officials claimed to have financed over 85 percent of all 1950 tourism development projects in France. American funds contributed to the construction of airports at Aix-les-Bains and Biarritz, facilities improvements at ski resorts in the Alps and seaside resorts, hotels in Paris, and the purchase of overnight wagon-lits for trains.

As the French hotel industry rebuilt, the ECA sought to convince owners to modernize in ways that would attract Americans. They needed little convincing. Three groups of hotel and restaurant owners brought to the United States under the Technical Assistance Program stayed for six weeks to study American hotels and leisure facilities. In seeking the best means to attract American tourists, French hotel and restaurant owners tried to distill from what they saw in America an essential, minimum standard of service that should be made available to tourists in France. They also did this self-consciously in order to preserve what was most French. The leader of one group, Lucien Serre, concluded, “The American clientele, especially the new clientele, has its own way of life which differs substantially from our own. Should we adopt their ways or find a compromise?”

The first hotel and restaurant group left France in January 1950. The visitors under Serre provided the most detailed report of their visit. Serre, the director of hotels in Biarritz, Cannes, and Paris, was accompanied by Pierre Lafon, owner of La Coupole restaurant in Paris, and Jacques Gauthier, another hotel manager from Paris. During their visit to the United States they identified three forms of American hotels: transient hotels (for men), traditional or resort hotels, and the newcomer, the motel. Motels made an indelible impression on the three. Serre pointed out that the relationship between Americans and their cars were unique: “One can say that Americans practically live in their cars and love to have them in the course of their travels.” He suggested that if Americans could more easily transport their automobiles across the Atlantic they would be more likely to visit. Motels could then be constructed to respond to this market.

Serre’s group identified twenty-two details in American hotels that should be adopted by French hotels. These adaptations would preserve the character of French hotels while at the same time Americanizing them enough to pro-
vide the conveniences that Americans seemed to take for granted (the report included blueprints for an American-style bathroom). As Serre explained:

We realize we cannot become identical in appearance and customs with American hotels. Moreover, we feel that the foreign traveler to European hotels expects something different and new, and that European hotels would lose some of their atmosphere should they try to copy completely the American hotel practices.

Serre's proposals showed two sides of Americanization: on the one hand, changing French customs to become more like Americans—which Serre tried to minimize—and on the other hand, adapting American innovations, as was the case with the gift shop. Serre concluded that the middle-income status of American tourists had forced hotels in the United States to use every possible portion of their premises to earn revenue. The result was small stores on the first floor of many hotels. Serre suggested such stores be created in French hotels on the ground floor as long as they did not detract from the appearance of the entrance hall. The middle-income guest also determined the content of these shops, making it imperative that maps informing Americans of the principal sites in the area be sold. According to Serre, “A large and persuasive publicity campaign will be necessary to get these people conscious of the attractions that Europe has to offer.” As a result, each hotel was to contain an excess of leaflets explaining the significant facts of a given area, including a list of monuments and churches to visit. If a region possessed a specialty craft, such items were also to be sold in the gift shop.

French tourism professionals concluded that for the majority of Americans wine lists were a puzzle. Hotel menus needed to suggest the appropriate wine for each meal. Americans also liked to be served ice water before a meal, and meals should be presented in a *prix fixe* scheme that offered multiple meal choices and included the cost of tea or coffee. Americans preferred to drink their tea or coffee (“served rather light”24 during their meal. Few Americans liked to eat breakfast in their rooms. Instead, small tables should be provided in a room for this purpose, or failing that, in the regular dining room. Hotel rooms should be heated between twenty and twenty-two degrees Celsius. At the same time, the windows in a room should be easy to open because most Americans preferred to sleep with them open. Electric lights should be placed at the head of every bed and hot water should be available twenty-four hours a day. A small bar of soap should be placed on every sink and an English-language newspaper should be provided free every day.

Serre's report was well received by the French Mission of the ECA. They decided to use it as the basis for a pamphlet distributed to tourism professionals, “La touriste et vous.” Serre’s recommendations also contributed to the American display at the first *Salon du Tourisme* held at the Porte de Versailles.25 Antoine Pinay, then Minister of Public Works, Transport, and Tourism, inaugurated the twenty-day industry fair on November 3, 1950.26 The Salon contained over 150 exhibits from various countries, airlines, shipping lines, and
equipment manufacturers. Mission France’s exhibit, strategically placed just inside the main entrance, highlighted the results of the Technical Assistance visits, as well as the contribution of the ECA to hotel reconstruction. Particularly striking was the representation of American tourists. “Monsieur et Madame Amérique” provided the theme of the exhibit: what they looked like, who they were, why they came to France, and other information.

Monsieur et Madame Amérique were life-sized illustrations on vertically standing wooden panels representing the ideal-type of an American tourist family. Against the backdrop of an American flag lined with skyscrapers, the two white Americans followed arrows to France. Madame Amérique was clad in a shimmering dress, large earrings, and pearls. Atop her head sat a complicated hat with a feather as long as her body streaming back over Monsieur Amérique. He was clad in a checkered suit, polka-dot shirt, and a black tie. Two suitcases dangled from ropes around his right shoulder and he carried a larger suitcase in hand. Both were bespectacled; both showed gum and teeth through a wide smile. As for children, it may have been difficult to pick out, but a five-pointed star with legs did appear alongside Madame Amérique.

Who were they? According to one panel, 24.6 percent of American tourists were housewives and 22.6 percent were businessmen. Professors and students made up 13.5 percent and the liberal professions another 10 percent. “Employees and workers” constituted 9 percent, which was just more than the number of journalists, writers, and artists at 7.5 percent. The remaining portions were divided between farmers, civil servants, and military personnel. According to another panel, all Americans came to enjoy, in this order, the inhabitants of France, its scenery, architecture, museums, theaters, concerts, and cabarets. The next panel, only appropriately it seems, pictured a French man holding up his palm and the caption: “Can more Americans come?” Five panels summarized the Technical Assistance visits, presenting all twenty-two of Serre’s suggestions. The exhibit also contained a number of panels that portrayed the benefits of tourism to Franco-American understanding.

The attendant at the display reported that the display received an average of three thousand visitors per day. This figure, if accurate, suggests that the fair attracted the general public in addition to industry representatives. According to the report, the French visitors resented the wide smiles of Madame and Monsieur Amérique: “Some people thought they were being laughed at.” The best spin the staffer could put on the affair was: “Visitors were always interested, never indifferent, which was the objective to be attained.”

Tourism Takes Off

The largest single factor for the increase in transatlantic tourism was the creation, in 1952, of tourist-class airfares. The economic importance of tourism was clearly demonstrated in the ECA’s early and sustained commitment to a
tourist-class fare for transatlantic flight. Tourist-class airfares crystallized several factors of concern to the ECA. The creation of medium income air-travel was an essential condition for the increase in the total number of American tourists visiting Europe. Air-travel also provided a means to increase off-season tourism. Finally, an increase in air travel benefited American commercial and industrial interests.

The Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), the US agency charged with regulating air travel, adopted tourist fares within the United States in 1948. The first route operated at night between New York and Chicago. Discussion for transatlantic tourist fares occurred at the Bermuda meeting of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in 1948. The issue was not resolved and it was tabled until the 1949 IATA meeting in Nice, France. Paul Hoffman, the head of the ECA, took a personal interest in promoting tourist airfares. Another major proponent was Juan Trippe, the president of Pan-American Airlines.

Thomas K. Finletter, chief of the ECA mission to the United Kingdom, and the British government opposed the fare. Finletter argued that the bulk of the UK air fleet would be rendered obsolete if tourist fares were implemented. It was first-class only by virtue of it being the only air transport available. Tourist fares implemented on these planes would have negated any reason to purchase a first class ticket. (During this period, airplanes were not divided into coach and first class areas.) Averell Harriman, the ECA's special representative in Europe, acting as mediator, suggested that British opposition could be overcome if Hoffman made a personal appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps. According to Harriman, Hoffman could argue that the loss to the air transport industry of Britain would be made up for with increased dollar revenues as a result of the greater number of tourists that the tourist fares were sure to bring.

The debate intensified when the chairman of the CAB, Joseph J. O'Connell, weighed in negatively. The CAB—not the ECA—was the US representative at IATA meetings. O'Connell argued that there was no indication that tourist service could be performed at a cost lower than regular service. Aircraft that could effect a reduced operating cost such as the Lockheed Constellation and Boeing Stratocruiser were not yet in widespread service. O'Connell also stated that the physical characteristics of transatlantic flight precluded class distinctions. The CAB had only allowed tourist fares on domestic flights after conditions had been established that clearly distinguished coach from first-class. Initially, domestic tourist rates could only be applied to off-peak flights with planes (usually a DC-4) configured for high-density seating. There was no such thing as off-peak for a fourteen-hour transatlantic flight. Another factor was the subsidy provided to US carriers in the form of mail transport fees. According to O'Connell, the tourist fares would result in a decrease in profits and the CAB would have to increase its mail subsidy as a consequence. Public records that showed airline profits did not reveal the extent to which the mail subsidy sustained transatlantic carriers. O’Connell’s decision effectively
killed the measure at the Nice conference. In addition to the CAB, Air France, British European Airways (B.E.A.), and virtually every other European carrier opposed tourist fares. ECA officials were displeased. For them, the possibility of increasing the airline subsidy was less important than the benefits increased tourism would bring to European economies.

The US Congress was also beginning to take an interest in tourist fares. In August, Senator Owen Brewster from Maine called for a $150 round-trip airfare to Europe. John D. Rockefeller told Hoffman that lower-cost travel would encourage young Americans to travel abroad. In March 1950, Senator Claude Pepper and Representative Michael Mansfield wrote Harriman letters critical of the ECA’s tourism promotion program. “By far the largest source of dollars abroad in the last generation,” wrote Mansfield, “has been the American tourist dollar. It is also the most painless and the cleanest dollar from the standpoint of the US because it does not adversely affect home industry.”

The same month Senator Fulbright entered a statement in favor of tourism promotion into the congressional record. By April the ECA had convinced Congress that it was doing everything in its power to promote tourism; the fault lay with the CAB. These efforts culminated in a Senate Resolution targeted at the CAB on April 24, 1950.

The CAB moved slowly, but it could no longer resist such pressure. In March 1951 the CAB attacked companies that specialized in charter flights: non-scheduled airlines such as Flying Tigers, Trans-Ocean, Seabord, and Western. Henceforth, charter companies could operate only where regular carriers were either unable or unwilling to provide service. The CAB issued a statement encouraging airlines to provide low fares for individual passengers. One ECA official told Theodore Pozzy, the chief of the Travel Development Section of the Office of the Special Representative of the ECA for Europe, that the decision would influence the IATA to establish tourist rates at its next meeting. Pozzy concluded that the CAB decision was “probably one of the biggest steps in the development of travel to Europe.” Free of charter flight competition, the major carriers could organize low fares and charter flights through the IATA.

The IATA met throughout 1951 and 1952 to discuss the implementation of tourist-class fares. BEA and Air France now favored their implementation. Like Pan-American, they possessed extensive routes and, like other long-distance carriers, they faced competition from non-scheduled carriers. With American backing, the IATA agreed to implement tourist fares for transatlantic flights in 1952 and tourist fares for intra-European travel in 1953. The IATA set the price for London-New York flights at $486 round-trip and $270 one-way, approximately a third less than first-class. In contrast, budget passage on a steamship cost about $300 round-trip in June 1952.

The first arrivals of tourist class passengers on an international flight landed in London and Paris on May 2, 1952. Trans-World Airlines, Pan-American, and Air France began the flights simultaneously. At Orly, the occasion
received publicity from the Municipal Council of Paris, the Commissariat Général du Tourisme, and the American Embassy. The latter was particularly concerned with briefing the new arrivals about hotels and restaurants that “were in keeping with a coach air ticket.” Plans were later added for the mass distribution of pamphlets to the American tourists and the creation of a tourist information center at Orly. “Representative couples” were selected from the incoming flights and given publicized tours of Paris. The Commissariat Général au Tourisme organized a reception for the first arrivals. The theme was “À Paris pour 10 dollars par jour.” Other activities included a display of modern airplanes at Orly and a poster exhibit at the Aéro-Club de Paris.

The effects of the tourist fare were dramatic. In 1951, two hundred and eighty thousand Americans had visited France. Three hundred and sixty thousand Americans visited in 1952. Of those, nearly one-third traveled by air. Two-thirds of all air passengers in 1952 traveled tourist class, and 1953 saw a 25 percent increase in air traffic from the United States to France. Tourist fare traffic increased by 70 percent in 1953. American tourists were more common in France than Germans, Italians, or Spaniards. Only the British, with four hundred and eighty thousand tourists in 1952, were more numerous. However, the data show why Americans were the most important group for the French tourism industry: American tourists outspent the British by over a million dollars. Spending by air and ship passengers was not disaggregated. However, according to the IATA, during the five years following the start of tourist class fares, these passengers had spent an amount equal to one-fifth of the Marshall Plan.

The increase in tourism was also the result of increased French publicity in the United States and an increase in tourist services in France. The Organization for European Economic Cooperation sponsored a three hundred and fifty thousand-dollar joint publicity program in the United States to promote tourism during 1951. France was the largest contributor to the fund. From April 22 to June 15, 1951, one hundred thousand dollars were spent in the United States promoting the 2000th anniversary of Paris. Administratively, the French administrative structure was streamlined in June 1952, with the creation of the Conseil Superieur du tourisme. Composed of thirty individuals drawn from the French tourism industry, it reported directly to André Morice, Minister of Public Works, Transport, and Tourism.

The Commissariat Général au Tourisme also increased its subsidy to the Comité de tourisme de Paris et du département de la Seine. The Comité established three welcome centers in Paris during 1950, at the Gare Saint-Lazare, l’Aérogarde des Invalides, and on the Champs-Elysées. Young women in uniform—“hostesses of Paris”—staffed these offices. Other hostesses of Paris could be found on trains from Le Havre to Paris and on the passenger ship Liberté providing public relations information and distributing the pamphlet “Connaissance de Paris.” Throughout the Holy Year of 1950 the Comité coordinated its efforts with the Comité Catholique des Amitiés françaises à l’étranger.
It claimed to have welcomed over forty thousand pilgrims from the Western Hemisphere as they made their way to Rome. The Comité also organized the reception of the US radio star Bobby Benson when he came to France to adopt a child.

The boom in American tourism in France, however, did not fulfill every expectation French officials had for this critical sector of the economy. On January 27, 1953, André Morice briefed American officials. Morice stated that the number of foreign tourists to France during 1952 was virtually the same as in 1951: 3.2 million.61 Tourist visits from Great Britain had decreased, but visitors from the United States increased. The Minister pointed out that although official receipts for tourism had declined across the board, dollar receipts were the only currency to decline in face of an increase in tourists, from $47 million in 1951 to $36 million in 1952. Morice identified several causes for the decline. For one thing, an underground economy for converting dollars persisted. For another, consumers shied away from high prices in France. The French consul in Chicago reported that as a result of the high prices in Paris, many tourists preferred to spend the majority of their time in Italy or Austria, passing through Paris for a few days en route.62 Finally, Morice stated that a larger percentage of travelers were from “lower income classes” and this had caused per-capita spending to decline.63 This suggested that the nature of transatlantic tourism was changing during these years. It was not the case that these middle-class tourists were merely an addition to France’s traditional, elite American tourists (in which case per capita spending would have dropped but gross receipts would have increased). Rather, the entire bloc of American tourists was spending less, traveling more on the off-season, and staying for a shorter duration.64

France’s economy had also become closely tied to the performance of its tourism market in general and American tourists in particular. Tourism was an important component of the French economy and the dollars brought by Americans were both a boon and a problem. The drop in the value of the franc during the height of the 1953 tourist season illustrated the delicate relationship between the French economy and American tourist dollars. The problem was the availability of francs for dollar exchanges. The French had adopted a stopgap solution to provide francs for dollar exchanges that involved US film companies. These companies sought guarantees for the convertibility of profits to dollars. The Informational Media Guarantee Program provided some assurance, but this required approval by the State Department for individual projects. A more general agreement was reached with the French government. According to this agreement, franc earnings from US films were used to exchange tourist dollars.65 Profits were unblocked at the beginning of each tourism season for conversion.

This system showed its faults during the 1953 tourist season. The French government had enlarged the amount of unblocked movie profits in anticipation of an increase in tourists. However, in August large strikes led by the Force
Ouvrière occurred in the public sector. The strikes reduced tourist arrivals and the unblocked movie profits glutted the franc market. The exchange rate rose from 352 francs to the dollar before the strikes to a high of 385 in late August, and because prices remained stable, tourism profits declined. Thus, profits from tourism dropped as a result of the weak franc and cancellations due to the strikes.

By 1952 France had achieved its goal of three million foreign tourists, but it did not achieve the projected earnings. Why? Morice was correct in identifying the underground economy and high prices (coupled with inflation). Other factors inflated the number of tourists in France without the commensurate profit. One was the role of Paris as a geographic hub for European travel. Tourists staying for one night in Paris en route to another city were included in the French tourism figures, but their spending in Paris was negligible. Another source of American tourists was the American military in Europe. GIs on a two-day leave from Germany lowered the figure for per-capita spending while increasing the number of American tourists.

But if revenues from American tourism fell short of what the ECA and French officials hoped for, it was not for lack of efforts on both sides of the Atlantic to promote travel to France. The 1951 celebrations and publicity surrounding the 2000th anniversary of Paris illustrate the characteristics of transatlantic tourism promotion. Publicity in the United States was concentrated in Boston, Chicago, New York, and San Francisco. Jules Romains, the prominent writer and president of the organizing committee, came to the United States to promote the event. The Boston Symphony, conducted by Frenchman Charles Munch, held a concert in celebration. The Boston department store Jordan Marsh featured French merchandise in elaborate window displays. Windows lined with posters of the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame displayed Christain Dior dresses and Chanel perfume.

Articles, most likely coordinated with Mission France of the ECA, began appearing in late 1950. In November the New York Herald Tribune published a special supplement called “Paris Plans a Party!” “A party to end all parties will celebrate the city’s 2000th birthday next year,” declared the author, William Attwood:

Most Parisians don’t know it yet, but their city’s going to start a twelve-month birthday party next January—its first in 2000 years. That’s roughly how old Paris is supposed to be. No one knows for sure ... the main thing is having a good party.

The author described a series of meetings he held with two members of the organizing committee in Paris. “We want to reflect Paris’s role as the capital of Western Civilization,” one member told Attwood. “We want to attract a note that will attract Americans.” Between meetings Attwood related his walk to Notre Dame where he found “Americans swarming all over the ancient island from stem to stern.” Heartened by this sight, as well as that of a group of GIs
in the Bois de Boulogne wooing French women, Attwood assured one of the organizers, who feared Americans would not come, “I wouldn’t worry about the Americans. As far as they’re concerned, the party has already started and they are having a swell time at it.”

Attwood’s article was also intended to serve a didactic purpose. He told of meeting a flustered American tourist arguing with a Parisian taxi driver:

“What’s a matter with this guy?” he complained, “He won’t take good American money.” I suggested to him what might be the reaction of a New York Cabby to a proffered 500-franc note. He began to grin and relax.

Attwood befriended the tourist, “Fresh from the States and still smarting from a 3000-franc dinner tab at one of the gilded tourist traps near the Champs-Elysées.” He brought the American to a restaurant on a side street where they ate for less than a dollar and the proprietress explained the secret of her sauce béarnaise.

In addition to the didactic element—indicative of the influence of the ECA travel development officials—Attwood presented himself as something other than a tourist; he was what Chris Endy identifies as an expert traveler. In addition to Attwood’s advice to the American about the taxi and dinner, he also went to a café in St. Germain-des-Prés where French intellectuals debated and played chess. Attwood smugly explained that Americans could learn more about Paris in these cafés than in any by Notre Dame.

The San Francisco Chronicle published a travel supplement on the 2000th Birthday Party of Paris in April 1951. Like other publicity, the paper emphasized the cultural betterment entailed by a French vacation and the strength of the dollar:

Revel in the beauty of the country, in the cultural and artistic things that set France apart from the world. See the great museums, hear the finest concerts, study the architecture … and remember this: your dollar goes far in France.

“Beauty Comes First when One’s in Paris,” headlined a two-page spread on perfume (“France’s pedigreed industry”) and fashion. As for entertainment, one article recommended smoky spots on the Rue Pigalle where “the ladies discard their G-strings before the dance, and champagne is just another reminder that one should have left his wife at home.”

Four pages detailed the epicurean pleasures of Paris. “France has placed food in a special niche with love-making and wine-making as one of the honorable adornments of civilization.” This article reminded readers that because most restaurants post their menus on windows, they would have only themselves to blame if they erred on price. A facing page contained French recipes such as filet of sole chambord and deer stew à la française.

As these examples show, in their efforts to publicize tourism, French and American tourism officials and promoters presented a version of Frenchness
that was both conservative and titillating. Tourism publicity represented France as the land of vineyards and peasants, the Louvre, Notre Dame, and the Eiffel Tower. In addition to this conventional message, the publicity also revealed that France (particularly Paris) offered opportunities for gratification unavailable anyplace else. French cuisine, fashion and perfume offered the possibility for middle-class tourists to become sophisticated and glamorous. Cabarets and the Rue Pigalle promised men, with or without a wife, sexual adventure.

Conclusion

By 1952 American tourism to France was not only an example of a carefully marketed consumer product, it was also geographically concentrated in Paris and the Riviera. During 1952, American tourists in France occupied 90 percent of the beds in four-star hotels, and 87 percent of the beds in three-star hotels. In the same year, the only demographic group more numerous than Americans in Paris was Parisians. On the Côte d’Azur, only the British (58,103) were more numerous than the Americans (53,106). The American tourist flow to Biarritz and Bordeaux increased from 1950 to 1952 as a result of publicity in the American press, but the numbers remained smaller than Belgians, Spanish, and British visitors.

The concentration of Americans in Paris and the Riviera helped to reinforce French stereotypes about Americans. Paris was the favored leave destination for American soldiers stationed throughout Europe. Lapses of discipline by American soldiers in Paris were covered in L’Humanité and such incidents were a concern for French and American diplomats. Contrary to the assertion by a US official that tourism’s “contribution to mutual social and cultural appreciation among all nations are similarly immeasurable in terms of money,” the evidence suggests that American tourists in France did little to disabuse the French public of common stereotypes. Americans had been associated with materialism for over a century. The new American tourists concentrated in Paris did little to change this. Nevertheless, increasing international understanding was often presented as a bonus to the economic benefits of tourism. In early 1950 the ECA sponsored a poster program offering $2,000 in prizes for posters with the theme: “Understanding through travel is the passport to peace.”

Tourists were good for bringing dollars to France, but American officials believed they were not equally effective as proselytizers for the American way of life. As one ECA official explained:

We have found, surprisingly, that a single individual brought to this country and indoctrinated somewhat with our methods and manner of living, on his return to his country is of much greater value as an emissary of good will and the interchange of friendly relations, than two dozen or two hundred American tourists who, for a brief period, visit the country in question.
This statement reflected a growing belief in the State department of the importance of educational exchanges and visits by industry and government elites. American tourists were less effective than such visits for a number of reasons, one being that the State Department had only a limited influence on what tourists said, or what might be said to them. In theory, every American going abroad received the State Department pamphlet, “Tips for Your Trip.” Its purpose was to prevent the more embarrassing behaviors of American tourists. The reaction of one woman, “I’m from the country giving yours so much money,” to a French customs official was common enough.79 “Tips for Your Trip” cautioned: “Don’t forget that you’re a guest in Europe—politeness and respect for European customs and habits are always the best policy.”80 Another fear of the State Department was that Americans going abroad would be exposed to criticism of the United States. Printed in bold letters on the pamphlet was a reminder of the Marshall Plan’s significance: “It is a vital arm of US foreign policy directed toward postwar recovery in Europe and the establishment of a new pattern of world trade.”

The efforts by the French press to counter stereotypes of Americans as wanton consumers provide an indication of their strength. According to Le Figaro, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation expected a half-million American tourists in 1952.81 The paper warned that the French must not imagine American tourists “rolling in dollars.” Citing Theodore Pozzy, Le Figaro wrote: “The ‘deluxe’ American tourist has disappeared. It’s now the average American who is going to come to France.”82 La Croix criticized the Marshall Plan and the French government for financing high-priced resorts: “The era of billionaires is past and the hotel industry must face up to new conditions.”83 The paper noted that many bourgeois tourists could no longer afford the expenses of luxury vacations. They now had tastes similar to tourists of modest income. The paper happily reported that even Americans had adopted cost-saving habits. According to La Croix: “Nobody wants to be ‘taken for an American’ anymore.” Ostentation was no longer in line with the new conditions of tourism.

Even if the common view of Americans had not been based on long-standing perceptions of Americans as shallow and materialistic, the Marshall Plan program, which emphasized tourists as purveyors of dollars, would have created the image. The Salon du Tourisme was a case in point. By emphasizing the economic contribution of tourists, the Marshall Plan reaffirmed French assumptions about the affluence and materialism of Americans. However, if tourism tended to reinforce stereotypes about Americans, the same cannot be said for French views of American consumer goods tourists brought with them. During this period Marshall Plan exhibits that displayed such consumer goods as mixers, hair dryers, electric broilers, waffle irons, and garbage disposals were well received by French audiences.84 Ambivalence, not hostility, is often the most common response to Americanization.85 Nevertheless, tourism planners represented American tourists in simple terms to the French and pre-
sented a simplified France to Americans. This simplification of understanding corresponded to the needs and conditions of post-war tourism and was characteristic of both American and French officials.

The Marshall Plan’s impact on the French tourism industry was significant and formative. From hotels to rail transportation reconstruction funds helped rebuild and modernize the French tourism industry. New regulations governing air travel dramatically altered the conditions of transatlantic travel for the middle class. French international advertising for tourism targeted the American market, and Americans flocked to France in numbers far in excess of pre-war levels. Did Marshall Plan tourism development contribute to the Americanization of France? Indeed it did. Although the cultural and social changes the tourism program promoted in France were minor, the Americanization of France for American tourists did occur through this program. Reconstruction Americanized the physical features of the tourism industry. Furthermore, the French tourism industry viewed Americans as the most important demographic and its promotional material catered to their tastes. The success of the program was contingent on the extent to which a French vacation could be a part of a middle-class American consumer enterprise. Elite tourism no longer provided the numbers or the dollars that post-war France needed. Yet, it was exactly the elite status entailed by a trip to France that made French tourism appealing to middle- and upper-middle-class American consumers.

The Marshall Plan created the conditions for the post-war success of the tourism industry in France, either directly, as was the case with the creation of tourist class airfares, or indirectly through underwriting the Monnet Plan. After the Marshall Plan the French government took responsibility for the development and promotion of tourism. French tourism has flourished. In 2001, 76.5 million tourists visited France, more than any other country in the world and over 10 percent of all international tourism. Spain and the United States placed a distant second and third with 49.5 and 44.5 million, respectively.

In 1948 the Commissariat Général au Tourisme referred to tourism as the “highest French industry.” It represented the “healthiest and most authentic” source of French influence and prestige abroad. International tourism had become an element of the state’s cultural policy. The French government thus instrumentally embraced a key aspect of globalization, and selectively Americanized it in an attempt to maximize the economic benefit. Indeed, from 1948 to 1952 the French tourism industry Americanized in order to increase the reach of French culture. Given French apprehensions about globalization and the impact of American mass culture, the results of this strategy at times appear paradoxical. Recently Planet Hollywood outlets have failed throughout the world, but the Champs-Elysées location is alive and well, as evidenced by the thousands of people who were on hand to cheer Sylvester Stallone during a recent visit. Ten years after the French government won the competition for the new European location of a Disney resort the park is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe: an “insolent success,” in the words of
Agence France Presse. To the extent that France sees tourism as both essential for the *rayonnement* of its culture and a key industry, it will have to manage the commodifying logic tourism brings with it.

### Notes

1. J.J. Viala to Bonnet, 19 September 1949; Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, Relations culturelles 1945-59/échanges culturelles 1948-55/126. I am grateful for the comments and suggestions of the editor and the anonymous reviewers of *French Politics, Culture & Society*. I would also like to thank Richard F. Kuisel, Pauline P. Cullen, Herman Lebovics, and Ellen Furlough for commenting on earlier versions of this article. A faculty development grant from Colby-Sawyer College supported research for this project.


10. US Congressional Record, Promotion of tourism can supply Europe, Wednesday, April 26 (legislative day of Wednesday March 29), 1950.


20. Travel Development Section, E.C.A. France, NARA, RG 469, entry 969, box 3.


27. Report on Salon du Tourisme, NARA, RG 469, entry 1193, box 47.


33. The CAB had no control of international fares and rates as such, but it did have the power to approve or reject any agreement between US carriers and foreign airlines. Since all IATA decisions had to be unanimous this gave it an effective veto. See Wheatcroft, *Air Transport*, pp. 221-26.


42. Letter from Pozzy to Wilkinson, March 23, 1951.
43. Pozzy to Wilkinson, April 3, 1951. NARA, RG 469, entry 970, box 2.
45. Ibid., p. 139.
48. Telegram from American Embassy Paris to Department of State, February 18, 1952. NARA, RG 469, entry 969, box 3.
49. Ibid.
50. From Paris to State Department. NARA, Central decimal files of the State Department, 851.181/3-752.
52. French Tourist Trends, NARA, Central decimal files of the State Department, 851.181/12-2953.
53. Tourist Traffic to France by Air, NARA, Central decimal files of the State Department, 851.181/1-1454.
54. *Tourist 5*, p. 3; Tourist Traffic to France by Air, 851.181/1-1454.
55. Tourism Developments, France, NARA, Central decimal files of the State Department, 851.181/1-2853.
56. Tourism Developments, France, 851.181/1-2853.
58. Joint Publicity Program for 1951, European Travel Committee. NARA, RG 469, entry 928, box 3.
59. Tourism, France (Conseil Superieur du Tourisme), NARA, Central decimal files of the State Department, 851.181/12-552.
60. Compte-rendu annuel d’activité, Comité de Tourisme de Paris et du departement de la Seine. NARA, RG 469, entry 969, box 3.
61. Tourism Developments, France, 851.181/1-2853.
63. Tourism Developments, France 851.181/1-2853.
64. 60 percent of American tourists to France during 1952 traveled during the off-season. “Le tourisme étranger en France en 1952.”
65. Recent developments in Paris Capital Franc Market and Outlook for the Future, NARA, Central decimal files of the State Department, Central decimal files of the State Department, 851.131/8-2553.
68. “Le Tourisme étranger en France en 1952.”
70. I have been unable to find direct links between specific articles and agency decisions. However, it is likely, given the close ties between Mission France and press agencies, as evidenced by the planning participation of William H. Wise of the New
York Herald Tribune. Furthermore, the funds allotted by the OEEC for the promotion of the event were spent by the European Travel Commission in New York. The ETC had direct contact with both Mission France and the Commerce Department, “Minutes of the European Travel Commission,” November 22, 1949, NARA, RG 469, entry 928, box 3.

73. San Francisco Chronicle, 29 April 1951.
74. British tourists often surpassed Americans in number, but it was the Americans who flocked to Paris. “Le tourisme dans les regions de France,” Études et conjoncture 9 (September 1953).
76. See, for example, L’Humanité, 23 Mai 1951; Factors Adversely Affecting the Acceptance of US Troops in Europe, NARA, RG 469, entry 302, box 10.
77. Contribution of Travel Development to Closing the Dollar Gap.
78. Minutes of Travel Advisory Committee, Department of Commerce, Office of International Trade, October 5, 1950, NARA, RG 469, entry 928, box 7.
79. Memo to Theodore Pozzy, NARA, RG 469, entry 928, box 6.
80. Tips for Your Trip, NARA, RG 469, entry 928, box 6.
81. Le Figaro, 7 June 1949
82. Ibid.
83. La Croix, 4 June 1949.
86. The highpoint of prewar international tourism to France was 1929 when two million tourists visited. French Tourist Trends, 851.181/12-2953.
87. As Chris Endy points out, as early as 1909 the question was not “Can I afford to travel?” but “Can I afford to stay at home?” Endy, “Travel and World Power,” p. 570.
89. Étude sur le tourisme en France de 1946 à 1948, NARA, RG 469, entry 969, box 3.
90. Le Figaro, 9 September 2002.
91. Agence France Presse, 10 April 2002.