Tourism as connectedness

Abstract

Late modernity in developed nations is characterized by changing social and psychological conditions, including individualization, processes of competition and loneliness. Remaining socially connected is becoming increasingly important. In this situation, travel provides meaning through physical encounters, inclusion in traveller Gemeinschaft based on shared norms, beliefs and interests, and social status in societies increasingly defined by mobilities. As relationships are forged and found in mobility, travel is no longer an option, rather a necessity for sociality, identity construction, affirmation or alteration. Social contexts and the underlying motivations for tourism have changed fundamentally in late modernity: non-tourism has become a threat to self-conceptions. By integrating social and psychological perspectives, this paper expands and deepens existing travel and mobilities discussions to advance the understanding of tourism as a mechanism of social connectedness, and points to implications for future tourism research.

Introduction

The contemporary tourism system is characterized by massive growth (UNWTO 2015).

Explanations for this growth have included a wide range of reasons, including the growing

world population, availability of increasing disposable incomes, particularly in emerging

world regions, faster means of transport, and changing patterns of work, socializing and

dwelling (Hall 2005; Schafer and Victor 1999; Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2000, 2011).

Developed societies have seen changing mobility patterns resulting in individuals being part

of global networks with colleagues, friends and family spread over far reaching geographical

spaces (Axhausen 2002), and where even those who have not moved may find themselves

part of global networks (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006). These changing mobility patterns

are linked to changing motivations for travel, on which considerable work has been presented

over the decades (e.g. Crompton 1979; Dann 1977; Gnoth 1997; Maoz 2007; Pearce 1993;

Pearce and Lee 2005; Plog 1974; Ross and Iso-Ahola 1991).

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While acknowledging this earlier work, this paper takes an alternative approach by discussing individual and social psychologies underlying travel motivation; that is, how the sociological condition of late modernity influences individual and collective travel psychologies. Bauman (2000) considers late modernity (also referred to as liquid modernity) to be an extension of modernity as opposed to being part of the succeeding postmodern era; this is a notion also favoured by Giddens (1991). It is for the fluid property of late modernity that the term is used in this paper as a reference point rather than other theoretical constructs such as postmodernity or post industrialism (another transitional era which is marked by distinct rather than evolving change). Underlying motivations for travel and tourism, it will be argued, can only be understood from combined sociological and psychological viewpoints. Evidence for the proposition of a deeper social-psychology of travel motivation can be found in research showing that travel has fundamental value to individuals such as benefits to physical and psychological wellbeing (e.g. Higgins-Desbiolles 2006; McCabe, Joldersma and Li 2010). Conversely, the prospect of having to travel less has been found to stir considerable emotions, revealing hostile reactions to even insinuated infringements on the freedom of travel (Randles and Mander 2009; see also Higham, Cohen and Cavaliere 2014). It may be deduced that travel, as an activity linked to such deep emotions, must have fundamental functions in contemporary society in industrialized countries, even though this argument is not necessarily transferable to some parts of the population in developing nations. Travel and mobilities research lacks a discussion of transport psychologies entirely (Hannam, Butler and Paris 2014); therefore, it may be necessary to discuss tourism motivations from new viewpoints, much in the spirit of Larsen, Urry and Axhausen's (2007) 'de-exoticising' of tourism.

The paper sets out an introduction to the current sociological condition of late modernity, and its social-psychological implications for individuals, including a discussion as to how

socioeconomic structures have changed in recent decades, and how this has affected individual and social psychologies. This provides the basis for developing a new understanding of travel and tourism using contemporary socio-economic and psychological perspectives, in which society is increasingly characterized by loneliness, and socio-economic structures framed by inequality, insecurity and competition. These aspects of late modernity have led to changes in travel motivations including the need to maintain and extend social connections in increasingly mobile worlds, and the enhancement of social status through mobility patterns (Arp Fallov, Jørgensen and Knudsen, 2013; Kesselring, 2006). It is important to note the geographic focus of this conceptual paper is on developed nations, which does not provide an all-encompassing explanation for a deeper psychology of travel in late modernity, and the paper's treatment of the social, economic, political and psychological forces at play in modernity is necessarily reductive and non-exhaustive. This is equally true for the discussion of embodied aspects of identity such as race, class or gender, inequalities between the mobility rich and poor and demographic differences that will vary within and across societies and cannot be considered here in their complexity.

Social connectedness and the condition of loneliness

A key assumption of this paper is that social belonging is a central endeavour of humans. Social connectedness is a feeling of interpersonal closeness in a social context, and forms a major part of an individual's sense of belonging. Social connectedness is based on a variety of types of relationship from close relationships with parents or friends to more distant relationships such as those with communities or wider society (Lee and Robbins 2000). It is one of the most fundamental aspects of human life, as social belonging is essential for the sense that one's life has meaning (James 1890; Williams 2001). Where people mostly exist outside social networks, it is impossible to have a meaningful existence, as an individual's sense of self arises out of social interaction (Vaughan and Hogg 2002).

There is considerable evidence in the literature that individuals make huge efforts to socially belong, and that, indeed, there is a "universal need to belong" (Heinrich and Gullone 2006, 696). Being rejected has detrimental psychological consequences, because without feelings of acceptance, having peers, and being appreciated in forms of close relationships, human life is significantly reduced in meaning, or does not have meaning at all (Williams 2001). Individuals who feel that their social relationships are deficient feel lonely (Peplau and Perlman 1982); a subjective experience not synonymous with social isolation (West, Kellner and Moore-West 1986, 352) and different from being alone (Cacioppo and Patrick 2008). Close relationships that would protect against loneliness require a sense of security of the other's responsiveness (Reis, Clark and Holmes 2004), and relationships that are close thus imply more frequent, diverse, and strong impacts on the other person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour (Berscheid, Snyder and Omoto 1989).

Perceptions of not socially belonging and being rejected affect both psychological and physical well-being and health: to feel lonely strongly predicts depression (Nolen-Hoeksema and Ahrens 2002), and is linked to dementia, Alzheimer's disease, high blood pressure, alcoholism, paranoia, anxiety and, *in extremis*, can lead to suicide (e.g. Fratiglioni, Wang, Ericsson, Maytan and Winblad 2000; Gullone 2000; Hawkley, Thisted, Masi and Cacioppo 2010; Stravynski and Boyer 2011; West et al. 1986; Wilson et al. 2007). In contrast, social relationships offer attachment, expressed in security and commitment, social integration, opportunity for nurturance, reassurance of worth, reliable alliance, and guidance (Heinrich and Gullone 2006).

Even though the importance of social connectedness and close relations for human beings is undisputed, there is considerable evidence that a significant share of individuals, at least in

developed countries, are lonely. Comparable evidence from developing countries is beyond the present paper's scope. Cacioppo and Patrick (2008, 5) suggest that about 20% of individuals in the US feel "sufficiently isolated for it to be a major source of unhappiness in their lives". Depending on age group, Yang and Victor (2011) find that 6-34% of adults across 25 European nations feel lonely. These results are confirmed by national studies, with for instance, a Norwegian study revealing that depending on measurement instrument, 21-24% of individuals experience loneliness, with the oldest age group (65-81 years old) reporting feelings of loneliness most often, though loneliness was also more common among the youngest respondents (18-29 years) (Nicolaisen and Thorsen 2014). Victor and Yang (2012), in a study in the UK, confirm that loneliness prevalence is higher among those aged under 25 and over 65 years, with 9% feeling lonely "all or most of the time", and 28% (men) and 34% (women) experiencing loneliness sometimes. Complete withdrawal from societal face-to-face contact to a home-centred lifestyle, termed 'Hikikomori Syndrome', has grown in prevalence in Japan to 2% of 20-29 year olds, with evidence of the phenomenon also in Spain (Malagón-Amor, Córcoles-Martínez, Martín-López and Pérez-Solà 2015). Notably, loneliness is a stigma, and, as an expression of lack of social ties, may thus not be discussed openly (Rokach 2013).

Lonely individuals will typically seek to be socially connected (Peplau and Perlman 1982) as a mechanism to overcome loneliness. This will often involve travel, a suggestion that is not generally different from foundational studies on motivations for tourism (e.g. Cohen 1979; Crompton 1979; Dann 1977; Pearce 1993), all of which have proposed that travel can be about connectedness and strengthening of familial relationships. Yet, what is different is that members of contemporary societies find the need to connect arising out of fundamentally different socio-economic and psychological conditions, and making use of different means to connect than before.

Changing socio-economic structures

Social and economic structures in the developed world have changed fundamentally over the past 60-70 years, and it may be argued these changes have affected individual and collective social psychologies. In Europe, North America and Japan, the post-WWII period saw economically prospering societies with rapid growth in global GDP (World Bank 2014). Economic growth was accompanied by the emergence of neoliberal economic structures in the 1970s, and a growing advocacy of free markets in the 1980s and 1990s. As a consequence, income and wealth distribution became increasingly unequal, both globally and within nations (OECD 2011, 2014; Piketty 2014; Sassen 1988, 1999, 2014).

In line with these developments, economic maxims changed. The 1980s in the UK, for example, saw a rise in a political and economic ideology based on the individual rather than society (Voase 2007). In line with political and economic developments, welfare states were dismantled, and power rendered over to companies or removed from the State, as globalized production also made workforces increasingly global. As suggested by Bauman (2007), this caused fundamental changes in capitalism. A system for centuries organised by nation states now saw companies increasingly dictating the terms of the global economy. The rise of "flexible capitalism" (Sennett 1998) saw high-risk, low-loyalty workplaces, in which the individual as a person became replaceable, as only skills became seen to be relevant. Loyalties to other workers or commitment to the firm broke apart, being made redundant by short-term orientation on tasks and focus on ability (Sennett 2007). Labour markets thus came to inspire and promote division and competition, devaluing collaboration and the importance of the individual: societies increasingly became a 'network' rather than a 'structure' (Bauman 2007).

North America, Europe, and Japan, despite being culturally diverse both from each other and within individual national societies, all experienced growing levels of individual economic wealth in a broad middle class empowered by increasing independence from social structures, i.e. the group affiliations providing the very care, food and protection once represented in family structures and close relations. Economic independence supported individualization. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) provide one understanding of this phenomenon by explaining that life goals changed significantly since the 1950s and 60s, when key ambitions included having a new car, a happy home life or a superior education for one's children. Today's goals for a 'better' educated and more affluent youth are based around self-development with the success markers of previous generations no longer thought of as relevant. This has led to reflexivity and self-doubt with people questioning their happiness and fulfilment and creating a new value system of "duty to oneself" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 38).

Social network structures also changed. In the US, Putnam (2000) analysed changes in community structures over 25 years, finding that voluntary association memberships declined continuously and significantly. Delanty (2003) proposes that the traditional form of community (i.e. place based) has been challenged by modernity, globalization and the proliferation of technology and as a result is now in transition. Wellman (2001) describes the evolution of community as progressing from door-to-door (where people walked to visit each other) to place-to-place (transportation developments broadened the community beyond the immediate neighbourhood) to what exists now: person-to-person (enabled by communication technology). This demonstrates a shift from localised, place-based communities, to ones that are centred more on the individual. While individuals may become members of special interest communities by undertaking activities such as shopping (Bauman 2000) or backpacking (Cohen 2010) they may also find themselves part of traditional place-based

communities, albeit temporarily, at tourist spaces such as campsites (Dickinson et al. submitted). The move from placed-based communities to communities as a search for meaning and identity is largely a result of a desire for belonging. Lee and Robbins (1995) suggest that connectedness is one of the key elements of belongingness.

Putnam (2000) also noted a decline in participation in family dinners or having friends over, mirroring a decline in social connectedness and close relationships. Such developments have changed individual's immediate social environments, generating greater flexibility in the choice of social networks and a weakening of 'dense networks of social bonds' (Bauman 2007, 58), leading to the emergence of a more liquid phase of modernity representing a condition in which social forms 'melt faster than the time it takes to cast them' (Bauman 2007, 1). This has, over the past decade, led to increased use of the Internet and in particular social media to reach out to social networks (Germann Molz 2012), apparently also to overcome loneliness and anxiousness (Morahan-Martin and Schumacher 2003). Notably, social media provide strong and weak ties (Steinfield, Ellison and Lampe 2008), potentially increasing sociality as lonely individuals use the Internet more often (Morahan-Martin and Schumacher 2003).

A rise in individualism is thought to be a characteristic of a developed society in the stages of late modernity. It is a phenomenon where the individual has increased autonomy and freedom of choice, and where personal interests replace traditional concerns for family, church and other communities. Individualism has seen a rise in concern for self-actualization, personal development and happiness (Halman 1996), but it is also linked to narcissistic personality traits (Twenge and Foster 2010), competition, and a decline in levels of empathy (Konrath, O'Brien and Hsing 2011), ultimately resulting in isolation (Allik and Realo 2004). In tourism, focus on self and support of individualism is evident in for instance, advertisement campaigns

by cruise operator Aida "Mein Schiff" [My Ship], or Lufthansa's 2013-2015 "nonstop you" campaign (Lufthansa, no year). Through such campaigns, industry appears to pamper egos, emphasizing that it is individual wishes that matter most, encouraging "Generation Me" (Twenge 2014). There has also been growth in the availability and popularity of volunteer tourism to pursue goals of self-development or self-actualization (Sin 2009). As Voase (2007) suggests, growth in individualism is also evident in individuated experiences, facilitated in particular by the Internet.

Yet, as outlined, growing individualism may develop in parallel to growing economic and social insecurity. Individualism, it may be argued, thus leads to growing liquidity in social structures, changes in the quantity and quality of social networks and close relations, and is linked to political, economic and environmental uncertainty (Bauman 2007; Baumeister 1986; Giddens 1991). The following sections will argue that as a result of those changes there is a rise in individual change characterized by competition and social comparison, with a focus on self-conception and individualization. Yet, these developments have also fostered a desire to stay connected, and to be part of social networks. In contemporary developed societies, the paradox is that we are both encouraged to be individuals and to fight as individuals, while we simultaneously yearn to socially belong.

Changing social-psychologies of travel

The condition of late modernity has fundamentally changed societies and these changes have affected individual and collective social psychologies in various ways. In particular, loneliness and patterns of individualisation have increased in prevalence. While aspects of escape, relationship enhancement, social connectedness, or social status as motivations for travel and tourism have gained importance (Larsen et al. 2007; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2014), this has not been sufficiently linked to socio-economic change in societies and its

psychological implications. The following sections propose that tourism increasingly assumes two central functions for many individuals in developed nations, albeit awareness of these functions may be low: tourism is ever more a means to achieve proximity and social connectedness through corporeal mobility and physical encounters with others, not limited to family members; and it is ever more an instrument to achieve social status in late modernity as greater value is placed on lifestyles based on movement (Cohen, Duncan and Thulemark 2015; Urry 2003, 2011).

Proximity through movement

In a world characterized by dissolving social forms there is a heightened yearning for belonging. As Larsen et al. (2007) argue, contemporary tourism is less an escape from the ordinary than a means of making possible social relations. This paper argues that this is in considerable part linked to dissolving social structures leading to loneliness and feelings of being left behind, disconnected or rejected (Nicolaisen and Thorsen 2014; Victor and Yang 2012). In this situation, tourism gains importance as a means of connectivity. On the most fundamental level, this pertains to corporeal mobility, i.e. the very opportunity of staying in touch by overcoming physical distance (Bauman 1998; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2014; Hall 2005; Janta, Cohen and Williams 2015; Urry 2000, 2011).

The importance of this travel motivation is also evident in travel statistics: UNWTO (2015) estimates that 27% of all tourism is visiting friends and relatives (VFR), a segment that may in reality even be larger (Backer 2012) and growing (UNWTO 2011), and closely linked to migration (Griffin 2014), globalization and new social structures including "global families" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2014). VFR thus constitutes a 'traditional' form of tourism, intensified by the late-modern dispersion of kinship and increasingly global networks of friends. Though liquid modernity may weaken ties in these networks, there will remain a need

for co-presence (Urry 2003). Janta et al. (2015) identify five key practices of VFR travel, namely: social relationships, the provision of care, affirmations of identities and roots, maintenance of territorial rights, and leisure tourism. They argue that while VFR travel is not as problem free as some literature may suggest, it does provide the opportunity for relationships and feelings of connectedness to be created or affirmed, this is also true in travel undertaken in search of new ties (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). VFR travel may take place at a location where neither party has hosting responsibilities, thus allowing relationships to be performed on neutral territory (Janta et al. 2015).

VFR tourism, along with volunteer tourism, independent travel where backpackers create communities (Cohen 2010) and virtual travel (including online forums) are examples of the many manifold types of travel that tourists may undertake in search of connectedness. Connectedness may also be experienced at locations other than the destination. For example, journeys to destinations (Dickinson, Lumsden, and Robbins 2011), meeting strangers at train stations (Hibbert, Dickinson, Gössling, and Curtin 2013) or virtually online (before, during or after travel) through web travel forums or social media (Gössling and Stavrindini 2015) are all opportunities for connectedness.

In late modernity, tourism is also an offer of Gemeinschaft, a 'community' of people with shared understanding of norms, interests and beliefs (Brint 2001), which allows individuals to join networks of likeminded travellers, offering symbols of identity, evidenced, for instance, in the couchsurfing community (Germann Molz 2007). The joining of networks of likeminded people provides an opportunity for identity affirmation, development and performance, as individuals seek a sense of belonging that has diminished with changing socio-economic structures (Bauman 2001). Therefore, while tourism has become a key element of social connectedness, in some contexts it is even more; it is an offer of community affiliation in an

age of loneliness. Expressions of this are ubiquitous, from marketing campaigns such as, 'Generation Easyjet' (2013/2014) inviting anyone to join the community of urban, highly mobile, unbound travellers, as well as Ryanair's 2014 campaign 'Love', depicting a yellow heart on blue background, filled with no content but the figure 17.99 (the price in Euro to be paid for being (re-)connected). Though these campaigns offer different kinds of social connection, that is, membership in dispersed virtual communities as well as face-to-face co-presence with loved ones, both represent relations to significant others.

Through movement, these campaigns imply, structures of loneliness can be overcome. While this may seem a notable paradox, as tourism is in itself a dissolving agent of social structures (Bauman 1998, 2007; Cohen and Gössling 2015), tourism creates *meaning* in the lives of many people as it is now an essential mechanism to generate social connectedness in industrialized countries. This has become increasingly interlinked with Internet use, as social media make mobile lives more visible to peers (Gössling and Stavrinidi 2016). Germann Molz (2012) suggests that social media allow for co-presence, and hence new forms and locations (i.e. online) of sociality that ultimately generate new forms of network capital. Network capital might be the actual social connection that mobility (corporeal or virtual) affords or it could simply be the potential of social connection: possessing network capital results in emotional, financial and practical benefits (Urry 2007). While there is some possibility that this may act as an alternative to tourism, research indicates that both strong and weak ties generate network capital, involving physical meetings (Gössling and Stavrinidi 2016). Strength of tie is related to "the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services" of the connection (Granovetter 1973, 1361).

Tourism as social status

The mobility turn emphasizes that corporeal mobility is an important precondition for one's

social standing in society, and that less mobile people face disadvantages and social exclusion (Sheller and Urry 2006). One's 'travelness' has for some time been discussed as a signifier of status, because contemporary society assigns high social value to the consumption of distance, to 'being mobile' (Larsen and Guiver 2013; Urry 2007, 2011). Bauman (1998, 2) observed that: "Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern times". Over the past 15 years, these processes have become more intricate, facilitated by the availability of social media (Cohen and Gössling 2015), and fuelled by social and psychological changes resulting in individualization and focus on personal identities. As Crouch (2013, 587) suggests, tourism consumption is linked to self or social identities, and driven by "its demonstrative effects of superior status". Where mobility patterns turn into an object of admiration, they become a social necessity, playing a part in shaping 'liquid identities', i.e. malleable identities increasingly built and modelled on mobilities (Gössling and Stavrinidi 2016). Liquid identity however also relates to a mind-set, in which identities are flexible and can be modelled on specific, admired lifestyles. These lifestyle propositions may be dominated by individuals with specific personality traits, with Ryan and Xenos (2011, 1663) concluding "…Facebook specifically gratifies the narcissistic individual's need to engage in self-promoting and superficial behaviour".

Identities have not always been flexible or as liquid; changes in societies, economies and political systems have meant that enforced (i.e. previously taken for granted) identities are changing and in some cases being erased (Woodward 1997). Increased scope to define one's identity was not always an option because of the comparably static nature of society (Giddens 1991). Bauman (2001, 144) asserts that due to the choices now increasingly available "'individualization' consists in transforming human 'identity' from a 'given' in to a 'task'".

Tourism as a form of consumption (Gram 2005) is associated with choice, as decisions will be made about where to go, how to travel and who to go with all allowing for specific presentations of self.

A significant recent phenomenon in this context is the emergence of ever more competitive patterns in tourism. Although competitive behaviour is ubiquitous in contemporary life (Garcia, Tor and Schiff 2013), and is fostered through continuing trends of individualization, the competitive mechanisms at work in the context of mobility have rarely been explicitly discussed outside of analyses of backpacker narratives (e.g. Desforges 2000; Noy 2004a, 2004b; O'Reilly 2006; Sørensen 2003). Thurlow and Jaworski (2006) do so in examining the accumulation of symbolic capital in the case of frequent flyer programmes, while Burns and Bibbings (2009) observe how destinations are 'ticked off' personal lists and collected as 'trophies' to display.

Others have identified the concepts of prestige and status as motivational factors to explain tourism consumption (Correia and Kozak 2012). While symbolic capital, prestige and status draw our attention to how we may try to distinguish ourselves from others in social fields (Bourdieu 1984), these perspectives tend to gravitate towards issues of social inclusion and class (e.g. Casey 2010), without adequately considering mechanisms of competitive behaviour. Again, the work by Thurlow and Jaworski (2006) is one exception, and illustrates the competitive performative practices through which 'mobility capital' (Scott 2006), or network capital (Urry 2012) is amassed, such as by moving from gold to platinum elite status in frequent flyer schemes. Competitive behaviour, however, not only arises from societal structures of provision and discourse, but is also produced and reproduced through the performances of individuals, and is thus at least partially tied to psychological processes. It is here where the concept of *social comparison theory*, a term proposed in a seminal paper by

Festinger (1954), and defined as "the tendency to self-evaluate by comparing ourselves to others" (Garcia et al. 2013, 634), perhaps gives the most leverage in understanding competitive mobility behaviour at the level of individuals.

There is a strong link between competitive behaviour and processes of social comparison (Festinger 1954), with this manifesting itself through tourism, as it does in other domains of consumption and production. Although competition is multiply determined, social comparison on a broad basis is a key source in *increasing* competiveness (Garcia et al. 2013). Competitive behaviour manifests out of 'comparative concerns', which are the desire to reach or continue a superior position relative to others. Comparative concerns arise from both individual and situational factors, with the former relating to personality variables such as an actor's competitive disposition, whereby "people have an innate motivation to evaluate their own abilities and opinions" (Doran and Larsen 2014, 1025), and the latter centred on how societal structures affect comparably situated actors (Garcia et al. 2013). Situational factors that increase competitiveness may include, for instance, proximity to a standard, such as when a rankings system is in place. Often these comparisons manifest in an upward drive to outperform others perceived as slightly better off (Buunk and Gibbons 2007). Social mechanisms that tally and glamorize mobility, such as visualizations of travel within Facebook or TripAdvisor, which count the numbers of destinations its members have visited and allow them to compare their total to that of peers (Cohen and Gössling 2015; Gössling and Stavrinidi 2016), are indicative of situational factors that foster social comparison and lead to competitive mobility behaviour.

Social comparison, and hence competitive behaviour, increases both when people compare themselves to similar others, and do so in front of an audience (Garcia et al. 2013), and may be particularly relevant for the already highly mobile or those aspiring to mobile lifestyles.

Consequently, social media sites where members are linked to friends, who are often similar in terms of personal characteristics and form a cohort of observers, are particularly strong channels for fostering competition. Social comparison through these sites may be intensified by the 'local dominance effect' (Zell and Alicke 2010), which suggests that self-comparison with a few specific individuals has a stronger influence on competitive behaviour than comparison with a larger aggregate. The highly personalized nature of profiles on some social networking sites thus seems to escalate competitive behaviour through a local dominance effect. With tourism practices increasingly articulated through social networking sites such as Facebook, such sites are engendering complex patterns of competition for mobility capital, creating, in the process, 'winners and losers' (Gössling and Stavrinidi 2016).

The threat of non-tourism

Previous sections have sought to discuss the changing role of tourism in contemporary developed societies. Urry (2007) outlined that the importance of movement is now such that it is one of the most significant forces ordering emotional and social lives. Any factor that would reduce the opportunity for social interactions with close others will increase loneliness (Shaver et al. 1985), and any measure that would restrict mobility must thus be a threat to self-identity and self-conceptions, evoking anxieties. Similarly, having positive and close relationships and a role and standing in a connected society are essential for wellbeing (Helliwell and Putnam 2004) as these are underlying aspects of having a meaningful life (Baumeister et al. 2013).

Mobility and tourism have consequently become essential for achieving positive relationships and social status on various levels including with wider society. Lee and Robbins (2000) state that social connectedness arises not just via relationships with family and friends but also through feeling connected to communities and society. In societies that place value on

mobility, individuals may feel the need to travel in order to be part of society, to feel relevant or "human amongst humans" (Kohut 1984, 200) and/or to maintain cultural reference points. Kesselring and Vogl (2010, 150) suggest that "the immobile individual is potentially excluded from power and the cosmopolitan society." The opportunity of mobility also brings mobility inequalities (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006) as some people will find themselves either unable to travel or will experience mobility in ways very different to the majority (e.g. Small 2015). Even the possibility of mobility restrictions is likely to invoke fear, and lead to hostile reactions, as observed by Randles and Mander (2009).

Sheller and Urry (2006) argue that mobility permeates society and collective psychologies, shaping individual and national identities founded in near constant movement (cf. Adey 2010; Edensor 2004). This paper argues that one's ability to be mobile may now have become the single most important determinant of social connectedness. Mobility is a prerequisite for work, leisure and relations, and increasingly defines one's standing in society and network capital (Urry 2011). In conclusion, tourism and travel not only afford but also necessitate connectivity and sociality in an iterative process. This would indicate that mobility becomes increasingly fundamental to contemporary societies and that further growth in tourism can be expected because of these social and psychological developments. On the level of the individual, this predicts a rise in liquid identities (Gössling and Stavrinidi 2016). For those thriving on mobility and performing liquid identities successfully, this is likely to also result in degrees of self-assurance and growth of ego, while for those being unable to embrace this liquidity for economic, social, psychological or other reasons, loss of connectedness and greater degrees of loneliness may paradoxically be a consequence of ever more mobile societies.

Conclusions

This paper argues that collective and individual psychologies of social connectedness in developed societies have fundamentally changed in recent decades, and that because of these changes, underlying motivations for tourism have also profoundly changed. This paper has explored these interrelationships, concluding that in contemporary society, social bonds and solidarity structures are dissolving, and close relationships are increasingly in danger. Social comparison, on the other hand, has become more relevant, creating increased uncertainty in personal identities, which now may be increasingly modelled on means of social connectedness founded in corporeal mobility.

Many individuals seek to increase their social connectedness, with tourism serving this purpose through at least two interrelated mechanisms: proximity through movement and the generation of social status. 'Proximity through movement' refers to social relations that are ever more dependent on overcoming distance. Tourism in itself is thus becoming an offer of Gemeinschaft: social connectedness is a ubiquitous experience of self as understood in relation to its place in the world and can be founded on relationships (or connections) with strangers (Lee and Robbins 2000). As sociality is becoming increasingly more relevant, and increasingly based on social media (Germann Molz 2012), the phenomenon may now be directly or indirectly relevant for most travellers. As outlined, the search and longing for sociality is already used in tourism advertisement campaigns, and it may be argued that basic human emotions including feelings of loneliness, have now become a key selling point for travel, in which tourism becomes as a mechanism for connectedness.

Travel and tourism are also generators of social status in contemporary society, as tourists compete on mobility, with the most frequent travellers embracing liquid identities in a process of social comparison. There will thus be those admiring and behaviourally mimicking those successfully acquiring social connectedness, social status and network capital out of

mobilities. Those unable to compete due to power asymmetries, or unwilling to admire liquid identities, may withdraw, with a renewed focus on local networks, or isolation. Embracing liquid modernity, on the other hand, would imply a more active maintenance and defence of one's position in social networks through corporeal travel and visiting significant others, as well as immersing oneself in social media to expose one's travelness and thereby maintain sociality and gain status. Social media in particular may be characterized by competitive structures, fostering the need to travel. Paradoxically, proximity in online networks is thus found in the consumption of distance.

The implications of this paper's arguments are manifold and point towards a number of areas that tourism studies should emphasize in future research. First, the focus in this paper has been on developed societies. Cohen and Cohen (2015) illustrate how the growing middle classes from developing nations are increasing travelling on domestic to long-haul international scales. It is likely that similar socio-economic shifts that empower the middle classes, by giving them increasing independence from social structures, will also be underway in some developing nations, albeit with their own socio-cultural, political and economic complexities. It will be necessary to understand if and how issues of social connectedness and loneliness materialize, and the roles that tourism may play in generating social relations and status in these contexts. Second, the arguments here have important implications for research on social tourism (see Minnaert, Maitland and Miller 2011). Those who are less mobile are likely to feel excluded, as tourism and the ability to be mobile plays an increasing role in feeling fully part of society, and in one's standing in society. This implies that justifications for social tourism, as a fundamental right to travel, will only strengthen. Third, as mobility is evermore relied upon as means of social connectedness, further growth in tourism can be expected in both the developing and developed world. This may provide further opportunities for the tourism and transport industries to capitalize on feelings of loneliness and

connectedness through advertising campaigns, but it also presents challenges for the sustainability of the sector. Restricting mobility for environmental reasons will encounter considerable resistance due to the threat it would place on self-identities and the opportunity for social relations.

Consequently, these findings are also pertinent to discussions of transport interventions in the context of environmental issues, with for instance Hall (2012, 68) asking: *"Why have so many people increasingly come to believe that consuming such mobility will somehow make them happier and improve their life?"*. This paper argues that tourism can increase perceived wellbeing because it creates sociability and connectedness, as well as social status in a world that appears to be increasingly characterized by individualization and loss of meaning. Tourism has thus gained fundamental importance in late modernity, with reasons for travel being increasingly found in contemporary social-psychologies of individualization and a desire of finding social connectedness.

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