



Research Report

GA3

Preventing the negative influence that unethical production, mainly for mass tourism purposes, has on labourers in underdeveloped countries.

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Introduction

Unethical production is something that we see all around the world, you may think that this is only limited to countries like China, which we are familiar to by their mass production and unfair wages. However, unethical produced products are found in (nearly) every supermarket, or clothing store. But also, online stores are in the spotlight due to their production values, large cooperations like amazon have been known to avoid tax payments, but how does that contribute to unethical production you may ask? By avoiding tax payments, they contribute to the GDP without their earnings actually making a difference in the livelihoods of the citizens, meaning that in some cases it has an ill effect on the citizens. This can also be done by them not paying up for climate effects they may have caused by their unethical production. Another way in where they can choose to not pay up is by choosing labourers from oversea, in non-western or underdeveloped countries minimum wages are often a lot lower, often resulting in only a fraction of the cost or even more. As you can imagine may discuss if this is ethical, even though these companies are paying minimum wage, many of their labourers still do not have enough to cover their expenses properly, and by paying their taxes in other countries they are also not contributing to the social security systems. We know that things like these are not something we want to contribute to, but with our want for affordable products we have no other choice but to do so. For tourism this may have a whole other discussion, when going to another country may tourist like to do things they normally wouldn't in their own country, think of visiting the Eifel tower in France, or trying on local traditional clothing. Places like Barcelona or Paris or often thought of as popular destinations especially after the growth of the use of planes, in these cities you can find a souvenir stand at almost every corner or someone advertising their city tours. These are classic examples of the purchasing power in tourism, almost everyone wants a souvenir so many people take the opportunity. Making the market oversaturated but also increasing the mass production and as you may have guessed cooperations that exclusively mass produce their products often score low on ethical standards and production.

Definitions of Key Terms

Unethical production;

This refers to the manufacturing practises which violate moral standards often to cut costs. Some examples are; unfair wages, workers exploitation, tax evasion, environmental pollution, and the creation of unsafe products.

LEDC;

Low economically developed country, which refers to a country who does not have the financial capability to have adequate social security.

FTT;

Fair trade tourism, could be seen as ethical tourism

Mass production;

Manufacturing of large quantities of products often due to it being cheaper or due to demand.

Nature bases tourism;

Tourism for the nature in the area, for exaplme for flora and fauna.

General overview

The rise of tourism has created many economic opportunities for underdeveloped countries, especially nature-based tourism. This, however, isn't all positive. This rise of tourism has had a large impact on the production industry, particularly in terms of unethical production. As stated before, mass production for souvenirs but also food has flourished. In these areas where nature-based tourism is common, workers' exploitation is as well. The lack of education is also a problem. Many do not have a degree or even a lower school education, typically forcing them to go into industries like the service industries. Tourism is where the most money is made. Western tourists tend to spend more in these countries compared to their home country due to the change in currency value and inflation.

This also creates opportunities for international corporations. They directly have locals work for them without the payments going through these locals, creating a power imbalance. Western tourists pay in their own currency, so they do not pay the lowest price, resulting in more money for international companies.

Simultaneously, these companies pay their employees the local minimum wage.

This system puts the workers in an unfair position, which we can also call morally imbalanced production standards.

There is also another side to look at: mass production for tourism in other countries than LEDCs, like France or Spain. What this shows is that countries seek foreign production to make their own products cheaper. This happens for their own markets but also for tourism. This way of importing and exporting goods is not inherently bad unless they choose to do so by importing products that are not up to the standards they are supposed to meet or by severely damaging the environment through the making or shipping of goods.

The negative effects of these two systems can differ, but for the most part they overlap. In both cases, the effects of mass production on the environment are severe. Many of these LEDCs being the target of climate change makes this even more impactful. However, these corporations do not have legal obligations to protect the livelihoods of citizens and workers, due to them not paying for the necessary climate control regulations through taxes or other financial programs. What we also can see is that the job market in the tourism industry is impacted by climate change, making the employment rate low and unstable. This also means many do not pay taxes due to the lack of funds to do so. It may also force them into working excessive hours, taking multiple jobs, or starting to work at unethical and unsafe ages. We especially see this in women and girls, many are forced into textile businesses to make sure their families have food on the table, like said the want for cheap mass production is large, so young workers often fill that spot.

Cost-cutting is something we can also see in overseas production. Since the production is cheaper than it would be in local industries, they don't always value the cost of production beyond wages. Cheap and unsafe materials are common and dangerous. Machinery producing toxic waste have been in the news often, without change being implemented. This is particularly due to many LEDCs lacking regulation (or strict regulations) on these topics, making it easy to cut costs on these cheaper products so they can be sold for even less, competing with other similar products in an oversaturated market.

Major parties involved

On this topic there are no exact countries involved, due this being such a broad topic however as we know there are many countries known for their production such as;

China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India

These are countries known for their production being dirt cheap, and for having bad work environments, as well as bad effects on the environment.

Other countries such as

The USA, Japan, South Korea

Are known for their more expensive and innovative manufacturing, however for many of these products they get foreign materials often making use of unethical production methods.

Woman and children in underdeveloped countries are frequently the target of harsh hours in (clothing) mass production, women are also the least educated people resulting in the job market being very limited to them. Children in production are also often a target for no education, by being pulled out of school at young ages, due to them being young their work is often seen as the least ethical, breaching almost every European child labour law

Timeline of Key Events

1919; around this period the ILO was formed, the international labour organisation, in which we have international rights regarding the basic rights of workers.

1988-2004; FTT, fair trade tourism, this idea has put a boundary for many unethical tourism destination and asks to have a certification process to have the FTT name.

2001; The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism is officially recognised by the UN General Assembly

2015; all 193 member states on the UN chose to agree on the SDG's, sustainable development goals in where they have 17 goals to achieve by 2030.

2020; peak of the covid-19 pandemic in where many countries restricted their borders which caused a dramatic loss in tourism forcing many in ledc's to lose their livelihoods.

Possible solutions

1. medc's could (financially) encourage underdeveloped countries in a way that they don't rely on foreign cooperations for their job market.
2. ledc's support their citizens to get higher educated or have stricter regulations on the topic of the age someone could leave school.
3. Look into how we could desaturate the oversaturated market/mass production market.
4. FTT, as stated in the key events is something to see how your own country operates which it, and how it could be implemented.

Further Readings

<https://mize.tech/blog/mass-tourism-the-benefits-and-hidden-costs/> = on mass tourism while also talking about how tourims could be made more sustainable and ethic

<https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/75-un75-conversation-rethinking-tourism> = un report on tourism and the effects

Bibliography

<https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/retailers/five-unethical-companies>

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