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Contemporary Issues in Irish and Global Tourism and Hospitality

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Contemporary Issues in Irish and Global
Tourism and Hospitality

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This book contains an edited collection of papers from the Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland Conference 2009 (THRIC). It deals with a broad range of issues which are all pertinent, not only for Irish tourism and hospitality academics, policy makers and industry practitioners but will also resonate with international counterparts.

The target audience for this book includes researchers of tourism and hospitality in Ireland and internationally, policy makers, small business owners, undergraduate and postgraduate students and those involved in community tourism products. Geraldine Gorham and Dr. Ziene Mottiar are Lecturers at Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland.





Contemporary Issues in Irish and Global Tourism and Hospitality



Edited by Geraldine Gorham and Ziene Mottiar





Contemporary Issues in Irish and Global Tourism and Hospitality





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Contents

List of Contributors

Preface

1	Introduction Geraldine Gorham and Ziene Mottiar	13
2	Recession — Opportunity or Challenge for Tourism? Alex Gibson	17
3	Sustainable consumption and degrowing tourism and hospitality: future shock meets Corrigan knows food C. Michael Hall	23
4	Towards performance measurement in hotels: An incremental approach Detta Melia and Leigh Robinson	51
5	Demographic change and labour supply in global tourism to 2030: A tentative assessment Tom Baum	76
6	Global conformity of indicators for eco-certification programmes Aine Conaghan and James Hanrahan	93
7	Developing dark and political tourism in Northern Ireland: An industry perspective Maria Teresa Simone-Charteris and Stephen Boyd	106
8	Promoting tourism destinations: A film tourism model Noelle O'Connor, Sheila Flanagan and David Gilbert	124
9	The 5Ds of international city break travel Gerard Dunne	137
10	A factor analysis of the North American coach tour sector in Ireland Marie Ryan, Jim Deegan and Richard Moloney	150
11	Traditional versus low-cost airlines: their competitive advantages from the perspectives of SERVQUAL and ticket price: A case study of the Macao International Airport Victor K.Y. Chan, Shanmei Wang, Jie Li, Fei Liu and Wai Lam	165
12	The role of the customer as a quasi-employee in service organisations — a research agenda Jennifer Lawlor	179
13	Human factors and their influence on the Irish online hospitality consumer process Manus Ward and Mathew Shafaghi	188
14	Unravelling the complexities of inter-organisational relationships within the sports tourism policy arena on the island of Ireland Adrian Devine, Stephen Boyd and Emily Boyle	200
15	'Making a difference' through volunteer tourism Peter Smith and Jim Butcher	225



List of Contributors

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Alex Gibson is a Senior Lecturer in Tourism Marketing at the Faculty of Tourism and Food, Dublin Institute of Technology. His professional experience includes various marketing roles in the UK with Nabisco, Danone and Holiday Inn. A regular commentator on tourism marketing issues, he has been a judge at several prestigious Irish marketing awards including the Advertising Agency of the Year and Marketing Professional of the Year. As a consultant to industry Alex has worked with leading players such as Intercontinental Hotels, Accor and Holiday Inn. Alex has co-authored a text book ‘Tourism and Hospitality Marketing in Ireland’ published by Gill and Macmillan. In 2007 Alex was awarded a Lifetime Achievement award by the Irish Chapter of the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association (HSMAI) , where he currently serves as Education Officer. He also serves on the European Board of HSMAI. He is the presenter of a weekly radio show on marketing issues – The Persuaders – on Dublin City FM. He was the recipient of the Marketing Educator of the Year Award at the All-Ireland Marketing Awards in 2007.

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Dr Leigh Robinson is a senior lecturer in sport management at Loughborough University. She has authored a range of journal articles, reports and research papers in the field of quality management. Leigh is author of *Managing Public Sport and Leisure Services* and editor of *Managing Olympic Sport Organisations*.

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Dr. Mathew Shafaghi received an MSc in Management Studies from the University of Salford in 1990 and a PhD in problems and implementation issues of tool management and control systems from Sheffield Hallam University in 1994. Having worked as a strategic ICT consultant on a wide range of projects in various sectors, he joined the University of Bolton in 2002 as a senior lecturer. He is the programme leader for the professional doctoral programme (DBA) and programme leader for off campus postgraduate programmes at Bolton Business School. His primary research interest is in the exploitation of ICT for business efficiency, service improvement, and competitive advantage. He is currently supervising a number of PhD students in the areas of E-business, E-marketing, E-tourism, E-banking, online shopping behaviour, and e-business strategies for SMEs





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Manus Ward is the School Commandant of the Irish Defence Forces School of Catering in McKee Barracks in Dublin, Ireland. Manus has served most of his military career in the Irish Defence Forces School of Catering but also has United Nations overseas tours in infantry battalions in the Lebanon, Eritrea and Chad. Manus is studying for his PhD in Internet Tourism in the University of Bolton and also has a Higher Diploma and Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management as well as a Post Graduate Diploma and Masters of Science in eBusiness. Manus's primary area of research is online consumer behaviour in tourism. Manus has presented and/or submitted papers at THRIC, CATCON and University of Bolton conferences.





Preface

This book contains an edited collection of papers presented at the Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland Conference 2009 (THRIC). This annual conference provides an invaluable opportunity for Irish and international tourism and hospitality academics and practitioners to debate the key contemporary challenges facing the sector. Based on this selection of conference papers a broad range of issues are addressed in the following chapters. These are issues, which are pertinent not only for Irish tourism and hospitality academics, policy makers and industry, but also resonate with international counterparts.

Contributions to this book are made by an eclectic mix of highly established and published academics and those who are conducting their PhD research. The areas explored in this book span sociology, business and tourism and deal with issues as diverse as performance management, transport, sustainability, city breaks, sports, volunteer and dark tourism. Rather than thematically group chapters we have left them as stand alone contributions, however common threads and linkages are highlighted in the introductory chapter.





1

Introduction



Geraldine Gorham and Ziene Mottiar





Travel, tourism and hospitality are global activities. In 2009, 880 million people travelled worldwide and although it has been noted international tourist arrivals worldwide decreased by 4%, the UNWTO projects an increase of 3–4% in tourist arrivals for 2010 (UNWTO, 2010a). Despite the recession worldwide, over 1,515 luxury hotels and 2,150 first class hotels, with more than 1 million guest rooms are under construction (Hospitality Trends, 2010). As travellers become more intrepid and access has become more feasible, almost every corner of the globe is touched by travel, tourism and hospitality. Economically the industry's importance is well established employing 235 million people in 2009 and generating 9% of world GDP (WTC, 2010). Furthermore, in 2008 international tourism resulted in €643 billion in export earnings (UNWTO, 2010 b). It is for these reasons that research into this sector is vital.

However, what is equally important to note is that while tourism is a global industry it takes place on a local or national stage. Unlike other sectors, where products and services could be produced in any part of the world, tourism services and facilities are most often specific to the place in which they are offered. The local place forms part of the attraction for the tourist with national and local heritage and histories influencing the way in which the tourism product is offered and the tourist experience that occurs. Thus it is extremely important that we learn lessons from what is occurring in tourism places across the world.

This book attempts to rise to this challenge as it combines discussions on global issues such as sustainability, low cost airlines, city tourism, e-booking and volunteer tourism, with those of place and firm specific issues such as performance management, regional concerns and niche products and markets. While the focus of the chapters is often Ireland, they have been selected due to their applicability outside the island of Ireland.

The annual Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland Conference brings together academics, industry representatives and policy makers to debate and discuss key issues of concern. This book contains a selection of papers from the 2009 conference. The importance of the timing of this publication is that this research has taken place at a point in time where we have entered a period of significant change, with economic decline internationally. While some have proclaimed this to be the beginning of a serious decline for the industry, a more positive stance was evident in the course of the conference's round table discussion. This is outlined in chapter two where Alex Gibson, round table chair, analyses the opportunities, as well as the challenges that the recession offers the tourism and hospitality industry. The round table panellists were remarkably upbeat, given the current economic landscape, with Aidan Pender (Fáilte Ireland) noting that the recession does 'provide opportunities, for small businesses in particular,... as tourism micro-enterprises are nimble, they are agile and can come in and out of the industry fairly fast'.





Concurring with this theme, Bobby Kerr (CEO Insomnia) believes that 'you've actually got a better chance of survival to be coming into the market now than five years ago'.

While chapter two focuses on the global economic downturn, chapter three centres on the issue of sustainability. In this chapter, Hall examines the influence of tourism on global environment change and sets an agenda for how tourism could make a valuable contribution to sustainable development. He argues that more is not always better and that a paradigm shift in thinking regarding growth and development in tourism is required in order to make tourism sustainable.

Readers from industry will be particularly interested in chapters four, five and six. In chapter four Melia and Robinson deal with the important business issue of performance management. They show there is a need for small and medium-sized independently owned hotel operators to adopt a structured formal approach to performance management and they propose a model for the industry. Baum, in chapter five, acknowledges the importance of human resources in the successful delivery of tourism services and considers the challenges that demographic change will create for tourism employers worldwide. With increased pressure for tourism providers to operate sustainably Conaghan and Hanrahan, in chapter 6, investigate eco-certification programmes and ask why such certification is important, who monitors these programmes and from an Irish perspective how do the Irish tourism certification programmes meet the global criteria of sustainability?

In difficult economic times local areas and regions are forced to re-evaluate their tourism offerings, especially as increasingly tourists are travelling for reasons much more diverse than the beach and the sun. Simone-Charteris and Boyd, in chapter seven, discuss the emergence of dark and political tourism as a tourist attraction in Northern Ireland. While O'Connor et al., in chapter eight, present a Film Marketing Action Plan which they have developed as a way of promoting film tourism. In recent years city tourism has grown three times as fast as sun and beach holidays and in chapter nine Dunne develops a model entitled the 5Ds of international city break travel. Dunne's model outlines the distinguishing characteristics of this type of travel. From an Irish perspective, North American visitors are an extremely important market and Ryan et al., in chapter ten, present quantitative research which creates a detailed profile of the North American coach tour sector in Ireland. Furthermore they identify seven potential niche markets for this sector.





Perhaps more than anything else the internet and low cost budget airlines typify the globalisation of the tourism industry. In chapter eleven, Chan et al. switch the common focus in analysis of budget airlines from price to quality and compare traditional airlines with low cost airlines in terms of service quality. Perhaps surprisingly they find that traditional airlines do not beat the low cost carriers in all aspects of service quality.

Chapter twelve sees Lawlor investigate the practice of how the travel, tourism and hospitality industries encourage customers to act as quasi-employees through the use of self-service technologies. As this is an emerging area of research, Lawlor presents a research agenda in this regard. In a similar vein, in chapter thirteen, Ward and Shafaghi focus on Irish consumers and how they utilise the internet to make hospitality and tourism purchases.

Policy makers will be particularly interested in chapter fourteen. Here Devine et al. provide a rigorous analysis of inter-organisational collaboration. Using Sports tourism in Ireland and Northern Ireland as their focus, the authors develop a model that identifies aims, ideology, politics, trust, culture, power and leadership as factors which affect the development of inter-organisational relationships.

Chapter fifteen provides a welcome conceptually based discussion on volunteer tourism. Smith and Butcher argue that the motivation of these tourists to engage in volunteer tourism is influenced by life political strategies rather than traditional explanations of social and collective solutions to human problems.

It is intended that these chapters will inform, contribute to, enlighten and challenge our discourse on tourism and hospitality. While individually they deal with specific issues, all chapters deal with current issues of concern for the sector and authors provide research, ideas and analysis of current issues which will guide academics, tourism providers and policy makers as we move into the next decade.

Hospitality Trends (2010) <http://www.htrends.com/trends-detail-sid-44483-t-Global_Hotel_Boom___Hotel_Investments_Rise_to___bn_Euro.html> (accessed 15/3/2010).
UNWTO (2010a) <http://www.unwto.org/media/news/en/press_det.php?id=5361&idioma=E> (accessed 15/3/2010).
UNWTO (2010b) <<http://www.unwto.org/index.php>> (accessed 15/3/2010).
WTC (2010) <http://www.wtcc.org/eng/Tourism_Research/Economic_Research/index.php> (accessed 15/3/2010).





2

Recession — Opportunity or Challenge for Tourism?

Alex Gibson





The THRIC Annual Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland Conference 2009 incorporated a round table panel discussion to consider the extent to which the recession creates more opportunities than challenges for the tourism and hospitality sector in Ireland and globally.

The panellists were:

Professor David Airey – Professor of Tourism Management and University Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University of Surrey.

Professor Jim Deegan – Director of National Centre for Tourism Policy Studies, University of Limerick.

Bobby Kerr – Chief Executive Officer, Insomnia Coffee Company.

Aidan Pender – Director of Policy and Industry Development, Fáilte Ireland.

Chair – Alex Gibson, Senior Lecturer, Dublin Institute of Technology.

The discussion centred on a number of themes, and this chapter's aim is to provide the reader with a synthesis of the views expressed by the panellists.

Innovation Policy

The nature and direction of policy in innovation was an early talking point with much of the focus on the extent to which Ireland's tourism industry was populated with a large number of enterprises that might best be described as micro-businesses. Aidan Pender from Fáilte Ireland painted a picture for the audience of the tourism enterprise landscape in Ireland. The tourism sector in Ireland comprised approximately 18,000 firms with the reality being that a majority of these could be best described as hobbyists. It was estimated that perhaps as few as 2500 firms were actively seeking to develop their businesses with perhaps as few as 500 having strong growth potential.

While these small businesses had serious challenges of access to capital in the recession, necessity was often the mother of invention, and it was often the case that the shakeout that inevitably occurs could provide opportunities for others. This point was amplified by Bobby Kerr from Insomnia who thought that, paradoxically, this was a better time to be starting a business than five years ago before the recession hit. The recession offered unparalleled opportunities in terms of lower rent costs and property deals generally. However, Professor Jim Deegan from University of Limerick cautioned that many start-ups fail due to a lack of market orientation. Innovation was a nebulous concept and this was particularly evident in the tourism sector and services in general, leading to a concentration of Government funding and research in manufacturing sectors. Among the challenges in raising tourism on the Government agenda was the issue of measurement, with a plea being made by Professor Deegan to the relevant agencies to do more to develop credible supports





for innovation through a benchmark system based on that developed by the OECD in its Oslo manual (OECD, 1996). Professor David Airey from the University of Surrey argued that innovation in the tourism sector was often to be seen directed at reducing the high fixed-cost component that was prevalent in the sector. He argued that this focus militated against other types of innovative focus. Similarly Bobby Kerr argued that the reality was that without a focus on costs, businesses faced extinction and that people needed to look at new ways at doing tasks.

The extent to which innovation was directed at cost reductions provoked a lively discussion. Aidan Pender made the point that, as a development agency, Fáilte Ireland increasingly focused on where market failure existed, namely at the level of the SME sector, in particular micro-enterprises. Using an analogy from the world of US politics he said that small tourism entrepreneurs very often don't know what they don't know. They don't even know that they don't know the right things about the law or finance or whatever. He mentioned the Three Cs that they were increasingly focusing on in their work with such companies: minding customers, minding cash and minding costs. On this point Professor Deegan stated that we need to find what the barriers are that are blocking those innovations in micro-businesses, whether it be finance or whether it be marketing skills or whether it be just basically market trend information.

Aidan Pender felt that he was not sure that State or State agencies have a great track record in innovation, leading to a poor experience over the years in terms of putting together innovation funds of one sort and another. Ultimately it was a case of doing something cheaper, better or different, and that we should look to people as a source of innovation, i.e. processes and how we work rather than big light bulb ideas.

A discussion ensued about the productivity levels that existed in tourism services. Aidan Pender pointed out that in tourism the average value added per hour per worker is a little over fifteen euros per hour. Set against a minimum wage of €8.65 he argued that one can see there is a need for increased productivity. He argued that tourism was not a low skills industry nor was it high skills, but it was a medium skills sector. Professor Deegan cautioned however that the figures on low productivity in the tourism sector needed to be set against a lower level generally for services industries, where production and consumption occur simultaneously.





Education and Research

The discussion then moved on to the extent to which tourism and hospitality education and research funding would be affected by the recession. Aidan Pender in response said that their organisation was very determined and focused on craft education and increasingly to put some money into fourth level, with less emphasis on higher education. Their particular focus was on craft education because they considered that the market would fail there. To train a chef was horrendously expensive with ratios of sixteen to one. He said that they would genuinely like to think that they were more effective in discussing the kind of research that should be happening in tourism education – to maybe mimic some of the productivity and some of the investment stories that one hears coming out of the Far East. He posed the question of how industry could mimic some of those productivity gains, the innovation, and the investment with a clear view to develop research that's not of interest uniquely to the researcher. The research must be implementable in a business context.

Industry practitioner Bobby Kerr did think education was important and thought it was important that one learns academically as much as possible about one's subject but he did think that the real learning was done on the job and that the ideal was to have an element of both if that's possible. He bemoaned the fact that, in his opinion, Ireland had lost all the personality hoteliers.

Jim Deegan argued that the problem in Ireland for research is that we haven't had a good graduate school in tourism to train young people appropriately. The government hasn't seen fit to support tourism but it had seen fit to support every other sector. There's was a big gap between the labour market and what actually happens in colleges and universities, not because people are stupid but because people work to incentives. So there was unfortunately a substantial growth of tourism programmes that he personally thought was very questionable, leading to obvious questions as to whether there might not be scope for rationalisation.

Professor David Airey, speaking from a UK perspective, pointed to the challenge this recession would pose in terms of funding for third-level tourism and hospitality education. He argued that the research projects that were not directly related to industry and economic objectives would increasingly struggle to attract funding in the future. Taking up the point made by Professor Deegan about the relevance of many tourism courses, he argued that while there had been a similar rise in the number of such programmes in the UK, his contention was that the crucial question to ask was if the tourism programmes were good and challenging. If they were, then it was just as sensible to study tourism as it was to study history, or geography or any of the other subjects that don't have an immediate vocational aim. He told the audience that they would not criticise history programmes because not everybody who does a degree in history goes off to be a history teacher or to work in a museum.





The discussion moved on to the immediate concern of many on the audience of the extent to which tourism programmes would be hit by proposed Government cutbacks. Bobby Kerr argued that the focus on jobs creation offered an opportunity for the tourism educators to protect their funding, provided a cogent argument was made in terms of the sector's job creation potential.

Tourism Sustainability

The issue of tourism sustainability and the extent to which this remained on the tourism agenda was the next issue discussed by the panel. Aidan Pender asserted that the sustainability agenda needed to be couched in terms of the broader economic benefits accruing to businesses. Bobby Kerr was more sanguine in his view of the Green Agenda, arguing that the dialogue had been typified by much that was irrelevant, with many jumping on a bandwagon. Jim Deegan referring to an earlier paper session made the point that, as a general principle, when people are very poor or when conditions are very poor, concern for the environment is no way as important for you as it is when things are very good.

David Airey argued that sustainability comes from three sources; supply, demand and government and there were actually conflicting things coming out of that. On the supply side he contented that we were likely to see a quickening of those things that are bringing down costs, and if that is something to do with sustainability then sustainability will be followed. Looking at government and government regulation, he thought that such regulation would not be a priority while the recession was in train. Finally from the demand point of view he was quite dismissive about the prospects of people changing their behaviour pointing to the continued popularity of low-cost carriers as one example of people putting their own needs before their environmental concerns.

However Aidan Pender did argue that there were dimensions to the Green Agenda that are very practical and have a business purpose. In Ireland Fáilte Ireland had an executive working on Green developments, but ultimately it was a case of working on an enterprise-by-enterprise basis to effect change.





Tourism Marketing

The final part of the discussions centred on the marketing of Ireland as a tourism destination. Bobby Kerr pointed to his own experience as a Kilkenny native of how that city had been able to overcome its lack of a manufacturing base with a determined focus on destination marketing. One of the difficulties about tourism he argued was that there were so many different interests involved in it. He argued that we needed as an industry to take a step back and say what do we want to be as a nation to attract people.

David Airey, speaking as an 'outsider', argued that prime among the tourism assets Ireland has is a countryside which is something to do with green; a wonderful coastline, its pubs, its golf courses and horse racing and people. He considered that all of these things actually do fall into a similar kind of package of things that has something to do with activities.

Professor Deegan wondered exactly what Ireland was selling as a tourism destination. He argued that the John Hinde traditional postcard image of Ireland appeals to a dwindling group of ageing visitors. While people talk an awful lot about globalisation and the world being more homogenous, he argued that when it came to tourism one can't do it on the Internet. He saw the future of Irish tourism as centering on harnessing our creative talents and creating a memorable experience, citing as an innovative example the development of an annual conference themed around the singer Morrissey.

Aidan Pender said that despite extensive debate he was not sure that we had settled on a satisfactory answer in terms of what Ireland's Unique Selling Proposition was in tourism terms. Fáilte Ireland work on the supply side which is about education, skills, training, business so happily he didn't have to answer this question. He did not envy colleagues elsewhere that are responsible for such marketing issues, but did concur with an earlier expressed view that tourism continues to have an enormous future in Ireland, citing Ireland's enormously dynamic and creative society as positive drivers to take us from the recession. On this positive note the panel discussion concluded.

OECD (1996) Oslo Manual (2nd edition) DSTI, Paris: OECD.





3

**Sustainable Consumption and
Degrowing Tourism and Hospitality:
Future Shock Meets Corrigan
Knows Food ***

C. Michael Hall





The concept of sustainable tourism has been at the forefront of tourism academic discourse since the late 1980s. The notion of sustainability has also been incorporated into many government policy statements, state-sponsored reports and consultancies, and speeches as well as statements from private sector organisations. Yet despite the strength of the concept of sustainability as part of the public and policy language of tourism, as an economic endeavour tourism is no closer to becoming sustainable than it was when the term was adopted, and is arguably less so.

This chapter will outline tourism's impacts with respect to global environment change. Following this it will examine the notion of sustainable development and sustainable tourism as it has broadly been utilised. The chapter will then outline a potential reformulation of sustainable tourism utilising concepts derived from ecological economics and sustainable consumption and will suggest that without such a reformulation the potential of tourism to make a positive contribution to sustainable development will remain unfulfilled.

Tourism and Global Environmental Change

Although climate change now receives considerable attention in both tourism and in the wider media, climate change is only a part of the broader issue of global environmental change (GEC). The global environment is always changing although change is never uniform across time and space. Nevertheless, 'all changes are ultimately connected with one another through physical and social processes alike' (Meyer & Turner, 1995, p.304). However, what is most significant with respect to present environmental change is that it is not due to natural processes alone rather the scale and rates of change have increased dramatically as a direct result of human action related to the consumption of natural resources, the creation of new habitat for human, and the waste products of human consumption and production.

Human impacts on the environment can be regarded as having a global character in two ways. First, 'global refers to the spatial scale or functioning of a system' (Turner et al., 1990, p.15), e.g. the climate and the oceans have the characteristic of a global system. Second, GEC occurs if a change, 'occurs on a worldwide scale, or represents a significant fraction of the total environmental phenomenon or global resource' (Turner et al., 1990, pp.15-16), e.g. deforestation and desertification. Tourism is significant for both types of change (Gössling, 2002; Gössling et al., 2002; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Hall & Lew, 2009).





That tourism has negative impacts on the environment has been recognised since the 1970s (e.g. Turner & Ash, 1975; Rosenow & Pulsipher, 1979; Mathieson & Wall, 1982). However, that tourism can have environmental impacts at a global scale is a much more recent conceptualisation that first emerged in the 1980s in institutional and policy terms with the development of the World Conservation Strategy and the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) and in academic terms with interest in climate change and biodiversity conservation (e.g. Brookfield, 1988; Colby, 1990; Turner et al., 1990). Initially, tourism was arguably regarded as more of a victim of GEC than a contributor (e.g. Gable & Aubrey, 1990; Seki & Christ, 1995). Yet as the 1990s wore on increased attention began to be given to tourism's role in environmental change at a global scale (e.g. Wilson, 1997; Schafer & Victor, 1999).

The first attempt to seek to provide a comprehensive overview of the global environmental consequences of tourism was undertaken by Gössling (2002) who argued that from a global perspective, tourism contributes to: changes in land cover and land use; energy use; biotic exchange and extinction of wild species; exchange and dispersion of diseases; and changes in the perception and understanding of the environment. Gössling's (2002) estimates for 2001 with respect to tourism's contribution to GEC and updated in Gössling and Hall (2006) have been more recently examined in Hall and Lew (2009) (**Table 1**) and suggest that the contribution of tourism to GEC is continuing to grow as a result of increasing numbers and distance travelled of domestic and international tourist trips (Hall, 2005, 2008b).

The increased environmental impacts of tourism at a global scale raise profound questions with respect to the effectiveness of the sustainable tourism 'paradigm' (e.g. Wheeler, 1991; Mowforth & Munt, 1998; Jamal, 2004; Gössling et al., 2009) at a number of different levels. The substantial academic discourse on the subject arguably has had only marginal affect on tourism industry practice and effective tourism policy making. Although the term is utilised by supranational bodies, such as the UNWTO and the WTTC, and government at various levels the environmentally undesirable effects of tourism have not declined from or even been maintained at the levels when the concept became popularised in the 1990s. One of the reasons why tourism research has had little practical effect on sustainable tourism policy and practice may lie in the notion of epistemic community, a concept used in international relations to explain how policy makers are influenced by the providers of knowledge. An epistemic community therefore refers to a network of knowledge-based experts or professionals with an authoritative claim to knowledge and skill in a particular issue-area and the domain of their expertise (Hass, 1992; Sebenius, 1992).





Table 1: Tourism's Contribution to Global Environmental Change

Dimension	2001 Estimates	2007 Estimates
Number of international tourist arrivals	682 million ¹	898 million ¹
Number of domestic tourist arrivals	3,580.5 million ²	4,714.5 million ²
Total number of tourist arrivals	4,262.5 million ²	5,612.5 million ²
Change of land cover – alteration of biologically productive lands	0.5 percent contribution ³	0.66 percent contribution ⁴
Energy consumption	14,080 PJ ³	18,585.6 PJ ⁴
Emissions	1400 Mt of CO ₂ -e ³	1848 Mt of CO ₂ -e ⁴ (1461.6 Mt of CO ₂) ⁵
Biotic exchange	Difficult to assess ³	Difficult to assess, however rate of exchange is increasing ⁴
Extinction of wild species	Difficult to assess ³	Difficult to assess, particularly because of time between initial tourism effects and extinction events but increasing
Health	Difficult to assess ³	Difficult to assess in host populations, but sickness in tourists in tropical destinations assessed at 50% by WHO ⁶
World Population ⁷	6,169.8 million	6,632.2 million
Total number of tourist arrivals as % of world population	69.1%	84.6%
Number of international tourist arrivals as % of world population	11.1%	13.5%

1. UNWTO figures;

2. Hall and Lew (2009) estimates based on UNWTO data;

3. Gössling (2002) estimate;

4. Hall and Lew (2009) extrapolation based on Gössling's estimates and other research;

5. UNWTO and UNEP (2008), Scott et al. (2008) estimate for 2005.

6. In Hall (2005)

7. Mid-year world population estimate by US Census Bureau International Data Base (<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/worldpop.html>)





Tourism academics active in sustainable tourism research have not been able to become a publicly recognised group with an unchallenged claim to understand the nature of the sustainable tourism issue-area and therefore be able to interpret the area for decision-makers thereby influencing decisions, actions and behaviour. Such epistemic communities, where successful, can introduce new policy alternatives and encourage their implementation. In the environmental policy field the cases of concern over the protection of the stratospheric ozone layer, control of European acid rain, and Mediterranean pollution control via the Mediterranean Action Plan (Med Plan) are all examples of when new policy actors were consulted because of uncertainties about environmental problems (Hass, 1989).

In the case of sustainable tourism, as with climate change, the influence of researchers may be vitiated by the countering interests of business and other groups thereby diminishing not only access to decision-makers but also claims as to authoritative knowledge. However, another explanation may also lie in the fact that members of the sustainable tourism epistemic community do not hold a sufficiently common set of causal beliefs and shared notions of validity to be effective (Haas 1992). This is a practical as well as an academic issue as the development of an agreed conceptualisation and definition of a problem actually is fundamental to its solution in policy and planning terms (Majone, 1989). And it is to these issues and difficulties with the conceptualisation of sustainable tourism that we will now turn.

(Re)Conceptualising Sustainable Tourism

Although the notion of sustainable tourism has its roots in the concept of sustainable development, the World Commission for Environment and Development (WCED) 'Brundtland' report only mentioned tourism once. Yet, the famous Brundtland definition, that 'sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987, p.49), has come to feature in many tourism textbooks and student essays (Hall, 2008a). Five basic principles of sustainability were identified in the report:





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- the idea of holistic planning and strategy-making that links economic, environmental and social concerns.
 - the importance of preserving essential ecological processes.
 - the need to protect both biodiversity and human heritage.
 - the need for development to occur in such a way that productivity can be sustained over the long term for future generations (the concept of intergenerational equity); and
 - the goal of achieving a better balance of fairness and opportunity between nations.

The concept of sustainable development has been described 'as the central challenge of our times' (Wheeler, 2002, p.110), and as 'the defining issue of the twenty-first century' (Harrison, 2000, p.1). Jabareen (2004, p.623) even goes so far as to describe it as 'one of the pervasive icons of modernity'. Yet, in practice, the implementation of sustainable development has been extremely poor as measured by the continued decline of global environmental quality (Millenium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). Numerous reasons can be put forward for this situation including vagueness of the term (e.g. Mayumi & Gowdy, 2001), insufficient attention to urban issues (e.g. Woodgate & Redclift, 1998), and disagreement over what should be sustained (e.g. Sachs, 1999). From an urban and regional planning perspective, Lindsey (2003, p.165) commented: 'Participants in planning processes generally agree that sustainability is concerned with environment, economics, and equity, but they often disagree on particular meaning of the concept', an observation that resonates with much of literature on sustainable development and sustainable tourism (e.g. see Clarke, 1997; Stabler, 1997; Swarbrooke, 1999; Saarinen, 2006; iLu & Nepal, 2009 for just some of many reviews) as well as the lack of an epistemic community.

In tourism policy, and in much of the writing in tourism studies, sustainability is seen as being 'environmental' and development as 'economic' (and to a lesser extent 'social') with the concept of sustainable development seeking to mitigate the paradox between them (Jabareen, 2004). Indeed, Sachs (1993) believed that sustainable development had gained support from such a wide range of interests and stakeholders because it gave the impression that it could bring about a rapprochement between ecological (sustainability) interests and economic (development) interests.





Similarly, Baeten (2000) argued that as portrayed via government and supranational institutions the sustainable development concept suggests that it is able to cope with ecological crisis without affecting existing economic relationships of power and with capitalism and ecology no longer appearing contradictory. Such an approach is conveyed in the work of organisations such as the World Economic Forum (WEF) (2009a, 2009b), the UNWTO (2002, 2007), and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2003, 2009). For example, the UNEP and UNWTO (2005) 'guide for policy makers' on 'making tourism more sustainable' (described as 'a "bible" for all decision makers who are encouraged to be actively involved in the development of an environmentally and socially responsible tourism which creates long term economic benefits for the businesses and destinations' by Eugenio Yunis, Head of Department UNWTO (2006, p.2), argues that the concept of sustainable development had evolved since the 1987 Brundtland definition:

Three dimensions or 'pillars' of sustainable development are now recognised and underlined. These are:

- Economic sustainability, which means generating prosperity at different levels of society and addressing the cost effectiveness of all economic activity. Crucially, it is about the viability of enterprises and activities and their ability to be maintained in the long term.
- Social sustainability, which means respecting human rights and equal opportunities for all in society. It requires an equitable distribution of benefits, with a focus on alleviating poverty. There is an emphasis on local communities, maintaining and strengthening their life support systems, recognising and respecting different cultures and avoiding any form of exploitation.
- Environmental sustainability, which means conserving and managing resources, especially those that are not renewable or are precious in terms of life support. It requires action to minimise pollution of air, land and water, and to conserve biological diversity and natural heritage. It is important to appreciate that these three pillars are in many ways interdependent and can be both mutually reinforcing or in competition. Delivering sustainable development means striking a balance between them (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, p.9).





The notion of 'balance' is a thread that runs through much of sustainable tourism policy, industry statements, and academic research (e.g. Wall, 1997). As Hunter (2002, p.12) observed, 'unfortunately, many studies in the tourism literature that incorporate an attempt to define [sustainable tourism] do not venture beyond the rhetoric of balance and the underlying rationale for policy formulation'. For example, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board state that 'The term Sustainable Tourism was conceived and adopted at the World Earth Summit in 2002 and has provided a platform for propelling the importance of a balance between the economic, environmental and socio-cultural aspects of tourism' (Northern Ireland Tourist Board, 2009). Similarly, Edgell (2006, p.24) states that, 'For sustainable tourism to be successful, long-term policies that balance environmental, social, and economic issues must be fashioned' with the preface noting that the book, 'stresses that positive sustainable tourism development is dependent on forward-looking policies and new management philosophies that seek harmonious relations between local communities, the private sector, not-for-profit organisations, academic institutions, and governments at all levels to develop practices that protect natural, built, and cultural environments in a way compatible with economic growth' (2006, p. xiii) (this author's emphasis).

The problem with the notion of 'balance' is that, while perhaps conceptually attractive at first sight, it underplays not only key questions of what is being balanced for whose benefit, but also devalues the importance of the natural capital that actually underpins all economic growth and social and economic well-being and is fundamental to an ecological understanding of sustainability.

The Brundtland report did not refer to natural capital although it did note 'the planet's ecological capital' (WCED, 1987, p.5). Pearce et al. (1990, p.1) defined natural capital stock as 'the stock of all environmental and natural resource assets, from oil in the ground to the quality of soil and groundwater, from the stock of fish in the ocean to the capacity of the globe to recycle and absorb carbon'. Natural capital includes all natural assets; humans can modify and reduce it, and enhance its reproduction, but humans cannot create it and it is therefore non-substitutable. The natural capital stock is usually divided into three categories (Roseland, 2000): non-renewable resources or natural capital (NNC), such as oil and gas resources; the finite capacity of the natural system to produce renewable resources or natural capital (RNC), such as food, water, timber as ecosystem goods, as well as ecosystem services such as erosion control; and the capacity of natural systems to absorb anthropogenic emissions and pollutants without negative externalities on present or future generations.





More than just a metaphor (Jabareen, 2004), the natural capital concept underlies ecological economic approaches to understanding sustainability. From a neoclassical perspective an economy is sustainable if the value of economic output is non-declining over time. From an ecological economic perspective sustainability is not only an economic problem but also a problem of maintaining essential, irreplaceable, and nonsubstitutable natural capital that is beyond the confines of market exchange (Gowdy, 2000). Therefore, total income is a combination of traditional marketed economic goods and services and nonmarketed ecosystem goods and services.

According to Costanza and Daly (1992), the concept of sustainability is implicit in the definition of income so natural income must be sustainable as, from this perspective, any consumption that requires the running down of natural capital cannot be counted as income. Therefore, they conclude that the constancy of total natural capital (TNC) is the cornerstone of sustainable development.

TNC = RNC + NNC

This observation has fundamental implications for tourism, and the concept of sustainable tourism in particular, which have been ignored by the vast majority of writers on the subject (Collins, 1999, 2001). Although crucial to understanding sustainable tourism as a form of tourism consumption that does not require the running down of natural capital is how we understand scale.

Scale, Sustainable Tourism and Global Environmental Change

The notion of a geographical tourism system is a fundamental concept of tourism studies (Hall, 2008a). The classic model of a tourism generating region, a destination, travel to and from the destination in a transit zone, and the surrounding environment emphasises that as a phenomenon tourism is occurring over successive stages in time and space with its effects not just being felt in destinations but in all stages in which travel occurs (Hall, 2005). As Scott et al. (2008) demonstrate in their analysis of tourism and climate change, the majority of emissions come from transport for travelling to and from destinations rather than destination based activities or accommodation.





Therefore, by only studying what happens at a destination or a specific site rather than over an entire trip it is likely that there will be a gross underestimate of the environmental, and other, impacts of tourism (Hall, 2007a). Moreover, some of the products of tourism consumption at a specific location or route, such as pollution and emissions, will have effects at a global rather than a local scale because of either their dispersal patterns or by their aggregation. As Gössling (2002, p.200) argued, 'even ecotourism projects often seem to ignore the global environmental aspects of travel. Ecotourism may thus be sustainable on the local level (in the sense that it puts a minimum threat to local ecosystems through the conversion of lands, trampling, collection of species, etc.), but it may in most cases not be sustainable from a global point of view'.

According to the UNWTO Secretary-General Francesco Frangialli the UNWTO is 'committed to seek balanced and equitable policies to encourage both responsible energy related consumption as well as anti-poverty operational patterns. This can and must lead to truly sustainable growth within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals' (UNWTO, 1997b). Yet, the report of the Global Humanitarian Forum (GHF) (2009, p.1) indicated that every year climate change already leaves over 300,000 people dead, 325 million people seriously affected, and economic losses of US\$125 billion (more than the all present world aid) primarily in the less developed countries. In all four billion people are regarded as vulnerable to climate change, and 500 million people are at extreme risk with approximately half a million lives expected to be lost per annum to climate change by 2029. Given that tourism is conservatively recognised as contributing 5% of greenhouse gas emissions (UNWTO and UNEP, 2008; WEF, 2009b) this means that in proportional terms tourism as a generator of greenhouse emissions is already responsible in 2009 for about 15,000 deaths, seriously affecting 8.25 million people, and producing economic losses of US\$6.25 billion as a result of its emissions. This figure is also significant given the arguments by organisations such as the UNWTO that tourism is a means to alleviate poverty in the less developed world, as the economic losses estimated by the GHF (2009) with respect to climate change in the developing world are already greater than the US\$5.42 billion of tourism expenditure in the 49 least developed countries (most recent figures (2006) derived from UNCTAD 2008). Tourism may contribute to poverty alleviation but the benefits of tourism need to be weighed up against all its costs, including the effects of climate change.





The relationship between the impacts of climate change and the contribution of tourism to poverty alleviation highlights the importance of understanding sustainability at a global scale and within the entire tourism system. Yet different responses exist to this situation. A statement by Francesco Frangialli, UNWTO Secretary-General, on the occasion of the UN Conference on Climate Change at Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007, stated 'Those who say: "do not travel far from home and avoid taking planes to save several tons of carbon emissions", should think twice. Because these long-haul trips are often to countries that are home to the planet's poorest populations, which—we know—will already be the first victims of warming. These communities, like Bali, would be doubly affected if we also deprive them of the economic contribution of tourism' (UNWTO, 2007a p. 9). In contrast, from his examination of the ecological footprint of tourism in the Seychelles, Gössling et al. (2002) concluded that:

From a global sustainability and equity perspective, air travel for leisure should be seen critically: a single long-distance journey such as the one investigated in this survey requires an area almost as large as the area available on a per capita basis on global average. This sheds new light on the environmental consequences of long-distance travel, which have rather seldom been considered in the debate on sustainable tourism. Taking these results seriously, air travel should, from an ecological perspective, be actively discouraged (2002, p.210).

Frangialli and the UNWTO acknowledge that climate change and poverty alleviation 'are interdependent and must be dealt with in a holistic fashion'. Yet the solution of the UNWTO is a call 'for a more responsible growth. Tourism has become both the victim and the vector of climate change. Our sector has to reduce its emissions; it also has to adapt' (UNWTO, 2007b). Yet is such a situation possible when growth in tourism on a global scale is greater than efficiency gains with respect to emissions or energy (which also tend to be relatively localised) (Gössling, et al., 2010). Even the highly conservative WEF (2009b) estimate that CO₂ emissions from tourism (excluding aviation) will grow at 2.5% per year until 2035 and annual increases in carbon emissions from aviation will be limited to about 2.7% because of expected load factor gains and more fuel efficient planes, which will replace existing fleets.





A similar issue in terms of the importance of a global scale of analysis occurs with respect to the relationship between tourism and biodiversity (Gössling, 1999). Tourism is often regarded as a major contributor for the justification of biodiversity whether in terms of charismatic megafauna (e.g. Walpole and Leader-Williams, 2002) or national parks and reserves (e.g. Frost and Hall, 2009). However, tourism also directly reduces biodiversity as a result of the loss of habitat for tourism infrastructure (i.e. hotels, theme parks, sports and recreational facilities, transport), pollution, loss of ecosystem services such as water supply and quality, the introduction of invasive species and disease, and more indirectly via the loss of habitat and ecosystem services as part of the tourism supply chain and climate change (Gössling & Hall, 2006a, b; Coombes et al., 2008). At the local level tourism may therefore appear extremely directly beneficial for biological conservation yet the indirect or less immediate implications of tourism may have substantial effects as well and should be factored into any analysis.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (2006, p.9) note that biodiversity losses 'due to human activities were occurring more rapidly in the past 50 years than at any time in human history, and that the direct causes (or drivers) of this loss are either remaining steady, showing no evidence of decline over time, or are increasing in intensity over time'. The IUCN (2009) suggests that the wildlife crisis with respect to actual and potential species loss is greater than the economic crisis. The IUCN Red List suggests that 869 species are Extinct or Extinct in the Wild and this figure rises to 1,159 if the 290 Critically Endangered species tagged as Possibly Extinct are included. Overall, a minimum of 16,928 species are identified by the IUCN threatened with extinction. Although this number is a gross underestimate as only 2.7% of the 1.8 million described species have been analysed with respect to their level of threat (IUCN, 2009).

In one of the few studies to look at the relationship between tourism and biodiversity loss as a global scale, Mozumder et al. (2006) identified increasing biodiversity risk with more tourism as significant when examining the regression results between the log of tourist arrivals and the log of an upgraded national biodiversity risk index for 61 countries for which data is readily available. Given the relationship between energy and emissions as well as energy use and biodiversity loss (Ehrlich, 1994) it can be conservatively estimated that in proportional terms tourism is responsible for approximately 3.5-5.5% of species loss with a future higher figure being likely when climate change scenarios are considered. Such concerns therefore need to be balanced against the benefits of tourism for biodiversity conservation.





The fourth UNEP Global Environment Outlook report (UNEP, 2007) concluded that biodiversity provides the basis for ecosystems and the services they provide, upon which all people fundamentally depend. Critically, the UNEP (2007, p.159) identified that 'Biodiversity loss continues because current policies and economic systems do not incorporate the values of biodiversity effectively in either the political or the market systems, and many current policies are not fully implemented'. In the case of tourism for example, much is made of the contribution that tourism makes to the establishment of protected areas such as national parks. Studies of species-area relationships suggest that 30 to 50% of a given community or ecosystem type needs to be conserved to maintain 80 to 90% of the species (Soul'e & Sanjayan, 1998; Groves, 2003). However, in their analysis of the conservation deficits for the continental USA Dietz and Czech (2005) noted that even 30 to 50% may not be enough to sustain species over the long term with research indicating that there is no single threshold value that can be broadly applied to conserve all species (Fahrig, 2001). Hall's (2010) analysis of the interrelationships between biodiversity, island biogeography and tourism in the Caribbean and the Pacific found that of the 16 Caribbean countries which were studied only two (the Cayman Islands, Trinidad and Tobago) have over 30% of their land area set aside as protected areas. In the Pacific only Kiribati has set aside more than 30% of its land area as protected area, while Tonga has a protected area of just over 25%. The proportion of protected marine area in both regions is much lower than terrestrial area. In the Caribbean Jamaica has the highest proportion of marine area set aside at 3.56% and in the Pacific Palau has 8.74% of its marine territory as protected area.

Unfortunately, and critically, it should also be noted that the areas set aside as protected areas in most countries have historically been those with low biological diversity (Scott et al., 2001). A point also supported by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2006) which reported that while coverage of protected areas was increasing, the extent of selected biomes, ecosystems, and habitats; the abundance and distribution of selected species, the change in status of threatened species; and the genetic diversity of domesticated animals, cultivated plants, and fish species of major socio-economic importance all demonstrated negative trends. While tourism's value for providing an economic value for protected area designation is significant, much more detailed analysis needs to be undertaken on the representativeness of such areas in the broader context of biodiversity conservation.





The situation with respect to the interrelationships between tourism and climate change and tourism and biodiversity raise fundamental questions with respect to the scale of thinking about sustainable tourism. While tourism may be recognised at a local, business or firm scale as 'sustainable' it is readily apparent that at a global scale it is not. Much of this occurs because of where boundaries are placed with respect to analysing the sustainability of tourism in space and time. If narrow boundaries and limits are set that do not include the travel of tourist consumers then it is much easier to become 'sustainable'. This is currently the predominant mode of analysis in tourism. In the same way a focus on the per capita impacts of tourism can mask absolute impact. As while per capita efficiencies with respect to using energy and lowering emissions are gained, the overall amount of emissions of a sector can increase as more people travel. This is the current scenario for tourism (Gössling et al., 2010).

Similarly, if only immediate aspects of tourist consumption are considered, rather than accounting for downstream effects such as changes in ecosystem services and climate, it is also much easier to ignore the unsustainability of much tourism. Such questions are not just accounting issues. Instead, it raises fundamental questions about whether sustainability can actually be achieved via a 'balanced' approach that seeks to promote economic growth. An issue which is also critical, of course, to the idea that you can promote tourism as a means of alleviating poverty while simultaneously reducing tourism's contribution to climate and environmental change. There is very clear evidence that there is not a simple and predictable relationship between pollution and per capita income so that as incomes or GDP rise the level of pollution and biodiversity loss declines (the so-called environmental Kuznets curve) (Dietz & Adger, 2003; Stern, 2004; Czech et al., 2005; Mozumder et al., 2006; Mills & Waite, 2009). Wealth and economic growth are not reliable indicators of improved conservation practice and, as Czech et al. (2005, p.791) point out, 'certainly a higher GDP cannot resurrect an extinct species'.

Rethinking Sustainability

Given the clear failure of tourism to reduce its absolute impact on the global environment it is appropriate to reconsider how sustainable tourism should be conceptualised. Fundamental to this must be the issue of whether 'balance' or a 'business as usual' approach is compatible with the need to conserve natural capital, given that constancy of total natural capital is the key idea in sustainability of development (Constanza & Daly, 1992).





One of the key issues is therefore the notion of sustainable tourism being compatible with economic growth. The problem is that economic growth is simply an increase in the production and consumption of goods and services. It entails increasing population and/or per capita consumption, where consumption refers to the consumption of materials and energy by firms, households, and governments. Yet as the evidence provided above suggests, much tourism growth, as with much economic growth in general, is already uneconomic at the present margin as we currently measure it given that it is leading to a clear running down of natural capital. As Daly (2008, p.2) commented in a report to the UK Sustainable Development Commission:

The growth economy is failing. In other words, the quantitative expansion of the economic subsystem increases environmental and social costs faster than production benefits, making us poorer not richer, at least in high-consumption countries. Given the laws of diminishing marginal utility and increasing marginal costs, this should not have been unexpected... It is hard to know for sure that growth now increases costs faster than benefits since we do not bother to separate costs from benefits in our national accounts. Instead we lump them together as "activity" in the calculation of GDP.

Daly (2008) also stressed the importance of the scale of human activity vis-à-vis the natural world. Related to scale and the steady state is the distinction between growth and development. Growth refers to the quantitative increase in economic output, whereas development refers to an increase in the quality of output without an increase in material and energy use. Similarly, Czech (2006, p.1563) commented:

The nineteenth-century economist, William Stanley Jevons, noted in "The Coal Question" that every increment of additional efficiency in coal extraction and utilisation was met with an increment of additional coal extracted and consumed. "Jevon's Paradox" helps illustrate the chicken-or-egg nature of economic growth and technological progress. As long as economic growth is the goal, technological progress will not result in biodiversity conservation; rather, an expansion of the human niche and the consumption of more natural resources will result.





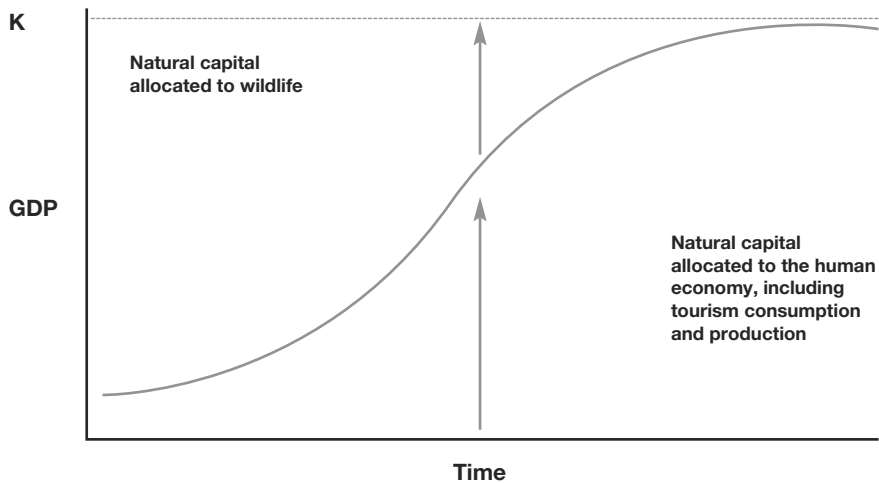
While neoclassical economists emphasise relative limitation (scarcity pricing), ecological economists stress Malthusian, general limitation. For the latter, substitution can solve relative allocation but cannot solve general limitation which can only be avoided if economic activity proceeds within appropriate cyclical resource transformations – a steady state (Khalil, 1997). Hall (2009) argues that sustainable tourism needs to be understood from a steady-state economic perspective that explicitly recognizes the extent to which economic development, including tourism, is dependent on the stock of natural capital. According to Hall (2009) steady state tourism is a tourism system that encourages qualitative development, with a focus on quality of life and wellbeing measures, but not aggregate quantitative growth to the detriment of natural capital. A steady state economy, including at the destination level, can therefore be defined in terms of ‘a constant flow of throughput at a sustainable (low) level, with population and capital stock free to adjust to whatever size can be maintained by the constant throughput beginning with depletion and ending with pollution’ (Daly, 2008, p.3). Such an approach therefore recognises that the human economy competes with wildlife for use of scarce natural capital. **Figure 1** illustrates that natural capital (e.g. soil, timber and water) is reallocated from wildlife to humans in the process of economic growth thereby leading to species extinction and threats. As the economy grows, the natural capital comprising wildlife habitat (represented above the sigmoid curve) is converted into goods and services in the human economy (represented below the sigmoid curve). K equals economic carrying capacity (Czech, 2004). Under such an approach sustainable tourism policies should therefore be geared to stop tourism growing where marginal costs equal marginal benefits although the willingness of destination authorities to do this, except in the most ecologically sensitive areas, such as in some national parks or the sub-Antarctic islands, currently appears minimal.

In order to reduce its demands on natural capital, tourism needs to become part of a circular economy rather than a linear one, so that inputs of virgin raw material and energy and outputs in the form of emissions and waste requiring disposal are reduced (Hall, 2008a). Such a change is often categorised as ‘sustainable consumption’ (Cooper, 2005; Jackson, 2005). As Boulding (1945, 1949) recognised with respect to the relationship between consumption and production over 60 years ago.





Figure 1



There is a very general assumption in economics that income (or out-go) is the proper measure of economic welfare, and that the more income and out-go we have, the better. In fact, almost the reverse is the case. Income consists of the value of production: out-go is the value of consumption. I shall argue that it is the capital stock from which we derive satisfactions, not from the additions to it (production) or the subtractions from it (consumption): that consumption, far from being a desideratum, is a deplorable property of the capital stock which necessitates the equally deplorable activities of production: and that the objective of economic policy should not be to maximise consumption or production, but rather to minimise it, i.e., to enable us to maintain our capital stock with as little consumption or production as possible. It is not the increase of consumption or production which makes us rich, but the increase in capital, and any invention which enables us to enjoy a given capital stock with a smaller amount of consumption and production, out-go or income, is so much gain (Boulding, 1949, pp.79-80).



Therefore, with respect to sustainability, any investment that enables humanity to reduce the volume of throughput needed to maintain a given level of welfare can be considered an indirect investment in natural capital (Daly, 1996). This is usually undertaken either by increasing the efficiency of throughput thereby making more productive use of materials and energy or by changing the nature of consumer behaviour, including the overall level or rate of demand, what may be described as sufficiency, as it serves to slow the overall rate of consumption (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Efficiency and Sufficiency in Sustainable Tourism Consumption (Hall 2007b)

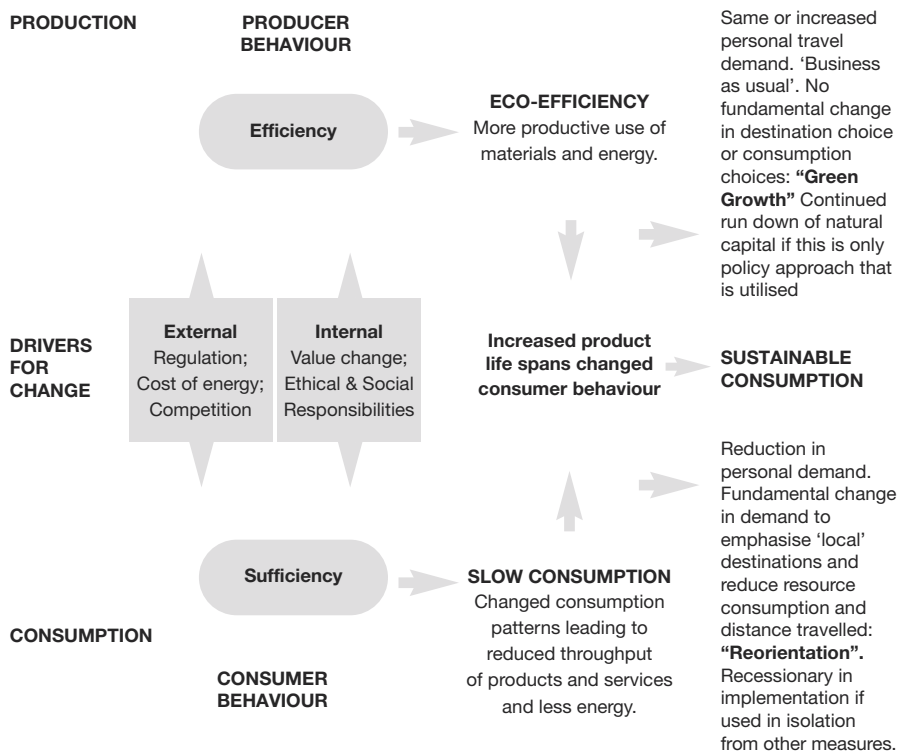




Table 2: Most Promising Emissions Mitigation Measures Identified by the WEF for Travel and Tourism

Travel and Tourism Specific

1. Encourage modal-shift from cars to mass-transit systems (bus and rails)
2. Acceleration of fleet renewal with more fuel efficient planes
3. Removal of infrastructure inefficiencies in the airspace and air-traffic management
4. Integration of international aviation in the post-Kyoto climate change agreement at a global sector level
5. Acceleration of hotel refurbishment to support the highest degree of energy efficiency

Cross-Sector

1. Accelerated development and deployment of low carbon sustainable fuels in the aviation sector
2. Accelerated deployment of renewable energy in the accommodation sector
3. Improvements in cruise ship fuel efficiency
4. Removal of mass-transit inefficiencies
5. Generate consensus on global and regional sustainability standards and metrics
6. Pro-active leverage of various funding mechanisms

Source: WEF (2009b)

The efficiency approach is dominant in current industry approaches towards sustainable tourism, especially with respect to reducing emissions. For example, the WEF (2009b) focus on developing a 'low carbon' travel and tourism industry is geared towards technological innovation and change rather than shifting consumer demand or regulatory strategies (**Table 2**). Yet, the technological solution is extremely questionable as 'technological progress does not reconcile the conflict between economic growth and biodiversity conservation because it arises only in tandem with the conflict' (Czech, 2003, p.1456). The problem in tourism, as with most economic sectors, with respect to efficiency is that the focus is on the maximisation of maintenance efficiency rather than production efficiency. 'As a mature scale is reached, production is seen more and more as a cost of maintaining what already exists rather than as the source of additional services from added stock. The larger something has grown, the greater, ceteris paribus, are its maintenance costs. More new production, more throughput, is required just to keep the larger stock constant' (Daly, 1996, p.68).





These relationships can be expressed by the identity:

$$S/T = S/A \times A/T$$

Where S equals service (the satisfaction experienced when wants are satisfied. It cannot be accumulated), A equals accumulations (both stocks and funds) (A stock is an unstructured inventory of like things that can be used a little at a time without affecting the whole, i.e. stocks get 'used up'. A fund is a structured organic whole which depreciates as a whole, i.e. funds get 'worn out'), and T equals throughput (the entropic physical flow of energy and matter from nature's sources, through the human economy, and back to nature's sinks. The flow is accumulated into stocks and funds as well as their maintenance and replacement) (Daly, 1996, pp.68-69, 110-111).

From the identity it can be seen that service is therefore the final benefit and throughput the final cost. The replacement of stocks and funds requires the accumulation of more throughput and consequent new sacrifices of natural capital with consequent reductions of the service of natural capital. The cost nature of throughput begins with depletion of low-entropy resources and ends with the pollution of the environment with high-entropy wastes, although some may be recycled. Accumulation, including by tourism, therefore both yields benefits and imposes costs.

From this approach growth can be defined as increase in throughput keeping the two right-hand ratios constant (physical increase). In contrast, development is increase in service as a result of improvements in the two right-hand efficiency ratios, keeping throughput constant (qualitative improvements that allow more stock maintenance per unit of throughput, and more service per unit of stock). Economic growth is a combination of these two processes but physical growth implies reduction in natural capital. In contrast, sustainable development is development without growth in terms of throughput beyond the regenerative and absorptive capacities of the environment and natural capital (Daly, 1996, p.69).

The sufficiency approach aims to slow the rate of consumption and therefore reduce the cost nature of throughput via changing consumption behaviours and patterns, including the amount of consumption. The focus on time in much of the sufficiency literature has meant the approach is often related to the notion of 'slow' consumption as well as the concept of 'décroissance' or 'degrowth' (Flipo and Schneider, 2008). Although grounded in consumer activism the approach also includes industry and public policy initiatives that dovetail with the efficiency approach.





These include (Hall, 2007):

- The development of environmental standards at the community, regional, national and international scales, e.g. such as the Nordic Swan eco-label, that aim to reduce throughput and the decline of environmental qualities (also utilised under the efficiency approach) (Bjørner et al., 2004; Gössling et al., 2009);
- The adoption of lifecycle thinking and analysis (cradle-to-cradle) in determining tourism infrastructure and product life spans (also under the efficiency approach) (McDonough et al., 2003; McDonough & Braungart, 2003). This also means that research on tourism and its impacts broadens attention to consumption beyond the points of purchase to all phases in the life of the tourism product and experience, from start to finish and from conception to final disposal and reuse (Hall, 2008a);
- Relocalisation schemes such as farmer's markets and 'local diets' that reinforce the potential economic, social and environmental benefits of purchasing, consuming and producing locally, as well as travelling locally (Hall & Sharples, 2009);
- Ethical consumption, through ethical and responsible tourism. This can include such items as fair-trade, local and organic purchasing, and Slow Food which are all significant for the hospitality sector, as well as low carbon travel, staycations, and local tourism (Gössling et al., 2009; Hall in press); and
- The so-called 'politics of consumption' such as anti-consumerism, consumer boycotts and culture jamming, and which may include 'downsizing', 'voluntary simplicity' and even commitments to have fewer children, that focus on living better by consuming less and the satisfaction of non-material needs including leisure.

The sufficiency approach and its connection to the broader politics of consumption also provides the basis for an even more radical critique of conventional thinking in tourism with respect to the role of economic growth in sustainable development. For example, degrowth is not a theory of contraction equivalent to theories of growth, but is instead a term that seeks to provide a conceptual alternative to the dominant doctrines of 'economism' in which growth is the ultimate good by positing the formulation of a non-growth form of economics bounded by the sustainable limits of humankind's ecological footprint as part of a post-development society (Latouche, 2004). Degrowth is therefore not so much connected to downsizing per se but to the notion of 'right-sizing' an economy in environmental terms (Hall, 2009).





A Genuine 'New Tourism'— Steady-State Tourism

This chapter has suggested that the achievement of sustainable forms of tourism is concerned not so much with more technological change but is instead grounded in paradigm change. At first glance, the notion that sustainable tourism policies should be geared to stop tourism growing where marginal costs equal marginal benefits, does not appear to be radical. Unfortunately, much of the thinking about tourism, even if it does acknowledge economic costs, does not fully consider the extent to which the marginal benefits of economic growth relate to those costs. In particular, for all the talk about the importance of 'the environment' to tourism, tourism as an industry and, to a lesser extent as a subject of study, does not adequately deal with how tourism impacts natural capital and instead focuses on economic growth without fully considering the maintenance of the natural resources that allow such growth. Yet, 'any consumption of capital, manmade or natural, must be subtracted in the calculation of income' (Daly, 2008, p.10). Growth does not equal development. Similarly, increased consumption does not necessarily imply living better, even though most contemporary tourism marketing is geared to encourage increased consumption within a consumer society, and is embedded within both the ideologies and institutions of contemporary capitalism.

Yet steady-state tourism does not mean the end of tourism or even people holidaying and travelling less. Instead, it does mean that the current internalisation of external diseconomies — those costs incurred by the activity of one actor but borne by the community at large, i.e., emissions and the loss of natural capital — needs to stop. In one sense this means fully applying the principle of 'polluter pays' in order to ensure that costs as well as benefits are demonstrated in economic activities rather than being externalised. In tourism this means not just accounting for the environmental effects of tourism at the destination, as significant as they might be, but throughout the entire course of the consumption and production of a tourist trip. Mechanisms to achieve this will have to be both efficient and sufficient in scope and will undoubtedly utilise the four Rs of steady-state tourism consumption: reduce, reuse, recycle and regulate. New travel patterns and behaviours would likely emerge, include more local and slower travel, in an effort to reduce the environmental effects of tourist trips (see Holden 2007). Many destinations will actually benefit economically as shifts occur from more distant to local travel, particularly in the major tourism generating regions, many of which currently run at a deficit in terms of departures versus arrivals. Some long-haul peripheral destinations will be negatively affected, in the same way that they may be from other regulatory and behavioural measures to mitigate emissions from long-haul travel (Gössling et al., 2010).





The only sector that will not benefit is likely to be aviation, or at least those companies geared to long-haul travel although it should be emphasised that there will still be a significant medium and long-haul aviation market for those prepared to pay the environmental costs.

The concept of sustainable tourism has been subject to considerable critique since it became popularised in the late 1980s. Yet it is an inadequate concept. We only have one planet. It is nice that tourism can possibly be regarded as sustainable at the scale of a location, a firm, or individual, but unless tourism's contribution is assessed as being positive at a global scale, the gains made at the local level will matter little. As 'a single-sector concept' it also 'fails to acknowledge the inter-sectoral competition for resources, the resolution of which is crucial to the achievement of sustainable development' (Wall, 1997, p.47). As it has usually been expressed the discourse of sustainable tourism and its use by industry and policy makers has failed to address the fact that the environmental impacts of tourism have continued to grow in absolute terms and that they have a massive global-wide effect. But more fundamentally the discourse has not adequately dealt with the fact that the decline of natural capital is inextricably linked to the way in which growth and development are understood. And without a fundamental change or paradigm shift in thinking and action on tourism sustainability that embraces the conservation and maintenance of natural capital and steady-state thinking, then tourism will continue to be unsustainable.

Pleonexia, the insatiable desire for more, was regarded in the time of Aristotle as a human failing, an obstacle to achieving the 'good life'. In the present-day it is a failing of the tourism industry in terms of its focus on growth without full consideration of the effects on natural capital. As this paper has sought to argue, in the case of tourism, more does not mean better, and growth does not mean development.





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4

**Towards Performance
Measurement in Hotels—
An Incremental Approach**



Detta Melia and Leigh Robinson





Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the world's fastest growing industries with estimated growth in global travel expanding from 450 million travellers in 1992 to 730 million by the year 2010 (World Tourism Organisation, 2006). In 2000, Ireland — the focus of this paper — attracted 6.3 million overseas visitors, which rose to 7.8 million in 2007 (Fáilte Ireland, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). However, data available for 2008 suggest that visitors from Europe are down by 6%, North American visitors are down 8.6% and other international visitors are down by 6% (Fáilte Ireland, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). In addition, the hotel sector is facing a very difficult financial crisis. Revenues have been squeezed by the combination of lower prices, excess capacity and low capacity utilisation rates. Costs have not significantly reduced; consequently, margins are under severe pressure resulting in closures across the country with 164 hospitality businesses entering examinership, receivership or liquidation in the first nine months of 2009. This figure is set to continue in 2010 with additional closures (Hotel and Catering Review, 2009).

The hospitality sector represents an important part of the tourism industry and comprises hotels, restaurants, pubs and clubs, guesthouses and self-catering operations. The largest component within the Irish hospitality sector is hotels. These hotels operate in a highly competitive environment as a consequence of a number of factors. First, a number of new markets have emerged in former Eastern Block countries that are in direct competition with Ireland as a tourism destination (Corr, 2007). Second, there has been a rise in market demand for, and expectations of, in-house facilities, quality of service and products and value for money (Harris & Mongiello, 2001), where visitors want to experience excellence at all levels of service, which can be readily recognised as good value for money. Third, hotel capacity has increased by 40% in eight years from 2000. This growth contributes to the increasingly competitive environment. Finally, a sharp rise in operational costs has resulted in declining profitability for hotels in addition to the recession that is impacting worldwide.

These trends require hotels in Ireland to be more efficient and competitive in meeting the needs of their customers, who are increasingly growing in sophistication (Fáilte Ireland, 2007; 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; HBC, 2007). The ability of Irish hotel operators to adequately respond to these challenges will determine their long-term success and development (Hotel and Catering Review, 2007; O'Connor, 2004). There is a growing awareness amongst operators of the need to optimise the effectiveness of operational and business decision-making activities, such as those relating to profit, planning, control and continuous improvement, in order to maintain a competitive edge. In larger hotels, this is leading to an emphasis on sound management practices, in particular a focus on performance management and measurement in order to maintain competitive advantage (Evans, 2005).





Literature Review

The research presented in this paper focuses on performance measurement because, as is argued by Folen and Browne (2005), performance measurement is based on the strategic role of the organisation and should be mutually supportive and consistent with the business goals, objectives and strategy of the organisation. Organisations need to set clear goals and objectives, develop criteria for measurement and measure performance, evaluate that performance and compare the performance against the goals and objectives of the organisation. The provision of feedback and plans for improvement, along with training and development for continuous improvement provides an integrated approach to performance measurement that encompasses the organisation's strategy and goals. Measuring performance plays an important role in planning and decision-making and makes the link between strategy, performance and strategic evaluation (Doran et al., 2002; Folen & Brown, 2005; Flanagan, 2005; Haktinir & Harris, 2005).

Research into, and the development of, performance measurement frameworks have been underpinned by concern at the overly financial focus of the measurement system of many organisations. Recent studies have shown that hotel companies place a greater emphasis on financial performance than on any other performance dimension and they are reluctant to use additional tools to monitor performance and manage the process (Atkinson & Brander-Brown, 2000; Haktanir & Harris, 2005). This limits performance measurement in hotel operations because of the over reliance on one dimension. Although, financial performance measurement is important, the use of a more comprehensive set of indicators may offer greater opportunities for measuring the strategy and organisational effectiveness in the longer term. The main performance measurement frameworks available to hoteliers are presented in **Table 1**.

It is apparent from **Table 1** that performance measurement frameworks have become increasingly more complex in terms of the scope of measurement and the breadth of dimensions. For example, although Sink and Tuttle's framework (1989) only measures efficiency and effectiveness of quality, the much later framework proposed by Rouse and Putterill (2003) attempts to measure a number of integrated areas. However, it is also apparent that existing performance measurement frameworks do not cover all areas that could be considered necessary for full strategic evaluation (Atkinson & Brander Brown, 2001; Amaratunga et al., 2001; Marr & Schiuma, 2003; Smith, 2005; Atkinson, 2006). For example, the balanced scorecard of Kaplan and Norton (1992) measures a number of significant dimensions, however, this framework fails to consider the external environment, the competitive environment, multiple stakeholders (Neely et al., 2002) and the social context (Sucheshchander & Leisten, 2005).





Table 1: Performance Measurement Frameworks

Framework	Dimensions of Measurement
Eight-Step Procedural Framework (Sink and Tuttle, 1989)	Efficiency, Effectiveness and Quality
Performance Measurement Matrix (Keegan et al., 1989)	Cost, Non-cost, Internal & External Performance Measures
Results and Determinants Framework (Fitzgerald et al., 1991; 1996; 2006)	Results (Financial Performance, Competitiveness) Determinants of the Results (quality, flexibility, resource utilisation, innovation)
Performance Pyramid (Lynch and Cross, 1991; 1995)	Vision, Market, Financial, Customers
Time-based performance Measurement Matrix (Azzone et al., 1991)	Time, Cost Internal/External Divisions
Kaydos' Framework (Kaydos, 1991)	Quality and Productivity
Wisner and Fawcett's Framework (Wisner and Fawcett, 1991)	Quality, Cost, flexibility, Dependability and Innovation
Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1992; 1996a; 1996b; 1996c)	Financial, Internal Business, Innovation and Learning Customers
Performance Measurement Cube (Bradley, 1996)	Time, Cost, Quality, Flexibility
Brown's Structural Framework (Brown, 1996)	Inputs, Processes, Outputs, Outcomes
Four Theoretical Performance Measurement System Framework (Lockamy, 1998)	Cost, Quality, Lead Time, Deliveries
ISO 9000 (Rabinowitz et al., 1998; ISO, 2003; Dick, 2005)	Quality System and Manuals
Brown's Balanced Scorecard (Brown, 1999)	Financial, Processes/Operational Performance, Customer Satisfaction, Employee Satisfaction, Community/ Stakeholder Satisfaction
EFQM Framework (EFQM, 1999)	Enablers, Results
Six-Sigma (Ramakrishnan, 1999; Keegan, 1995; Robustelli and Killman, 2002; Hoerl and Snee, 2002; James, 2005)	Defects from Performance, Quality and Service
Medori and Steeples (2000) Performance Measurement Framework	Quality, Cost, Flexibility, Time Delivery, Future Growth
SME Performance Measurement Framework (Hudson et al., 2001)	Finance and Operations





Framework	Dimensions of Measurement (cont.)
Total Quality Management (TQM) (McAdam and Bannister, 2001)	Quality Teams, Checks and Procedures.
Performance Prism (Neely et al., 2002)	Stakeholders Satisfaction, Strategies, Processes, Capabilities, Stakeholder Contribution
Integrated Performance Measurement Framework (Rouse and Putterill, 2003)	Structure, Processes, Inputs, Outputs
Framework for MNC's (Yenyurt, 2003)	Cross-process, Cross-Border Approach. Financial, Consumer, Internal Processes, Innovation, Corporate Culture/Climate
Optimus (O'Grady, 2004; Lenehan, 2004; Failte Ireland, 2005; 2006)	Results Orientation, Customer Focus, Leadership, Processes, People, Policies and Strategy
Holistic Balanced Scorecard (Sucheshchander and Leisten, 2005)	Financial, Customer, Business Processes, Social, Intellectual Capital and Employees

Source: Adapted from Folan and Browne (2005); Folen, Jagdev and Browne (2005; 2007) and Folen, Higgins and Browne (2006).

Folen and Browne (2005), Folen, Jagdev and Browne (2005, 2007) and Folen, Higgins and Browne (2006) have argued that no definitive performance measurement framework has been developed because of the number of complex issues involved in performance measurement. For instance, according to Biazzo and Bernardi (2003), Garengo et al., (2005) and Garengo and Bititci (2007) most performance measurement frameworks do not consider company size, yet the use of performance measurement frameworks can be correlated to size, with larger firms more likely users (Speckbacker et al., 2003). Likewise Davila (2005) has suggested that size acts as a driver for the emergence of a formal performance measurement framework in order to manage the complexities of a bigger organisation. Burgess et al., (2007) also argue that larger organisations are more likely to use performance measurement frameworks than the smaller or medium sized organisations because the larger firms have more resources to implement more sophisticated performance management systems and procedures. Bergin-Seers and Jago (2007) consider size and ownership structure as key elements impacting on the use of performance measurement in research carried out in the hospitality sector in Australia. Indeed Cooper et al., (2006) and Garengo and Bititci (2007) suggest that performance measurement in small to medium-sized organisations is poor and, although little research has investigated the reasons for this, it could arguably be due to a shortage of human resources and capital resources, lack of strategic planning, misconception of the benefits of performance measurement and the overtly complex nature of the frameworks (Hudson et al.,



2001b; Bititci et al., 2006). This would suggest that the size of the operation has an impact on the type of framework utilised for performance measurement.

Two issues emerge from the review of performance measurement frameworks presented. First, frameworks do not appear to be developed with the small and medium-sized operation in mind, and there appears to be an assumption that existing performance measurement frameworks can be scaled down and applied to small and medium-sized operations. This assumption has not been proven. Second, the existing frameworks do not appear to be directly transferable from the manufacturing sector to the service sector, because according to Atkinson and Brander-Brown (2001) and Krambria-Kapardis and Thomas (2006) a hotel measurement framework needs to enable managers to effectively cope with unique organisational characteristics and critical success factors, and reflect the complex nature of the service delivery process within hotels which includes perishability, intangibility, heterogeneity and simultaneity. Haktanir and Harris (2005) argue that these characteristics make it difficult to transfer a framework from a particular sector to another. Therefore, it would seem appropriate to suggest that different models and approaches are needed to satisfy the hotel industry requirements in terms of performance measurement, the focus on service, the competitive environment in which the hotel operates and the critical success factors impacting on organisational success. Consequently, the next section of this paper considers critical success factors that enhance performance measurement frameworks.

According to Brotherton, (2004a, 2004b) critical success factors are those factors capable of providing the greatest competitive leverage upon which resources should be focused. For example, Flanagan (2005) has identified a critical success factor as a position where the organisation's pricing is considered to be in the realms of competitive pricing and where the organisation's technical capability can match or outstrip competition. Brotherton, (2004a, 2004b) considers critical success factors to be combinations of activities and processes designed to support achievement of such desired outcomes specified by the company's objectives or goals. Consequently, they can be partially controlled by management and thus can potentially be managed.



Research in this area by Bergin (2002, 2003); Flanagan (2005); Phillips and Louvieris (2005); Olsen, Chung, Graf, Lee, and Madanoglu (2005); O'Donoghue and Luby (2006); Kandampully (2006) and Kobjoll (2007) suggest that there are a number of critical success factors, such as personal involvement, a customer focus, quality of service, customer retention and profitability directly related to the hospitality sector. For example, Flanagan (2005) has stated that the high contact nature of the hotel service would suggest people, both employees and customers, are a critical component of the success of the organisation. Therefore, a critical success factors may include the measurement of employees as one of the areas or dimensions of a performance measurement framework specifically designed for the hotel sector of the industry.

Research Methodology

In order to investigate the phenomenon of performance measurement in hotels, empirical research was carried out with hotel managers, owners and operators of hotels in Ireland. The research was carried out in three distinct phases. The first was a questionnaire survey of a sample of Irish hotel managers, operators and owners across the spectrum of hotels in Ireland, the second phase was qualitative focus group research conducted with managers and owners of small and medium-sized independently owned hotels, while the third phase was a series of in-depth interviews with a number of hotel operators and managers of small and medium-sized hotels in Ireland.

Results and Discussion

This section presents an overview of the main findings from the three phases of the research and then goes on to discuss the themes that emerged from the analysis of the results. For the first phase a self-completion questionnaire was administered to 300 hoteliers from the Be My Guest Guide published by the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF). A total of 134 hotel operators responded to the questionnaire, representing a 45% response rate.





Overview of Questionnaire Findings

The majority of respondents (69%) operate independently owned hotels in Ireland which is not surprising considering 75% of hotels in Ireland are independently owned and operated. Forty-six percent (61) of the respondents' hotels had between 51 and 100 bedrooms, 20% (27) of the sample had between 100 and 150 bedrooms, 15% (20) had over 150 bedrooms and 19% (26) had less than 50 bedrooms. In terms of star ratings 59% (79) respondents indicated that their hotels had three stars, 30% (40) had four stars and the remaining 11% (15) either had two or five stars, the majority had five star rating. The sample can be considered to be representative of the population in that the majority of Irish hotel operators are at the three and four-star levels.

Financial performance measures, which are prominent in the annual accounts, were unsurprisingly the most popular measures used to assess performance, 91% (122) of the respondents used profit as a financial measure, while 71% (95) used turnover as a financial measure. Operating profit margin, return on investment, asset turnover, sales and earnings per share were also used to determine data from the annual accounts. Other measures such as occupancy rates and percentage of customer complaints were more likely to be used by the international chains than the national chains and the independent properties. This is typical of the more comprehensive approach to performance measurement that is undertaken by the international operators as was evident by this phase of the research.

A number of operational indicators were measured and it is possible to see that 61% (11) of the national chains used percentage of complaints to total number of customers to measure complaints. Twenty percent (19) of independent hotel owners used the same measure, as did 65% (15) of international chains. Likewise with occupancy rates, 55% (10) of the national chains used this measure, 72% (67) of the independent hotel operators used this measure and 100% (23) of the international chain operators make use of this measure. Cash flow was measured in 83% (19) of the international chain operations, while 39% (36) of the independent hotel operators and 39% (7) of the national chain operators measured this variable.

Almost all respondents used some measure of comparison with competitors with past performance, standard of property and product being the most popular measures. However, this was the simplest type of benchmarking and as many respondents cited difficulties in obtaining peer group data a more comprehensive approach appears difficult. Ninety-eight percent of hotel operators measure customer satisfaction, primarily using number of complaints as a percentage of total complaints as a measure. Comment cards emerged as the most popular choice for collecting customer information and were used by 80% of all respondents.





Dimensions such as employee performance, measurement of efficiency and effectiveness and creativity and innovation were measured by some but not all of the respondents. Specific aspects of performance such as brand management, revenue management, value enhancements and training were measured to some degree; however, the measurement of these aspects of performance was limited. This is unsurprising as these dimensions are more difficult to measure, lack easy to use recognisable tools for measurement and require time to carry out the measurement process.

Overall, it was clear from the analysis of the questionnaires that the emphasis of performance measurement in Irish hotels is very much on tangible, measurable areas of performance, most of which are prepared by financial staff. This suggests that the information collected is primarily used for reporting purposes and with the exception of the international chains; little information is collected for a full strategic evaluation.

Overview of Focus Group Findings

The next phase of the research involved three focus group interviews were held with 29 operators of independent hotel properties. Included in the sample were 9 Owners (O), 8 General Managers (GM), 8 Duty Managers (DM) and 4 Human Resource Managers (HRM). These people represent a diverse range of small and medium-sized hotels. The organisations chosen for this phase of the study were approached at a networking event for the hotel industry; both the researcher and the hotel operators were members of this group. The researcher was afforded the opportunity to comment on the research being carried out and ask potential participants who carried out performance measurement in their organisations to volunteer for the focus group interview stage of the research.

The focus groups involved twenty-nine managers from small and medium-sized independently operated hotels. The initial discussion opened with the participants providing an overview of their thoughts on performance measurement. It is apparent from this phase of the research that the level of understanding of performance measurement and the rationale for using performance measures is wide ranging among this group. For example one participant suggested that "performance measurement was an ongoing process necessary in any organisation" and another participant perceived that "performance measurement leads to an evaluation, to assess to what extent outputs are being achieved"





Participants proposed a number of reasons for using performance measurement, which, not unexpectedly included the need for a better picture of the performance of the operation and the provision of information to assess all facets of operations. The discussion showed a perception of the value of performance measurement in comparing performance with industry averages which helps businesses set targets that are realistic and achievable. Participants indicated that performance measurement in general seems to be driven from the finance department or from investors with a keen interest in financial performance. For example, one participant indicated that "finance is seen as the responsibility of the financial controller, who often works in isolation of operations and marketing and additionally, staff operating individual departments do not appear to have much appreciation of what to expect in the greater scheme of things".

As regards additional measurement, the focus group participants felt that dimensions that proved difficult in information gathering, such as, market share and benchmarking are not suitable for the smaller hotels as the time and resources required to collect and evaluate information of this calibre is problematic. For example, one participant noted that, "in the smaller hotels, there is not the time or the resources for training for measurement in any other areas". In addition, another participant indicated that difficulties in performance measurement "often seem to stem from poor skills and a lack of knowledge of processes"

It is clear from this phase of the research that there are a number of issues and challenges facing the management of independently owned hotels in relation to the use of performance measurement. Although the somewhat simplistic approach to performance measurement identified by this phase of the research may be appropriate for some hotel operations, this simplicity is not the result of a well-considered approach to performance measurement. Indeed, the research highlighted poor management, a lack of knowledge of the process and poor administration as key factors in deciding what is measured and what is not measured, rather than a careful process of identifying strategy and critical success factors and that this was considered by participants to be a consequence of "poor administration in the industry, financial dyslexia, resistance to learning — linked to fear and dearth of knowledge about aspects of performance other than financial performance".





Overview of the In-depth Interview Findings

The organisations chosen for this phase of the study were approached at a networking event for the hotel industry similar to the focus group interview format; both the researcher and the hotel operators were members of this group. The researcher was afforded the opportunity to comment on the research being carried out and ask potential participants who carried out performance measurement in their organisations to volunteer for the in-depth interview stage of the research. Initially, ten hotel operators indicated interest in participating, two were rejected as international chains employed them and one was the manager of a national chain. Two subsequently deselected themselves because of time commitments, leaving five hotels to be included in this research.

The approach to performance measurement within the five hotels interviewed for this phase of the research ranged from an informal hands-on approach to one that can be considered to be very structured and formal where each hotel differs in the formality of its measurement and or the focus of its measurement process as can be seen from **Table 2**.

Table 2: Approaches to Performance Measurement

Hotel	Approach to Measurement	Focus of Measurement Activity
Hotel V	Semi-Formal	Customer Focused
Hotel W	Formal	Customer Focused
Hotel X	Informal	Customer Focused
Hotel Y	Formal	Balanced in terms of dimensions but with the financial dimension attracting the most measures
Hotel Z	Formal / limited	Competitor





The research shows that those hotels that have a larger food and beverage business have a more formalised process of performance measurement. Although each of the hotels appear to be small in terms of rooms, three of the hotels have a very large food and beverage business and it would appear that performance measurement in these hotels is more formal because of this. This is because food and beverage is one of the most difficult departments to manage in terms of cost, staffing and customer satisfaction. Therefore, the hotels need a number of measures to help evaluate the effectiveness of operations in this area. Where performance measurement had been identified as being more formal, the focus of performance measurement was on a limited number of dimensions, with an emphasis, once again on the financial dimension perceived necessary by all hotel operators. In terms of the measurement of other performance dimensions; the non-financial performance dimension that was most often measured was customer satisfaction.

Finally, this phase of the research established a number of critical success factors that are common to all the hotels, such as, customer satisfaction, employees, quality of the hotel product, quality of the infrastructure, and owner managed which can be incorporated into a structured framework or model to guide performance measurement.

The findings of the in-depth interviews suggest that the management of these hotels select dimensions for measurement that directly represent their operations and the degree of their involvement in the running of the business. Those that are more hands-on and involved on a day-to-day basis appear to rely on less performance measurement techniques than the hotels that have larger hierarchical structures. Once again, size, in particular, along with the complexity of the operation, dictates the amount and type of performance measures being used.

Emerging Themes

The analysis of the results of the three phases of the research leads to the identification of three themes that are common across the three phases of the research. These themes are; a lack of balance in performance measurement, the size of the business and a commonality of critical success factors.





A Lack of Balance in Performance Measurement

The first theme to emerge is that the independent hotel operators in this research prioritise the measurement of the financial dimension of performance. The research results indicate that many hotels use a considerable number of performance measures, however, these are predominantly financial in nature. This is not an unexpected finding as it reflects existing knowledge about performance measurement in organisations which indicates that hotel operators place an importance on measuring the financial aspect of their business but do not measure any other dimension in any detail. This reflects the work of O'Connor (2000); Artley and Stroh (2001a, 2001b); Kellen (2003); Kennerley and Neely (2003); Anderson and McAdam (2005) and Haktinir and Harris (2005) who have all argued that financial measures were most frequently used because of the ease of usage, the provision of instant information and easy to evaluate and track past performance.

It is evident from the research that independent hotel operators are not linking performance measurement with strategic management; therefore, it is likely that the links between the organisation's goals, strategy, objectives and performance measurement are not being made or implemented. This is an issue for the effective management of operations in light of the challenges facing the industry and is of major importance to an organisation's survival. This lack of strategic evaluation is a consequence of the limited number of performance dimensions that are measured by the operators. This reflects the work of Fitzgerald et al., (1991); Atkinson and Brander-Brown (2001); Doran et al., (2002); Ittner and Larcker (2003); Kellen (2003); Neely (2004); Evans (2005); Flanagan (2005) and Meekings (2005) and shows that in many instances organisations do not have a balanced approach to measurement because this is perceived to be too difficult.

The three phases of the research showed that Financial Controllers are predominantly responsible for making decisions about the dimensions measured and these decision-makers are likely to emphasise measures which help them in their work, hence the focus on the financial dimension of measurement. The need for a balanced approach to performance measurement that has been highlighted by the work of Eccles (1998); O'Connor (2000); Neely and Bourne (2000); Neely et al., (2005); Kellen (2003); Yenyurt (2003); Kaplan and Norton, (1992, 1996a, 1996b, 2001a, 2001b, 2004) and Haktanir and Harris (2005) appears to have been rejected by these hotel operators as is evident from the reasons outlined in the primary research.





Finally, participants in the research highlighted a lack of appropriate performance measurement systems for hotels. Focus group participants felt that the biggest difficulty they experienced in measuring performance was a lack of tools or models they felt were applicable to their hotels. In phase three of the research, a number of respondents indicated that they would put measures in place when the size and the performance of the business warranted it or if there was a suitable model or guidelines for the small and medium-sized hotel operator to follow.

The discussion above suggests that there is the potential to increase the use of more complex measures to provide a more balanced approach, but more importantly there is an apparent need for the development of a performance measurement process that is appropriate for this industry.

Size of the Business

The research shows that the hotels that participated in the study consider the measurement of financial performance to be critical to their business success and development. However, the research also suggests that adopting a more holistic approach that includes measuring non-financial performance is dependent on the size of the operation. As established by phase one of the research, the larger chain hotels, both national and international take a more formal approach to measurement of performance in all areas which can be attributed to a larger operation, the nature of the business in terms of bars, food and beverage restaurants, banqueting and conferencing, a more formalised management structure and in some cases the requirement to deliver on regular performance reports by the Financial Controllers and Accountants.

These findings are consistent across the three phases of the primary research and it is clear that because of the limited size of the independent hotels, managers and owners feel that their focus on a small number of measures is adequate as they provide the information the managers need to manage the business. This is consistent with the work of O'Connor (2000); Artley and Stroh (2001a, 2001b); Kellen (2003); Kennerley and Neely (2003); Anderson and McAdam (2005) and Haktinir and Harris (2005) who have all argued that financial measures were most frequently used because of the ease of usage, the provision of instant information and easy to evaluate and track past performance. However, this laissez-faire approach will limit the possibility of identifying and responding to threats from the external environment.





Critical Success Factors

The final theme to emerge from the research is the commonality of a number of critical success factors that are perceived to affect the performance of small and medium-sized hotels. Although it was evident from phases two and three of the research that some critical success factors were unique to each operation, the research identified the following four critical success factors as being common to small and medium-sized hotels. The first critical success factor is the quality of the infrastructure and products of the hotel. The second critical success factor is the location of the property, the third critical success factor is the high rate of customer care and satisfaction that the establishment provides and the fourth critical success factor is the staff providing the products and services of the hotel. These critical success factors reflect the existing research work of Bergin (2002, 2003); Flanagan (2005); Phillips and Louvieris (2005); Olsen et al., (2005); O'Donoghue and Luby (2006); Kandampully (2006) and Kobjoll (2007).

A Structured Model of Performance Measurement for Hotels

As a result of the research set out in this paper, it is possible to propose a series of structured models of performance measurement that, if adopted, will lead to the development of a structured and balanced approach to performance measurement in hotels. From the findings of the research it is clear that small and medium-sized independently owned hotels in Ireland need to further develop their practices in performance measurement in order to manage effectively in the changing operating context. The research of Atkinson and Brander-Brown (2001) has shown that an approach to performance measurement that measures the dimensions of employees, customers and finance has been successful in small and medium-sized hotels in the United States thus; these dimensions form the basis of measurement in all three models. Finally, the critical success factors presented in the following models draw on the commonalities that were identified in the primary research.





The primary research shows clearly that smaller hotels need a simplistic, yet structured approach to performance measurement. The model set out in **Figure 1** is considered appropriate for a small hotel to consider at the preliminary stage in introducing a structured approach to performance measurement. This can be considered phase 1 of a structured approach to managing and measuring performance. It takes account of the factors set out above which are considered to be an essential part of performance measurement in all hotels and also proposes measurement in a small number of performance dimensions, as appropriate. The primary research and the work of Phillips and Louvieris (2005) and Bergin-Seers and Jago (2006) indicate that the dimensions suggested in **Figure 1** are important.

In addition, a performance measurement framework should have an internal and external monitoring system (Biticti et al., 2002, 2005, 2006; Kennerley & Neely, 2003). Therefore, the measurement of the external environment is considered through the competitive environment dimension proposed in this model, while the internal environment is inherent in a number of the other dimensions. A review of performance necessary to match performance with strategic intent is considered through the measurement and feedback of information to inform future direction.

Following the successful implementation of **Figure 1**, **Figure 2** includes the additional performance dimensions of quality of service and the external environment, which were incorporated within other dimensions in the model suggested for introducing the concept of performance management and measurement. This reflects the work of Neely et al., (2005); Harrington and Lenehan (1998); and Robinson (2003). This is recommended as phase 2 of a structured approach to performance management and measurement.

As hotels become experienced in managing and measuring performance there is a need to expand the dimensions being measured. Therefore, in addition to the dimensions proposed in **Figure 1** and **2**, **Figure 3** introduces the additional performance dimensions of organisational learning, innovation and creativity. The inclusion of these dimensions in the model is based primarily on the research of Lynch and Cross (1990); Kaplan and Norton (1992, 1993, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c); Brown (1996); Kanji and Sa (2002); Neely et al., (2002); Marr and Schiuma (2003); Sucheshchander and Leisten (2005); Folen and Browne (2005) and Folen et al., (2005, 2006) who suggest that these performance dimensions are important to any organisation regardless of their operating context and industry sector and that organisations can benefit from measuring performance in these areas. This is recommended as phase 3 of a structured approach to performance management and measurement.





Figure 1: A Structured Model of Performance Measurement: Phase 1





In the models set out above the most popular measures established by this research have been presented, while others are proposed as they close gaps in measurement identified in the research. In particular, it was evident from the research that small and medium-sized hotels lack non-financial dimensions in their measurement activities and, therefore, these are included in the models in order to provide a balanced approach to performance measurement.

It is important to note that choosing to adopt one of the structured models does not mean that the other models are necessarily unsuitable for a particular hotel. If a hotel is not using a balance of dimensions and measures, they may choose to start with the structured model proposed in **Figure 1**, however, depending on management skills and resources, they may choose to introduce the structured model set out in **Figure 2**. However, the research has shown that choosing too many dimensions or measures poses challenges that may prevent an organisation from successfully implementing a balance of dimensions (Rutherford, 1998; Goulian & Mersereau, 2000; Atkinson & Brander-Brown, 2001; Amaratunga et al., 2001; Artley & Stroh, 2001a, 2001b; Ittner & Larcker, 2003; Kaplan & Norton, 2004; Neely, 2004) and thus the structured model in **Figure 1** is considered to be adequate and appropriate for an initial introduction of a performance measurement programme, then move to the integration of the more complex structured models once the hotel operator is comfortable with the performance measurement process. This phased approach is recommended.



Figure 2: A Structured Model of Performance Measurement: Phase 2

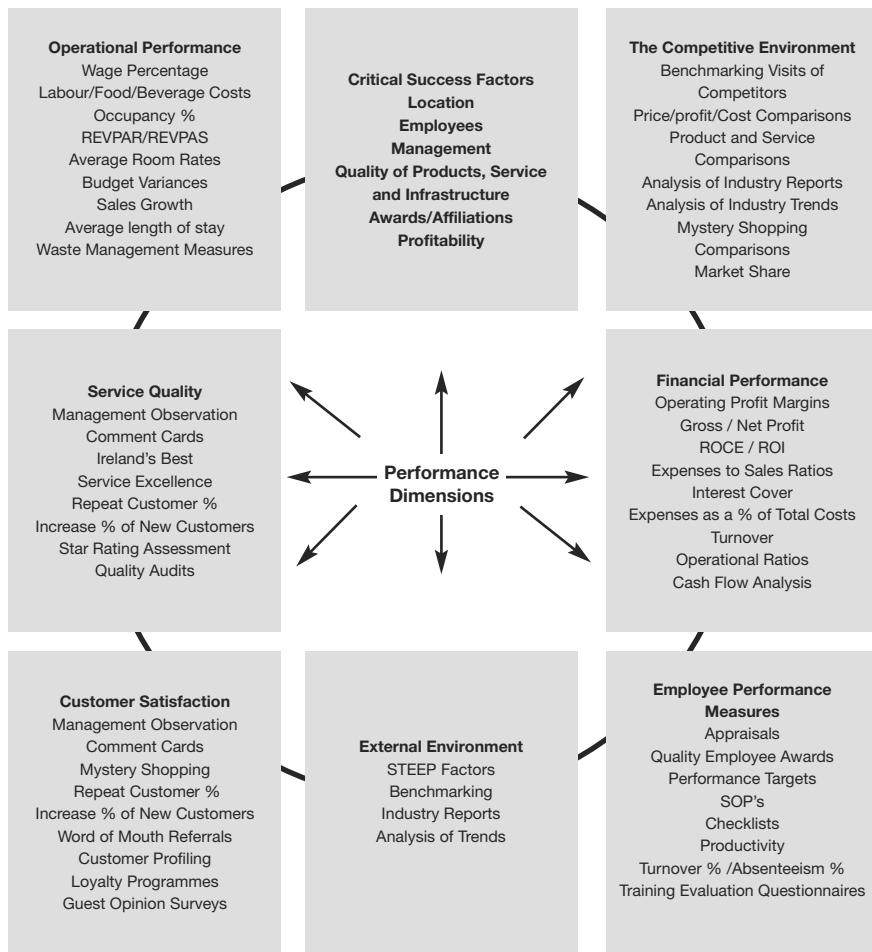
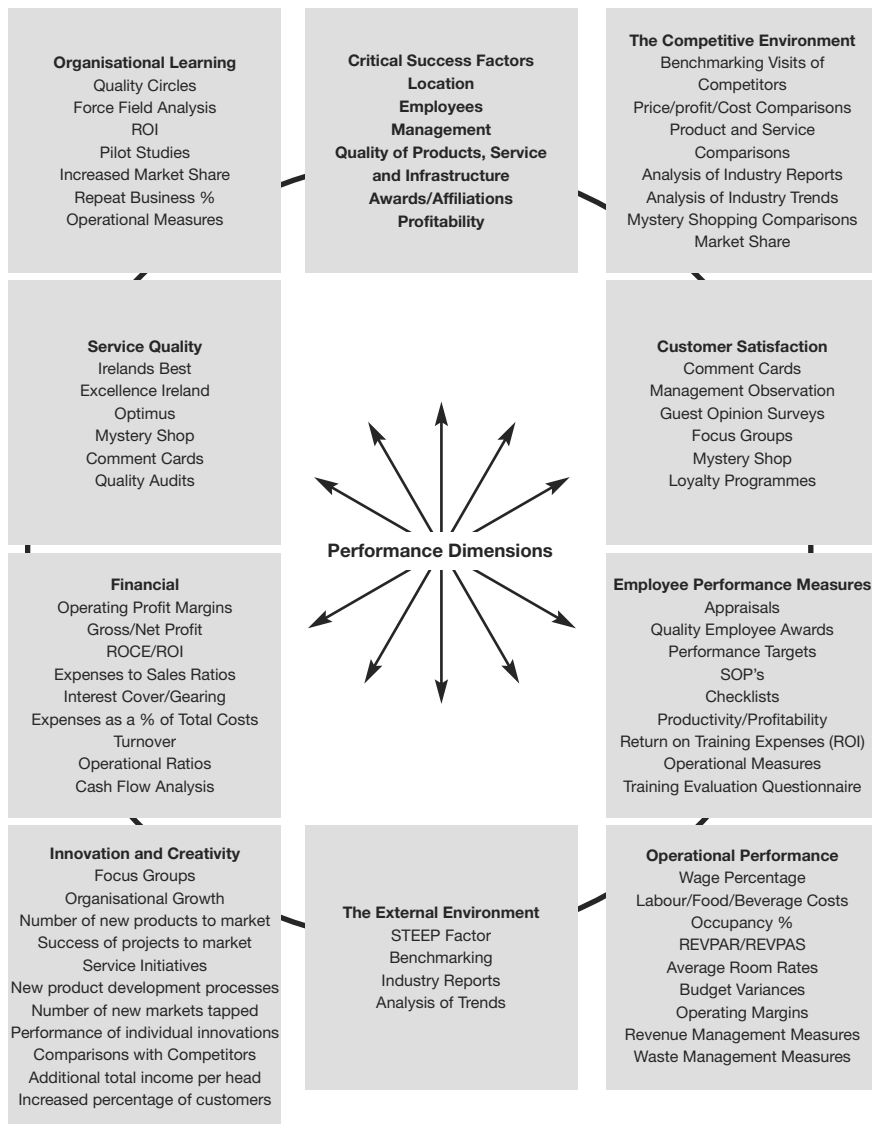


Figure 3: A Structured Model of Performance Measurement: Phase 3





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5

**Demographic Change and Labour
Supply in Global Tourism to 2030:
A Tentative Assessment***

Tom Baum



Introduction

Notwithstanding the undoubted impact of technology on the distribution and delivery of tourism services, people remain a critical dimension within the successful delivery of tourism services. 'The story of successful tourism enterprises is one that is largely about people—how they are recruited, how they are managed, how they are trained and educated, how they are valued and rewarded, and how they are supported through a process of continuous learning and career development' (Fáilte Ireland, 2005, p. 8). In today's tourism environment, worldwide, the pressing issues facing the tourism sector as employers relate to a combination of recruitment and retention; labour turnover; skills shortages; training and development opportunities; and workplace conditions. It is difficult to foresee a context within which this human dependence and the issues that underpin it will change radically although, undoubtedly, the nature of work that people undertake within tourism will continue to evolve into the future (Baum, 2007).

This said, however, it is important to recognise the extent and nature of change that is occurring within the external environment and to plan for such change into the long-term future. This chapter is concerned with the impact of demographic change on the tourism workplace. In addressing this concern, we first address the nature of this change in the global context and then focus on the specific situation in one, relatively small country, Scotland, recognising that this case example provides potential parallels to that to be found across the water in Ireland. Our broad timeframe for this analysis is the next 21 years, up to 2030 and beyond (depending on available data sources).

The Global Demographic Picture

A global assessment of demographic trends over the coming two decades points to a continuation of the current situation of a declining rate of population growth, although the pattern of this trend is certainly not even across all regions and countries. The key determinant of this is the birth rate across the main centres of population, which continues to decline. However, notwithstanding this overall trend, the global population is projected to rise from a current 6.5 billion to between 7.5 and 8.5 billion by 2030.

* This paper owes much in its genesis to Professor Ian Yeoman PhD, now of Victoria University, Wellington but latterly with VisitScotland, who initiated the discussion which has led to the preparation of this paper, while based in Edinburgh.





Table 1: Projected Global Population to 2035

2000	6,124,123
2005	6,514,751
2010	6,906,558
2015	7,295,135
2020	7,667,090
2025	8,010,509
2030	8,317,707
2035	8,587,050

Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision and World Urbanisation Prospects: The 2005 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>

Although overall growth rates are declining, Shackman et al (2002) anticipate forward trends that echo population growth figures over the past four decades. They point out that the growth rate for less developed countries continues to be higher than that for more developed countries, building on data which points to a disparity of almost three times as high between 1960 and 1980, and almost five times as high between 1980 and 2001. As a consequence of the higher growth rate among less developed countries, the population in these locations has become an increasingly large proportion of world total, growing from 70% in 1960 to 81% in 2001.

Within this environment, the main regions of population growth will be within the currently developing world, notably south Asia and other areas with a significant Islamic population. Overall, the International Labour Organisation estimates that the global labour force will increase by nearly 1 billion over the next decade, with most growth coming from the developing world, thereby putting significant pressure on already weak economies to create hundreds of millions of new jobs. The shortage of professional entry-level jobs will be a particular concern. Unemployment in the Middle East, for example, is currently most severe among young semi-educated city dwellers who have received enough education to raise expectations and aspirations and are reluctant to take manual low skills and low status jobs. This situation is likely to become even more acute over the next two decades.

By contrast, population stagnation or decline will feature in many currently developed regions, notably Europe and Japan. Growth will continue in North America but, primarily, through an increase in immigration. An assessment in 2001 talked in terms of a global picture where





The world will be older and far less Caucasian, and it will be far more concentrated in urban areas; these population shifts will demand concessions of political influence at the expense of the young and middle aged and at the expense of traditional rural constituencies, as well as from traditional US allies and toward states currently outside our orbit of influence. (CIA, 2001, p.5)

This world view is supported by Little and Triest (2002, p.47) who argue that

The United States will face dramatic demographic changes over the next one hundred years. Indeed, the country will be entering largely uncharted territory. In the twenty-first century, the population is expected to grow more slowly than ever before over an extended period. The population will also age rapidly, with the share of the population over 65 climbing to a succession of new record highs. Finally, the United States will once again become a nation of immigrants...But because the source of this inflow has shifted from Europe to Latin America and Asia, this new wave will change the voice and face of America forever.

These assessments point to one of the key features of change within the currently developed world, which is that of a rapidly ageing demographic. For example, the working-age population (15-64) in Japan is expected to decline by 37 percent by 2050 and, in Italy, the working-age population will drop by 39 percent by 2050. Germany's working-age population will fall by more than 18 percent during that same period while France and the United Kingdom fare better, with projected working-age population declines of 11 percent and 12 percent respectively. In a wider European context, the European Commission's (2007, p.13) analysis highlights this picture in noting that

According to Eurostat's baseline population projection, the median age of the EU will increase between 2004 and 2050 from 39 to 49 years. The number of young people (aged 0-14) in the EU will continue to decline in absolute terms from around 100 million in 1975 to some 66 million by the year 2050. The population of working age (15-64) will be most numerous around the year 2010 (331 million) but will subsequently decline to about 268 million by 2050.





Table 2: Western Europe: Median Age (years), 2000-2035

2000	38.9
2005	40.5
2010	42.2
2015	43.7
2020	44.7
2025	45.2
2030	45.6
2035	46.1

Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision and World Urbanisation Prospects: The 2005 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>

Ageing is a concern that will impact at a national level to varying degrees. The old-age dependency ratio (number of people over 65 divided by the number of people aged 15-64) will reach around 53% in 2050 for the EU-25 (up from 25% today), with the highest rates projected for Italy and Spain (66-67%) and the lowest for Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands and Sweden (around 40%). The consequences of this shift are fairly dramatic. In order to hold dependency ratios steady and therefore benefits and tax rates constant, by 2030 retirement will need to begin at

78 in Japan, 74 in France, 73 in Italy, and 72 in the United States. The alternative of cutting benefit levels is a politically charged issue and may not be palatable, especially in Europe. The impact of ageing in economic terms is clearly projected to be most severe in Japan, for a combination of demographic and socio-cultural reasons (MacLellar et al., 2004).

Turning to levels of preparedness for this change, particularly in terms of engaging a higher proportion of the older workforce in continued employment, the United States is probably more culturally predisposed to this notion and is, therefore, more likely to benefit from an active elderly population. Moreover, labour flexibility options are already more widely available in the United States than in Europe, and such options may hold greater appeal to the 65+ group. Currently, 17% of Americans in this age group are working while in Germany and Italy only 4 percent of males aged 65 and older are still in the labour force.

In Europe, the employment rates of older workers are projected to increase considerably from 40% in 2004 to 47% by 2010 and 59% in 2025. This increase in the employment rate of older workers represents a turnaround of a long-term trend towards earlier retirement from the labour force.





Older workers have accounted for three-quarters of all employment growth in the EU in recent years, and about half of the projected increase is due to the effects of recent pension reforms that have curtailed access to early retirement schemes and improved financial incentives for older workers to remain in the labour market. This is a trend that is set to continue and accelerate.

An ageing workforce is not only a numerical issue in labour market terms. There are mixed arguments with respect to the quality of work that can be expected from an older workforce. The European Commission (2007) note suggestions that an individual's productivity may decline with age, and that consequently a rising share of older workers in the labour force may reduce overall labour productivity in the economy. It is also feared that older workers may be less likely to embrace innovation, be more resistant to the introduction of new technologies and that ageing societies may also be less inclined to make long-term investments, notably in education and Research and Development. However, counter-arguments suggest that

The problem of an ageing workforce for future productivity often appears to be exaggerated. The negative effects of ageing per se are not particularly strong and can be more than offset by higher education levels, although this can only be achieved over relatively long time spans. Instead of focusing on whether productivity declines with age, a more relevant question is how to adapt education and lifelong learning policies in the context of an ageing society. Ageing should actually increase the economic returns to education, as the benefits of higher productive potential can be exploited over a longer time horizon, provided skills are updated throughout working life (European Commission, 2007, p.66).

Building an answer to demographic change through harnessing an older population in the workplace requires what the European Commission describe as a life-cycle approach aimed at enabling people to remain much longer active and productive, including through lifelong learning and better health protection.

Alongside labour market implications of ageing in the global population, the social and financial consequences are of equal importance to policy makers and planners, particularly the reality that, for many countries, increasing healthcare requirements will have to be met from a falling tax base. This may be the major demographic challenge facing developed and, increasingly, developing countries and is one which, because of the labour intensive nature of the care that will be required, poses direct competitive challenges to tourism within the labour market.





Harnessing an older workforce is one approach to accommodating change within the structure of the labour market. Facilitating wider participation of other groups in society, who are currently under-represented in the workforce, also represents an important strategy for both developed and developing countries. These groups include women, those with disability, minority groups and those with lower skills and educational attainment profiles. Although, in many countries, social and cultural factors do influence the workplace environment, as a general assessment, their participation rates are such as to create considerable potential to compensate for projected shortages. In the European Union, “thanks to higher education levels and greater labour force attachment of younger cohorts of women, female employment rates are projected to rise from just over 55% in 2004 to almost 65% by 2025” (European Commission, 2007, p.13). This process, however, will delay but not eliminate the overall demographic problem. The increase in female participation will come for the most part from cohort effects. Older women with low participation rates will be replaced by younger women with a higher educational attainment and consequently a stronger attachment to the labour market. Likewise, policies designed to reduce the effects of disability as a barrier to work, through health, attitudinal and technological means, will permit more people to join, remain in or rejoin the workforce than is currently the case.

A global assessment of labour markets, however, points strongly to migration as the means by which countries will seek to overcome both numerical and qualitative deficiencies in their work-forces over the next twenty years. Migration is by no means a new phenomenon in the economic and social development of major industrialised countries but will become the main instrument in combating indigenous population decline in most currently developed countries as well as some rapidly developing states. However, for migration to stabilise the population of major industrialised countries presents significant challenges in political, social and cultural terms.

In Europe, were immigration to be maintained at current levels, the working age population would continue to grow until around 2030 rather than starting to decline by the end of the present decade. However, such a perspective raises growing concerns about the integration of immigrants into the host community. Indeed, the degree of integration of populations of immigrant origin already present in many Member States is often seen as highly problematic and its continuation will transform Europe’s population structure (European Commission, 2007).





With specific reference to the UK, immigration has been rising since 1995. Data from the Labour Force Survey highlights that, by 2007, 12.5% of the UK's working age population was born abroad, up from around 8% in 1995. There are now 4.3 million adults of working age in the UK who were born abroad. According to the Centre for Economic Performance (2007), compared with people born in the UK, immigrants are, on average, younger, better educated and concentrated in London. New immigrants are more educated, on average, than immigrants who arrived in the past.

Numerical responses to demographic change in the labour market, through a focus on increasing participation rates on the basis of age, gender and disability or through pro-migration strategies can provide some answers to meeting challenges that face developed economies. However, a quantitative approach alone will not suffice as a means to ensure that labour market needs are met in a manner that enables economies to remain economically competitive. There is a clear need to consider the labour market in qualitative terms as well, with a focus on the specific and generic skills needs of key economies. This means addressing the implications of demographic change on the skills profile of the workforce. Zimmerman (2005, p.427) rightly argues that

Human capital is the ultimate resource of the 21st century. All developed economies face a strong and increasing excess demand for skilled labour, fostered by technological change, population aging and a subsequent decline in the future native European workforce. The upcoming needs cannot be satisfied sufficiently by the local labour force or the educational system in the particular countries. Europe is more and more drawn into a competition to provide the institutional settings for its companies to attract international skilled labour to fill the gaps.

Human capital is key to achieving the productivity gains that are essential if a population under numerical pressure is to survive, and, in the American context, Little and Triest (2002) note that, recent immigrants have had relatively little schooling compared with the indigenous workforce. Thus, while the renewed inflows of migrant workers will enlarge the supply of labour, "their arrival may also reduce average levels of educational attainment and possibly slow U.S. productivity growth relative to what they otherwise might be. Further, while some analysts anticipate capital deepening, others fear that investment capital will be in short supply" (Little & Triest, 2001, p.47).

Zimmerman (2005, p.425) expresses further concerns in skills terms when he argues that a:





Lack of flexible high-skilled workers and the aging process has created the image of an immobile labour force and the eurosclerosis phenomenon. In such a situation, an economically motivated immigration policy at the European level can generate welfare improvements. A selective policy that discourages unskilled migrants and attracts skilled foreign workers will vitalise the labour market, foster growth and increase demand for unskilled native workers.

Without such policies, a lack of qualified workers may decrease the incentives for businesses to hire low-skilled workers. The increasing demand of companies for high-skilled workers in excess of supply levels is then associated with the growing gap in jobs for the low-skilled. If there is a failure to train enough people or to attract high-skilled migrant labour, there will be soon a pressing need to develop markets that supply jobs for unskilled labour. As a consequence, the future may see developed economies grappling with a split labour market that is characterised by high levels of unemployment for low-skilled people and a simultaneous shortage of skilled workers. In this context, the development and maintenance of a viable tourism industry may play an important long-term role.

This opportunity is recognised in the analysis of the European Commission (2007, p.59) when they note that

Given that low-skilled jobs are not going to disappear there could be future bottlenecks in the commercial services and in the health and long-term care sectors. This could perhaps be avoided by improving the attractiveness of less qualified jobs, not only in terms of pay but also in terms of general working conditions... This evidence of the need to improve the attractiveness of low-skilled jobs confirms the present direction of the European Employment Strategy, which is as much concerned with job quality as with getting more people into work.

As a consequence, this expected continued demand into the long-term future for less-skilled workers, including those required by the tourism sector, may imply a need to reconsider immigration policy to ensure that this shortage is overcome.

The Scottish Context

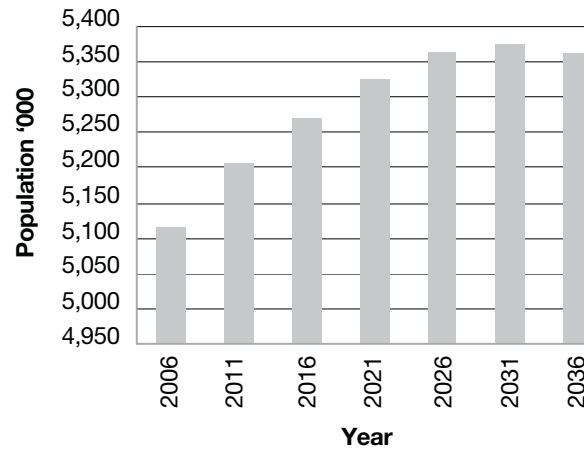
Turning to the Scottish context, it is clear that demographic trends point to a picture that, by 2030, is, largely, consistent with that of other currently developed countries but that, rather than experiencing slowing population growth, actual decline trends are currently in evidence and will continue over the timeframe unless active interventions take effect. The starting point is evidence from the 2001 Census which indicated that the Scottish population has declined by around 117,000 people to





5,062,000 over the previous 20 years. Consequently, Lisenkova et al (2007, p.3) point out that

There is currently apprehension amongst policy makers concerning Scottish demographic trends... projections indicate that under the principal assumptions concerning demographic parameters, by 2040 Scottish total and working age populations are 2.6% and 14.4% below the base year (2000) values respectively.



Source: Registrar General for Scotland Projected Population of Scotland (2006-based).

This assessment is supported by an ESRC (2004, p.3) discussion which estimates that, without high levels of in-migration,

Scotland's population will fall below 5 million in 2009 and reach 4.5 million by 2042. This means, in percentage terms, the population will be about 10 per cent smaller in 2042 than at present.

In addition to numerical decline, there will be further geographical re-alignment of the population, with lower decline or some growth in major urban areas and actual, more rapid decline in more remote regions of the country. This may be countered, in part, by "lifestyle migration" to scenic parts of the country.

A government assessment (Scottish Executive, 2006a, p.4) concurs with this challenging scenario and illuminates some of the main factors that underpin it.





The main driver for long-term change is simple: natural change (i.e. deaths exceeding births). Up to 2021 the most significant factor affecting projected population levels is migration; however, after that time natural change becomes the most significant factor. By 2031 that 'natural' decrease is projected to be around 15,000 persons a year. Scotland is not alone in having a natural decrease in population but, in many parts of Europe, this is compensated by higher in-migration than is currently projected to occur in Scotland.

Lisenkova et al's (2007) analysis continues by projecting a much lower rate of employment decline than that found in the total population, building on increased participation rates by those currently in the workforce and falls in the rates of unemployment. Employment costs are projected to increase as a result of a tightening labour market over the next two decades. Labour intensive sectors will suffer as a result of this increase in costs while those sectors that are more exposed to international trade will feel the negative competitiveness effect more strongly. In this sense, the tourism sector in Scotland will face a double whammy in the labour market in the period up to 2030 as it falls into both of these categories.

Scotland's population is also ageing in a similar manner to that of many of its neighbouring countries. Lisenkova et al (2007) estimate a small rise in the population up until about 2020 (as a result of migration) and a decline to reach current levels in 2030. By contrast, the active workforce peaks in 2010 and then declines by 9% by 2030, highlighting the impact of ageing. Within hotels and catering as an identified sub-sector, the estimates are for a 10% decline in employment numbers and a 8% decline in output in Scotland by 2040. Lisenkova et al point out that:

Only with a net migration above 10,000 per annum is total population projected to be greater than the base year (2000) value in 2040, and only with a net migration of above 20,000 per annum is working age population higher (Lisenkova et al, 2007 p.23).

The ESRC's (2004, p.8) assessment is that a combination of population ageing and decline means Scotland faces the prospect of fewer people employed and a greater proportion of older workers in the labour force. As a consequence, "the numbers employed will fall over the next four decades to below 2 million in 2042. This means the Scottish labour market could also face severe labour shortages in future".

Inevitably, in-migration features as a major platform to counter underlying demographic trends. Scotland has a long history of population loss through migration to other parts of the world and this continues to be a feature, especially among its skilled workforce.





ESRC (2004) point out that, over recent decades, Scotland's position in national and internal migration systems has been transformed so that the country now boasts a net migration balance and may yet become an area of significant net immigration.

Far from facing a 'migration problem', Scotland has seldom experienced such a healthy migration balance both in relation to the UK and the rest of the world as it does today (ESRC, 2004, p. 14).

As we have shown, a policy challenge for Scotland is to maintain and increase current levels of net in-migration. This has been recognised by government when they noted that:

Increased globalisation is likely to lead to further growth in labour market mobility. This could be significant for Scotland given its expected demographic changes. Increased migration will affect both challenges and opportunities that need to be taken. In addition, the possibility of further EU expansion ensures that current policies such as the Fresh Talent initiative will continue to have an important part to play in attracting skilled workers to Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2006b, p. 9).

Lisenkova et al (2007) clearly tabulate the economic benefits of in-migration to Scotland in terms of higher GDP, real wage levels and overall employment opportunities.

Alongside migration, an increase in labour market participation is recognised as important for Scotland in efforts to counter the impact of demographic change. Government points to "stretching the definition of working age" (Scottish Executive, 2006b, p.7) as well as encouraging greater participation from other groups currently under-represented in the workforce. These are identified to include:

- Reducing unemployment or inactivity levels;
- Enabling higher participation in the labour market by certain groups (such as married women with children, older workers or lone parents);
- Encouraging people to participate in the labour market for longer than they currently do on average e.g. less people taking early retirement;
- Enabling and encouraging students or young people to combine part-time work with studies

In addition, government seeks to encourage more active participation in life-long learning in order to support a higher level of overall skills within the Scottish workforce (Scottish Executive, 2003).





Interpreting Demographic Change for Tourism's Workplace

It is evident that demographic change will impact significantly on the tourism workplace over the next 20 years. This will be particularly true in developed countries but there will also be consequences for work in tourism in the developing world. We will now turn to a selective interpretation of demographic change in terms of the workplace in global tourism but also in the more localised context of a destination such as Scotland. This interpretation must be tempered by recognition that tourism demand (with its consequent impact on requirements for labour) will not remain static in either numerical or qualitative terms.

At a macro-level, competition for labour, as a resource, will remain an acute challenge for both developed and developing economies. Globalised economic relationships have already seen the movement of much productive capacity, especially in those areas requiring high inputs of labour, to locations where employment costs are low, currently Asia and parts of Central and South America. While these movements will continue, labour costs in countries such as China are likely to rise over time in response to demographic change, notably population stabilisation and aging. Within this context, tourism faces particular challenges because of the limited extent to which it can relocate its production and delivery of services to destinations offering lower labour cost opportunities. The place-specific nature of much of cultural and natural heritage tourism means that any shortages of labour have to be met through attracting new sources of labour, including the inward migration of workers. Some aspects of tourism development, however, may respond over time to labour cost considerations in choice of location. Major created attractions, such as theme parks, are already migrating to regions of high consumer demand which, concurrently, are also located within cheaper labour markets. Disney's theme park developments in China are examples of this and other providers will undoubtedly follow suit over the next 20 years. Experience substitution, such as that already practiced within the World Showcase at EPCOT in Florida (and in a similar vein, the resorts of Las Vegas and Macau), enables location specific and themed attractions, often icons, to provide a taste of (mainly) developed country culture, staffed by imported labour from those locations and may be a model which is replicated further within future tourism development. Mega events can also locate where labour costs, particularly in terms of the construction of facilities, are lower so that the future destination of Olympic Games and football World Cups may be influenced by labour market considerations.

Demographic trends are predicted to further fuel a global "war for talent" and this will continue a process already in place whereby the world's stronger economies, notably the United States and Western Europe, seek to attract talent from elsewhere, in part to fuel economic growth but also to compensate for a decline in the growth of their own populations.





The competition for talent is likely to take a three-dimensional form, both geographical in terms of competition between countries and regions and sectoral in terms of a striving between professional and vocational fields, seeking to access a shrinking pool of global talent. This competitive environment is likely to be particularly challenging for tourism as the sector seeks to compete within local, regional and international labour markets. However, talent, in the context of tourism, however, does not necessarily mean the same thing as it might in other sectors of the economy (Baum, 2008). Our understanding of skills encompasses a bundling that goes beyond the technical to incorporate emotional, aesthetic and informational processing and analysis dimensions with a strong focus on the delivery of service to diverse consumers (Baum, 2007) While there is a strong argument that “the most important property is now intellectual property, not physical property. And it is the hearts and minds of people, rather than traditional labour that are essential for growth and prosperity. The emergence of the knowledge society means an ever-increasing demand for a well-educated and skilled workforce across the whole economy” (Fáilte Ireland, 2005, p.36), this analysis requires specific interpretation in the context of tourism. The challenge for the tourism sector in the future and in the light of the demographic challenge that it faces is to evaluate the skills and know-how that underpin its business operations, particularly with respect to an interpretation as to what talent means in this sector context, and to consider how such talent can be most effectively developed across the hospitality and tourism workforce. With this re-evaluation of talent for tourism, competitive pressures in relation to other sectors may not be as acute in the future. However, numerical competition for talent will remain an issue for many locations such as Scotland where pressure from neighbouring countries such as England will create long-term difficulties for the tourism labour market but also within the global labour market, from countries such as the United States. In a wider context, the challenge for skills which already places pressure on sectors of the labour market in many developing countries which loose much-needed specialist skills to the developed world (medical, technical) is also likely to impact on the ability of these countries to compete effectively in international tourism.

Migration, which lies at the heart of the talent war in tourism and other sectors, will constitute a significant “reserve army of labour” by which the sector will, in the future, be able to draw on additional skills to meet local and global needs. Demographic change, as we have already shown, points to the future need for economies, particularly in the developed world, to draw upon currently untapped sources of labour in order to meet skills shortages. These sources of new workers will see a higher proportion of under-represented sections of society drawn into externally remunerated work – women, minority communities, the less abled and, probably most significantly, older workers.





The challenge for tourism in this context is how moves to be more inclusive in terms of its employment profile will sit with the growing pressures of employer branding, defined by Minchington (2006, p.3) as "the image projected by employees through their behaviours, attitudes and actions", and the linked focus of tourism businesses on aesthetic dimensions of their workforce (Warhurst et al, 2000; Nickson et al, 2003; Nickson & Warhurst, 2007). The ethical dilemma here is that presenting the "right" image through its employees may be important to many sectors of the international tourism industry and a failure to recruit into that image, possibly because enforced recruitment from these alternative sources of labour, may damage tourism's competitiveness in some markets. The issue of cultural authenticity in destinations such as Scotland in the future is also likely to be challenged as a result of the employment of new sources of labour within tourism, particularly from external, migrant sources. Baum et al (2007, 2008) have raised this issue in terms of current and projected developments in the Republic of Ireland and it is likely to be a theme of increasing concern into the future.

An ageing population, however, is likely to have the most significant impact upon the tourism labour market of both developed and developing countries. In the case of the latter, the impact will be through the pull of migration as a means of sustaining standards of living and providing the care necessary for aging communities. As a result, key workers in developing countries will continue to leave and impact on the quality and competitiveness of the local tourism sector. In the case of developed countries, considerations such as pension deficits are likely to keep more older workers in employment for longer, potentially benefiting flexible work environments such as those in tourism. However, sustaining workers in employment for longer or recruiting an older generation as first time tourism workers will have implications for both human resource development/ training in the workplace and for the design and management of the workplace and organisational environment. Furthermore, an ageing population in the future will lead to increased competition between tourism and the growing care sector for lower skills labour, whether drawn from local or migrant sources. The challenge of aging, in terms of tourism, may lead to a questioning of investment plans for the sector, as countries such as Scotland follow the lead of Saxony in Germany and start to apply a "demographic test" to policy making in areas such as education and employment (including tourism) so that all new policies and investments address likely consequences in terms of current and projected demographic criteria. With older consumers and older workers in the tourism sector of the future, we may well see, therefore, a rephrasing of the Ritz Carlton credo for 2030 to read "We are elderly ladies and gentlemen serving elderly ladies and gentlemen"





Conclusions

Looking into any future is fraught with difficulties, as a 20:20 hindsight for the past 20 years will readily demonstrate, whether we are talking about international tourism in a wider sense or about the sector's workplace. The argument (Baum, 2007) that both nothing and much have changed with respect to human resources in tourism in the 25 year period up to 2007 is indicative of confusing messages in this regard. There is little reason to suppose that the next 20 years will generate a perspective on change that is any different. This analysis speculates about the impact of demographic change and merely touches on some of the evidence that is to hand about how such change will shape up in a global and local (Scottish) sense. The hard evidence of change is already with us but its interpretation in the context of tourism work remains substantially speculative and, in this paper, selective. This is a chapter designed to provoke initial thought and stimulate debate. The author will willingly participate in an evaluation of the predictive components contained here, with the benefits of hindsight, in 2030.





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6

Global Confirmity of Indicators for Eco-Certification Programmes



Aíne Conaghan and James Hanrahan





Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify why certification is important, and discuss the challenges in tourism certification and some of the opportunities and pitfalls which can arise from the global conformity of indicators for eco-certification within the tourism industry. Global tourism is set to hit 1.6 billion arrivals by 2020; this is to be fuelled by the emerging developing countries such as India, China and Russia (UNWTO, 2009). Tourism is largely dependent on the environment therefore sustainable practices are required to be carried out for such growth. If tourism is to cater for such figures in a sustainable manner, all tourism businesses and services need to be sustainably managed and certification has been identified as an important tool in managing sustainable tourism. However which certification will the industry choose? There are over sixty sustainable tourism certification programmes worldwide. Furthermore, the tourism sector has been slow to respond to the needs of sustainable certification programmes although through time they may be a requirement. This chapter is based on the initial secondary findings of a doctoral thesis on certification and sustainable tourism destination. This research discusses why certification is important, the challenges in tourism certification, monitoring certification programmes, who certifies the certifiers and the opportunities from certification. Finally this chapter draws some conclusion on the conformity of existing certification programmes with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC).

Sustainable Tourism

There are numerous definitions in existence for sustainable tourism, evident in many of them is the triple bottom line as they seek to minimise ecological and socio cultural impacts while providing economic benefits. The widely recognised definition of sustainability, invoked by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), considers sustainable development to be 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987, p. 43). Sustainable tourism is tourism that seeks to minimise ecological and socio-cultural impacts while providing economic benefits to local communities and host countries (Mohonk Agreement, 2000).

However a question regularly asked is how sustainable is sustainable tourism? For example Collins (1999, p.99), asserts that if an explicit natural capital perspective is adopted, current sustainable tourism development can not be considered as genuinely sustainable. It can be argued that the potential spillover affects from sustainable development, such as what started as a designated sustainable destination, may end up not being one. While managing excess capacity, a certain destination might also deflect demand to another tourist area and thus actually "export unsustainable tourism to neighbouring destinations" (Velikova, 2001, p.99).





All these, and other arguments, lead logically to Collins (1999, p.99) assertion that sustainable tourism might not be as sustainable as is currently believed. Furthermore, the level of natural capital deemed adequate for sustainability by current generations may eventually prove insufficient in the future.

As a certain destination develops, the ability of the environment to resist change may diminish and thus the carrying capacity level needs to be adjusted accordingly. One way to overcome these problems, is to plan for some reserve capacity in advance. In Collins' (1999, p.99) interpretation of the WCED definition he acknowledges its broadness, obscurity, and the uncertainty it brings with regard to the needs and values of future generations. Tjolle (2008, p.1) states that it is 'no longer an activity, sustainable tourism is set to become a feature.' Collins does give the industry consideration and at the same time is warning against extreme reliance on it (Velikova, 2001, p.499). This is of importance if sustainable tourism is to be realised. Accepted global indicators for certifying global tourism is the logical step which needs to be implemented to ensure tourism is authentically and professionally sustainably managed. The role and need for certification within the tourism sector is now explored from a sustainable tourism perspective.

Certification

Certification labels have a long history, dating back to the fifteenth century when the Roquefort cheese label was regulated, French wines were certified, the electrical industry brought onboard certification and Woolmark certification for pure wool. There is also a long history to tourism certification. For most of the twentieth century there have been the Michelin guides in Europe and the world wide five-star system of hotel quality. The Blue Flag Campaign for beaches began in Denmark in 1987; it is worldwide with 3200 certified blue flags, this was the beginning of environmental certification of tourism services. Within the decade of The Earth Summit in 1992 and the International Year of Ecotourism 2002, there were more than 60 environmental tourism certification programmes developed, according to an ECOTRANS study (Bien, 2007, p.9). This was a large development in programmes and it is growing continuously. The success of the blue flag can be seen and hopefully the tourism certification programmes will reach the same growth especially if there is to be continuous growth in the travel and tourism industry.

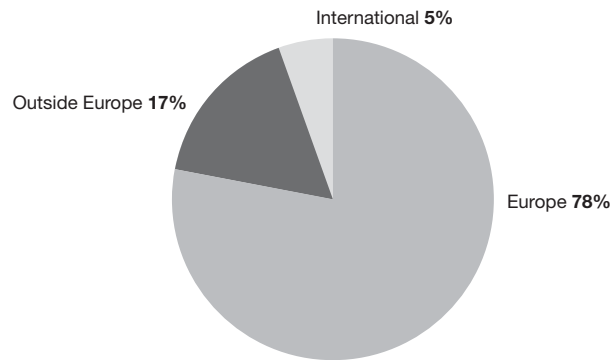
Certification is a way of ensuring sustainability. Certification is a management tool which gives credible recognition to reward the businesses that comply with such criteria; it is a tool that is used for setting standards that can help promote true sustainable tourism. Certification is defined as: "...a voluntary procedure that assesses audits and gives written assurance that a facility, product, process or service meets specific standards. It awards a marketable logo to those that meet or exceed baseline standards" (Honey & Rome, 2001, p.5).





The logo or seal the tourism organisations are awarded depending on whether they pass or fail can depend on the program. Some programmes are categorised in relation to the number of points obtained. Certification programmes measure visitor satisfaction based on sustainable qualities, including economic, social, political and cultural impacts. Once the certification is obtained it must be marketed, as then an organisation can differentiate themselves. There has been an explosion in the past ten years in the range of certifying to sustainability standards (Font, 2002; Honey, 2002; WTO, 2002). This is causing confusion for customers with the mixture of labels in existence.

Figure 1: Geographic Distribution of Tourism Certification Programmes



Source: WTO, Voluntary Initiatives (2002)

Amongst all the programmes that are in existence, the majority, 78%, are predominantly based in Europe according to WTO (2002). This can be seen from Figure 1. This is a large distribution of certification programmes in Europe however are they conforming to up to date Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC). Furthermore what are the motives and benefits to the tourism businesses that decide to go down the certification route.





Benefits of Certification

Certification is important as it provides benefits to the certified business, to the consumers, governments, the local communities and for the local environment. As a sustainable development tool, it has its advantages, such as showcasing good practice and encouraging voluntary improvements (Honey, 2002; UNEP, 1998; Font & Harris, 2004).

Benefits for those tourism organisations that have obtained certification are as follows:

- Helps the businesses to improve as the process is educational and it teaches them elements of sustainability in their operations and see the changes required.
- Business tends to be more efficient, reduction in operation costs, have a marketing advantage and attracts more clients.
- Business may obtain a better reputation and become more popular.

Benefits for the consumers are:

- Provides them with responsible choices, can distinguish which business is truly responsible.
- Increases public awareness, the tourist may tend to act more respectfully, better quality service offered to the consumers.

Benefits for the government are:

- Helps to protect their market niche, raise industry standard.
- Lowers the regulatory costs of environmental protection, provides economic benefits.

Benefits for the environment and local communities:

- Protection of it or little or no damage is done.
- The certified business is to respect the local culture and provide real social and economic benefits, benefits that are to be there for the long term, Bien (2007, pp.10-12).

Tjolle, (2008, p.23) highlights how, "certification will provide sustainable tourism producers with competitive advantage; the savvy customers will pay a premium for the product". A competitive advantage it may be, but with such an array of certifications in existence, why should a premium be paid? Furthermore the tourist who pays this premium will no doubt probably expect the organisation to have followed a particular authentic and rigorous process of tourism eco-certification.



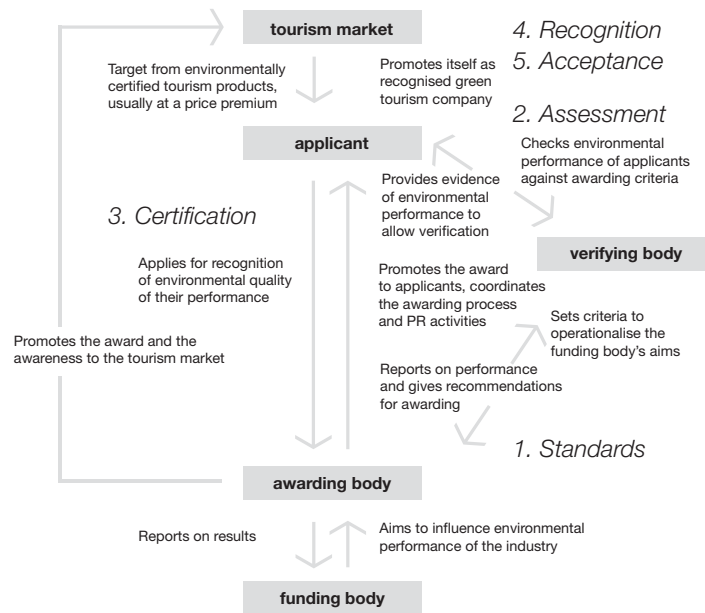


Certification Process

The certification process consists of five main steps: setting standards, completing an assessment of the business, granting certification based on a successful assessment, recognition of the certification and finally acceptance by the industry and the consumers. The process can be seen from (Figure 2).

A business wishing to get certified, must firstly select a program which meets their needs. It is recommended to choose a programme which now meets the GSTC. If the assessment is successful, the applicant is certified as meeting the standards. The certification body could also be subject to a procedure of accreditation, guaranteeing the process. The overall aim is that the label will be recognised by consumers or distribution channels, and considered as added value leading to its acceptance in the marketplace, to support the marketing of companies that make the grade (Font, 2002; Toth, 2002).

Figure 2: Process and Key Players in Tourism Certification



Source: Adapted from Font (2002, p.201).





The detailed process of certification is not without its challenges, for example who is the funding body, at present in Ireland Fáilte Ireland has subsidised some pilot schemes. These challenges may impede the industry adoption of certification; they are now discussed in relation to the GSTC.

Challenges and Disadvantages in Tourism Certification

There must be consumer consciousness of certification programmes in order to create a demand for a business to adopt a certification programme. A government backed education programme is an excellent way to create awareness and consumer consciousness. It then relates back to again, 'which one?' Which programme should they choose? There are many problems in certification and among the most challenging is how to reduce the number of overlapping and competing labels and how to raise consumer awareness and industry awareness Hamele (2002, p.5).

With the large number of sustainable tourism certification programmes in existence globally certifications face challenges. Each certification has a particular set of standards but they may vary vastly. As stated by Conroy (2007, p. 290), "if businesses and consumers are satisfied with any claim to certification, the concept may become diluted to the point of uselessness". There is a good chance of this happening due to the sheer numbers in existence; consumers and the travel industry are facing confusion (Honey, 2002). In October 2008 there was the launch of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) baseline standards. According to Tjolle (2008) there has been a longing for these standards and it will be easier to distinguish the certification programmes that conform to the standards of the GSTC. If an organisation wants a certification programme and is unsure which one to choose, Tjolle (2008, p.24) recommends in the Sustainable Tourism Report 2008, to 'go for the toughest certification, and then at least you know you've got the best'.

A disadvantage that exists among certification programmes is the 'green washing' of programmes, making false claims, as seen from Green Globe before it changed, "...the original Green Globe had no standards and did no audits; companies received a Green Globe plaque to display and the right to use the logo simply by purchasing membership in the Green Globe organisation" (Honey and Rome, 2001, p.75). Hence the discussion on the authenticity of the programme received much criticism from Honey (2002) and at the Mohonk conference, until it was upgraded to "Green Globe 21" in 2001. This leads to the need for legitimate certification. The new baseline standards should help as a tool to monitor and diminish such non-authentic programmes that exist. In order to ensure authenticity it is important to determine who will be certifying the certifiers.





Who Certifies the Certifiers?

Due to the existence of programmes that are not legitimate or authentic, there is the need for an international accreditation body. Accreditation is a procedure by which an authoritative body or peers verify that another body is competent to carry out specified tasks, it certifies the certifiers (Toth, 2000). As noted earlier, the concept of certification may become diluted and not authentic, those involved in certification must ask themselves, to what standards are they certified? How? By whom? And endorsed by whom? (Conroy, 2007, p.290). This is relating back to the point of who certifies the certifiers, how legitimate is the certification programme. Ecotourism and certification expert Bien (cited in Honey and Rome, 2001, p.70) states, "There is an indispensable requirement for all certification systems: credibility. does not have a market; it does not convince clients and it does not demonstrate anything". There was a longing to have credible baseline standards, through the development of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC); it will in effect certify the certifiers. However it may be a slow process to get existing certification programmes to adapt their certification programmes to meet the GSTC criteria.

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

It may be considered to be unrealistic to achieve a single international certification programme in the near future. In China research carried out highlighted that respondents identified four barriers to international schemes which were; cost, language, culture and governance. Such differences like the culture criteria between for example China and the West are going to differ vastly (Li & Cai, 2004; Tian, 2006; Ye & Xue, 2005). Instead, an international baseline standard and a global accreditation body such as the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC) could establish credibility by establishing a mechanism to ensure that 'green' tourism certification programmes meet a set of agreed upon criteria. A worldwide accreditation logo (which could be used alongside certification programme logos) can foment brand recognition. A growing number of certification programmes and networks have endorsed the STSC. These include: Eco Certification in Australia, Green Deal in Guatemala, Green Globe 21, Green Seal USA, Smart Voyager in Ecuador, Sustainable Tourism International in the US (Russillo, Honey, Rome & Bien 2007).

The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) was first introduced on October 6, 2008 at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain by the Rainforest Alliance, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (Rainforest, 2008). The idea behind the GSTC is that it should be the minimum standard that any tourism business should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation. In the last ten years, there has





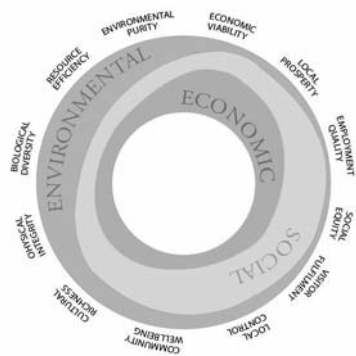
been an explosion in the range of certifying to sustainability standards (Font, 2002; Honey, 2002; WTO, 2002; Bendell & Font, 2004). Therefore the development of the GSTC was required to combat this. In order to have a common understanding of sustainable tourism, the GSTC Partnership developed a set of baseline criteria organised around the four pillars of sustainable tourism as seen in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Four Main Categories of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

- A. Demonstrate effective sustainable management.
- B. Maximise social and economic benefits to the community and minimise negative impact.
- C. Maximise benefits to cultural heritage and minimise negative impacts.
- D. Maximise benefits to the environment and minimise negative impacts.

To develop the criteria there were consultations with sustainability experts and they reviewed more than 60 existing certifications already being used around the world. More than 4,500 criteria were analysed. **Figure 3** represents the UNWTO 12 aims for sustainable tourism based on the triple bottom line. The GSTC criteria are based on the 12 Aims for Sustainable Tourism. The aims were the starting point in selecting the criteria and the criteria were mapped onto these aims, however the aims were divided into the traditional triple-bottom-line categories.

Figure 3: 12 Aims for Sustainable Tourism



Source: Adapted from ECOTRANS, WTO (2006)





Sustainable Travel International (STI), Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification Programme (STEP), is the world's first and only global sustainable tourism eco-certification programme offered by a non-profit organisation. Due to its comprehensive nature, STEP was recognised as the most comprehensive of any sustainable tourism certification initiative in an independent research analysis commissioned by the United Nations Foundation, helping to establish STEP as the "Gold Standard" in sustainable tourism certification (STI, 2008). STEP is designed for accommodations, attractions, transportation service providers, and tour operators; it is aligned with the GSTC and is currently pending global accreditation. But how does other certification conform to the GSTC indicators around the world?

Global Conformity of Indicators

A selection of certification programmes are contained in **Table 2**, this research was compiled in 2007 by Bien for the launch of the GSTC. From this it can be seen which are closest to conforming to the baseline criteria before the GSTC was developed. The leading certification programme as can be seen from **Table 2** is that of STI's (STEP) programme which is now pending global accreditation. According to this up to date research the EU flower which is the certification programme used in Ireland at present, meets only eleven of the criteria. It is evident that the certified organisations in Ireland are not conforming to that of the international standard work of GSTC.

Table 2: Certification Programmes Conformity

Country	Total	Criteria Met
STEP	World	25
Green Globe 21	World	18
Eco-Certification (Neap)	Australia	21
GTBS	UK	12
EU Flower	Europe	11
Green Key	Europe	10
Nordic Swan Ecolabel	Scandinavia	10
Legambiente Tourism	Italy	6

Source: Modified from Bien, (2007).





In all the certification programmes that are in existence, there is a lack of social issues being considered in the criteria. This is the area where most of the programmes as seen in **Table 2** are not conforming. Despite the growing number in certification programmes, the coverage is not even (Font & Buckley, 2001; Bendell & Font, 2004; WTO, 2002). Few of the programmes had taken socio-cultural factors into account (Bien, 2007). Nowadays, analysts, experts, practitioners, and policymakers are demanding a change in emphasis of certification to embrace social issues (Synergy, 2000; Chester & Crabtree, 2002; Griffin & De lacy, 2002; Honey, 2002; Koeman, Worboys, De Lacy, Scott & Lipman, 2002; WTO, 2002).

Conclusion

There is an abundance of tourism certification programmes in existence which are predominantly based in Europe. Will there be a continual development of certification programmes? Are we at the development of a transformation of what Conroy (2007) calls, "certification revolution or the certification movement"? The consumers are undeniably one of the major driving force behind sustainable tourism as stated by Tjolle (2008, p.23), 'Sustainable tourism is a market choice, without the consumer there can be no sustainable tourism business'. The "certification movement" would also play a significant role in helping businesses and countries reach many of the Climate Change targets, providing that these are genuine authentic programmes that are in existence and if they are brought to the standards of the GSTC. Honey (2002) noted that now is the right time to launch the STSC with the present rise in consumer demand for 'green tourism'.

If sustainable tourism is to be achieved, the tourism sector needs to take a more proactive role than it has done in the past if any lasting effect is to be achieved (Fáilte Ireland Environmental Action Plan for 2007-2009). Credible environmental certification schemes linked to policies and practices are required. The endorsement of existing certification programmes by governments and multilateral agencies will enable tourism certification to move from niche to mainstream. Governmental tourism departments and institutes should include certification as part of the marketing efforts of their country. Sustainable practices will no longer be a market strategy, but the minimum requirement for doing business. Thus the resources will be used in an environmentally responsible, socially equitable and economically viable way, so that the users of the tourism products and services can meet the current needs without compromising future generations from using these same resources (Russillo, Honey, Rome & Bien 2007).



Programmes to certify or “green” sustainable tourism standards are rapidly growing, and it is possible that certification might change in function and effect from awarding excellence to becoming de facto requirements to trade (Bendell & Font, 2004, p.139). Therefore it is essential that this study will identify if any of the growing proliferation of programmes in Ireland meet the GSTC standard. On initial analysis it seems that none of the three tourism certification programmes in Ireland meet all the global criteria (EU flower, Greening Irish Hotels and Green Hospitality Award). Therefore the question must be asked which indicators are not being met and is there a need for the government agencies and industry to adapt these measures through simple global conformity to the GSTC.

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7

**Developing Dark and Political
Tourism in Northern Ireland:
An Industry Perspective**



Maria Teresa Simone-Charteris and Stephen Boyd





Introduction

Dark tourism – the tourism of sites of tragedy – has been in evidence for centuries (Lennon, 2005; Seaton, 1996; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Stone, 2006). Today, dark tourism has become a global phenomenon and has aroused considerable academic interest (Cochrane, 2002; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Stone, 2006; Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Tourism scholars have attempted to define or label death-related tourist activity as “thanatourism” (Dann, 1994; Seaton, 1996), “black-spot tourism” (Rojek, 1993), “morbid tourism” (Blom, 2000), “grief tourism” (Trotta, 2006) and “atrocious tourism” (Ashworth, 2002), and create a typology comprising battlefield, cemetery, disaster, ghost, holocaust, prison, suicide, and doomsday tourism (involving visits to places which are under threat) (Trotta, 2006). Attention has also been focused on exploring the reasons underpinning tourists’ desires to seek out such sites or experiences. Despite these attempts, the literature remains eclectic and theoretically fragile (Stone, 2006; Stone & Sharpley, 2008). In contrast, political tourism has received scarce attention, often being associated with tourism mainly in relation to heritage (Ashworth, 1995; Crooke, 2005; Nic Craith, 2003; Timothy & Boyd, 2003) and the study of tourism policy (Altinay & Bowen, 2006; Hall, 1994, 1997, 2000). There are virtually no definitions of political tourism apart from that by Rinschede (1992, p.52) who defines it as “diplomatic tourism, tourism at political events and tourism at national monuments”, but the term has received more attention as of late focusing on the role of political tourists as potential political allies and propagators of political messages (Brin, 2006; Henderson, 2007; McDowell, 2008).

Close examination of dark and political tourism reveals that dark and political tourists share similar motivations (e.g. educational interest in the history of a site, national/patriotic feelings, commemorative reasons, and curiosity) and make use of similar attractions (e.g. cemeteries, memorials, commemoration sites, and sites of disaster). These similarities are particularly evident in Northern Ireland where some attractions, especially those associated with the recent Troubles, can be considered interchangeably as both dark and political tourist attractions.

The overall aim of this chapter is to report the findings of research undertaken to examine the development of both dark and political tourism within Northern Ireland. The objectives were: (1) to theoretically explore the interrelationship between both types; (2) to determine the level of cooperation and collaboration among representatives within the private and public sector of the Northern Ireland’s tourist industry to promote dark and political tourism; and (3) to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities both sectors can play in developing this niche tourism product. In so doing, the research aims to uncover the challenges and opportunities that these product niches offer to Northern Ireland.





Literature Review

Dark Tourism

According to Foley and Lennon (1996, p.198) 'dark tourism' relates primarily to "the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites". Tarlow (2005, p.48) adds a temporal dimension to Foley and Lennon's definition and identifies dark tourism as "visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives". Both definitions lack attention to motivation. In contrast, Seaton (1999) argues that dark tourism emerges from "thanatopic tradition" (the contemplation of death) that dates back to the Middle Ages. He proposes that thanatourism is the "travel dimension of thanatopsis" defined as "travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death" (Seaton, 1996 p.240).

Given the diverse range of sites, attractions, and exhibitions that are associated with death and the macabre, attempts have been made to identify different intensities of dark tourism (Stone, 2006; Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Miles (2002) for example, proposes that a distinction can be made between 'dark' and 'darker' tourism. On the other hand, Stone (2006) proposed a spectrum of dark tourism suppliers, comprising dark fun factories, exhibitions, dungeons, resting places, shrines, conflict sites and camps of genocide. With respect to discussion on the demand side of dark tourism, in the same way as a diverse and fragmented set of dark tourism suppliers exists, so equally diverse are the motives of tourists who visit and consume these products, for instance, curiosity, remembrance and commemorative purposes, educational interests, empathy with the victims, search of novelty and authenticity, overcoming childlike fears, celebration of crime or deviance (bloodlust), or risk-taking (dicing with death) (Ashworth, 2002; Causevic & Lynch, 2007; Dann, 1998 as cited in Stone, 2006; Seaton, 1999; Shackley, 2001; Slade, 2003; Stone, 2006; Stone and Sharpley, 2008). Interestingly, political tourists are inspired to visit political and historical attractions for similar reasons.

Political Tourism

As noted previously, little research has been carried out on political tourism, which is also referred to as 'politically-oriented tourism' (Brin, 2006), 'terror tourism' (Northern Ireland Assembly Official Report, 2008), 'Troubles tourism' (Belfast City Council, 2006; McDowell, 2008), and 'phoenix tourism' (Causevic & Lynch, 2007). As a consequence, a clear definition for a political tourist and an agreed upon typology of such tourists are virtually absent from tourism discourse.





Henderson (2007, p.244), while discussing the relationship between communism, heritage and tourism in East Asia referred to 'political heritage' as to that type of heritage, which "includes features based on war, colonialism and the physical and less palpable legacies of different regimes". Rinschede's definition (1992, p.52) of "diplomatic tourism, tourism at political events, and tourism at national monuments" is 17 years old and does not take into consideration the growing numbers of political tourists and activists who arrive in areas affected by political unrest on fact-finding missions to learn first-hand about events they see so often on their television screens (Burnhill, 2007; Kliger, 2005).

These more adventurous or ideologically driven visitors are not afraid of political strife or violent episodes; they come because of them (Burnhill, 2007). It follows then that political instability can be an impetus rather than an impediment to visit a given destination either when political instability is a thing of the past, or when conflicts are current and ongoing (Brin, 2006). For example, in South Africa, around 2,000 tourists per day visit Robben Island Museum to learn about apartheid (Shackley, 2001), whereas in Jerusalem, Israel, visitors take private or organised excursions to sites related to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Brin, 2006; Clarke, 2000). Similarly, in Northern Ireland, political tourists are interested in learning about the recent 'Troubles' through living history tours, which show the conflict from the perspective of one of the belligerent sides depending on the tour taken.

Moreover, according to Brin (2006), Crooke (2005), Henderson (2007), McDowell (2008), and Richter (1983) some visitors are more inclined than others to become potential agents, won-over carriers who can propagate desired political messages upon returning to their countries and communities. However, many tourists visit destinations as neutrals suggesting that there exists a mix of motivational factors for political tourists. As in the case of dark tourism, the motivations of political tourists are difficult to categorise due to lack of research on political tourism. The extant literature indicates that people are inspired to visit political attractions because they want to learn about past/current events they see/have seen on their television screens, to show support/solidarity, in search of authenticity, for nostalgic, commemorative and nationalistic reasons, because they empathise with the victims, for educational purposes, out of curiosity, or to enjoy the 'thrill' of political violence (Brin, 2006; Burnhill, 2007; Causevic and Lynch, 2007; Clarke, 2000; Kliger, 2005; Shackley, 2001). As such, the authors define political tourism in this paper as travel to sites, attractions, and events associated with war, conflict, and political unrest for educational, commemorative, or diplomatic reasons, showing solidarity or empathy, curiosity, in search of authenticity; enjoying the thrill of political violence or a combination of these.





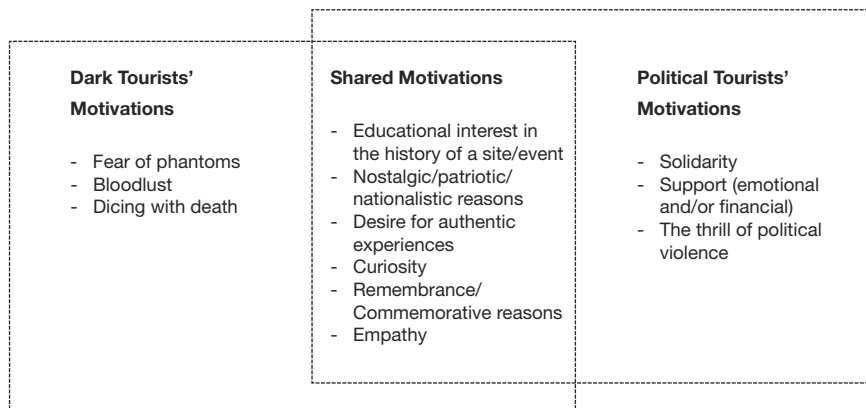
The Interference Between Dark and Political Tourism

In light of the foregoing, it emerges that dark and political tourists are inspired to visit cultural/heritage attractions by similar motivations. **Figure 1** illustrates that while motivations are different for political and dark tourists, there are a range of shared motivations, such as educational interest in the history of a site or event, and the desire for authentic experiences, to name but two. Furthermore, **Figure 2** illustrates that dark and political tourists make use of similar attractions including, for example, memorials, cemeteries and prisons. In so doing, the argument the authors' are putting forth in this paper is that there exist similarities between the two types and that both can be promoted alongside each other. This position is made using the case study of Northern Ireland.

Context: Tourism in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has a long history (circa 30 years) of terrorism (Boyd, 2000; Wall, 1996). Not surprisingly, the region's tourism industry has been affected in terms of receipts and visitors, unsuitable tourism developments because of a poor economic and social image, and a lack of suitable infrastructure (Boyd, 2000; Wall, 1996; Wilson, 1993). However, the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 have generated significant improvements for the tourism industry, with tourism in 2007 contributing £535m to the Northern Ireland economy (NITB, 2007).

Figure 1: Motivations of Dark and Political Tourists



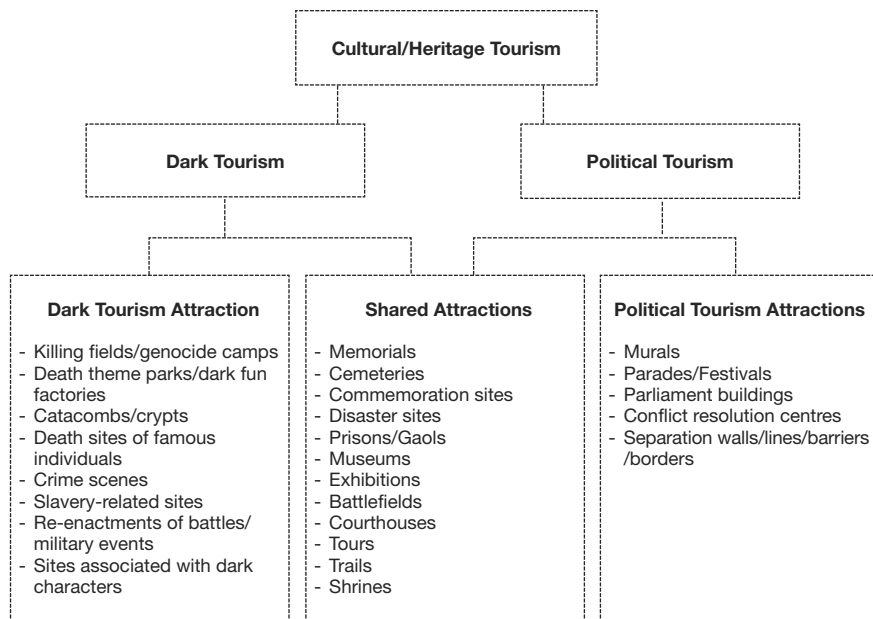
Source: Simone-Charteris & Boyd (2009)





In a turn of events, Northern Ireland's history and culture of conflict and violence is now satisfying the uniqueness demanded by contemporary tourists and political tourism is on the rise at least in cities like Belfast and Londonderry/Derry. Political tourism, however, divides public opinion, and while some see it as an opportunity to positively transform the legacy of the past thirty years (Crooke, 2001; Devine & Connor, 2005), others believe it exacerbates differences and sectarianism (McDowell, 2008). Boyd (2000) argues that there will always be an element of visitors to Northern Ireland who want to see landmarks that reflect a turbulent past. For example, while some people celebrate murals and consider them an expression of popular culture, political resistance, or working class-defiance, others consider them as expressions of power or even as acts of intimidation. Albeit the controversy they generate, murals have become popular with the media, but even more with tourists (McCormick & Jarman, 2005; Peace Line Tours, 2008). Political tourism was debated in 2008 in the Northern Ireland Assembly, with little agreement reached among the political parties (Northern Ireland Assembly Official Report, 2008). There were criticisms of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) failure to develop the necessary infrastructure, and as a consequence, political tourism operates through few private sector tourist companies and organisations.

Figure 2: Dark-Political Tourism Attractions Spectrum



Source: Simone-Charteris & Boyd (2009)



An assessment of the level of visitation enjoyed by attractions across the Province (by select years) reveals that sites that have some political association are still not well visited. **Table 1** ranks the top ten visitor attractions for select years over the past decade and half. 1994 was the first year that the IRA (Irish Republican Army) ceased its violent actions; 2000 was selected as a suitable year and where sufficient time had elapsed since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in April of 1998; and 2007 data represents current visitor interest to major attractions in the Province. **Table 1(a)** reveals that up to 2000, no dark/political tourism attraction featured in the top 10 attractions across the Province. The only attraction today that has any links to Northern Ireland's political past is visits to the Historic Walls of Londonderry/Derry **Table 1(b)**. According to the official figures, political sites and attractions (e.g. certain museums and mural sites) still remain as sites of lesser significance for the majority of visitors to Northern Ireland.

Table 1(a): Top 10 tourist Attractions visited in 1994, 2000 and 2007 in Northern Ireland

Attraction	1994	Rank	2000	Rank	2007	Rank
Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre	330,000	1	395,247	1	712,714	1
Ulster Museum	256,020	2	217,811	3	Not open	-
Pickie Family Fun Park	230,000	3	350,000	2	Not in top 10	-
Exploris	211,129	4	124,500	9	Not in top 10	-
Belfast Zoo	188,946	5	204,458	4	294,935	2
Ulster Folk & Transport Museum	186,656	6	155,847	7	168,866	9
Belleek Pottery	148,386	7	193,672	5	171,569	8
Murlough Nature Reserve	128,000	8	-	-	Not in top 10	-
Dunluce Centre	118,116	9	78,000	15	Not in top 10	-
Ulster American Folk Park	117,081	10	120,464	11	157,325	10

Source: Timothy & Boyd (2003), Northern Ireland Tourist Board (2008)



Table 1(b): Top 10 Visitor Attractions in 2007 in Northern Ireland

Rank	Attraction	Visitor numbers	% change on 2006
1	Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre	712,714	+29
2	Belfast Zoo	294,935	+14
3	W5 (Science Museum opened 2001)	247,506	+5
4	Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge	222,613	+20
5	Oxford Island Nature Reserve	216,713	-17
6	Historic Walls of Derry	213,415	+3
7	Belfast Lough RSPB Reserve	210,000	0
8	Belleek Pottery	171,569	+46
9	Ulster Folk and Transport Museum	168,866	-1
10	Ulster American Folk Park	157,325	+8

Source: Northern Ireland Tourist Board (2008)

The majority of political sites and attractions (with the exception of those connected to museums) do not have recorded visitors numbers that are officially provided to the NITB who are responsible for publishing the top ten visitor attractions. This is the reason why sightseeing tours particularly by bus companies where tourists are taken past the murals do not appear in official visitor attraction statistics. It should be noted that there is a tendency to promote dark/political sites and attractions under the wider umbrella of cultural and heritage tourism.





Study Methods

The research aims and objectives were stated earlier in the chapter. In essence the research focused on undertaking a qualitative study on political and dark tourism opportunity in Northern Ireland. Essentially given this qualitative focus, research methods centred on site visits, archival research, participant observation (of political tours), and interviews of managers, senior officers of public and private tourism organisations, and representatives of the Province's main political parties. With respect to the interviews, these were undertaken over the course of 2008, using a combination of face-to face and telephone interviews. A purposeful sampling method was used in the selection of the appropriate experts to interview (Hemmington, 1999).

Based on their experience, role, and influence in policymaking in tourism, 28 key participants were chosen among visitor and convention bureaux, city councils, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, the Orange Order, companies involved in the organisation of walking, bus and taxi tours, community organisations, two museums, and political parties **Table 2**. All known dark and political tourism organisations were included in this study, as can be ascertained from **Table 2**. Interview questions addressed the following: the importance of political tourism and dark heritage in terms of attracting visitors to Northern Ireland, the performance of political and dark tourism (in terms of visitor numbers) when compared against other more traditional forms of tourism, the role of different organisations in the development and promotion of political and dark tourism, the potential benefits of developing dark and political tourism for the Northern Ireland economy, the willingness to form strategic alliances in order to assist opportunities associated with dark and political sites and attractions, and the position of the communities towards the development of such products/ experiences.





Table 2: Interviewees and their Job Titles

Sector	Name of the Institution	Job Title
Public		
	Northern Ireland Tourist Board	Product Marketing Manager, Culture and Heritage
	Northern Ireland Tourist Board	St Patrick & Christian Heritage Signature Project Mngr
	Northern Ireland Tourist Board	The Walled City of Derry Signature Project Manager
	Belfast City Council	Cultural Tourism Officer
	Derry City Council	Assistant Economic Development Officer
	Armagh City & District Council	Tourism Development Officer
	Down District Council	Tourism Development Manager
	Sinn Féin (SF)	MLA, Councillor for West Belfast, Member of the Assembly Business Committee, and of the Standards and Privileges Committee
	Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	MLA, Councillor for North Belfast, and Party Spokesperson on Culture, Arts and Leisure
	Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)	MLA, Alderman of North Down, and Party Spokesperson on Enterprise, Trade and Investment
	Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI)	MLA for East Antrim, Councillor in Carrickfergus, and Party Spokesperson on Enterprise
	Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP)	MLA for L/Derry, Councillor in Derry City Council (DCC), and Party Spokesperson in Cultural Art and Leisure
Public/Private		
	Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau	Leisure Tourism Manager
	Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau	Renewing Communities Visitor Servicing Project Officer
	Derry Visitor & Convention Bureau	Sales & Marketing Manager
	Armagh Down Tourism Partnership	Chief Executive
Private		
	Belfast City Sightseeing	Business Development Manager
	Coiste na nIarchimí	Coordinator for Coiste na nIarchimí Irish Political
Tours		
	Shankill Tourism	Tourism, Culture, and Art Development Officer
	TaxiTrax	Chairman
	Derry Taxi Tours	Chairman
	Free Derry Tours	Coordinator Manager
	Apprentice Boys of Derry Memorial Hall	General Secretary
	Top Tours Ireland	Proprietor
	Armagh Guided Tours	Founder
	Legendary Days Out	Co-founder
	St Patrick's Centre	Director
	Orange Order	Belfast Orangefest Development Officer

Source: Simone-Charteris (2008)





All conversations were recorded: face-to-face interviews on a dictaphone and telephone interviews via a telephone conversation recorder. All recordings were transcribed in verbatim format soon after completion and notes were produced during the transcription process. The transcripts and notes were deconstructed in order to identify key themes. This allowed for the breakdown of the transcripts and notes into manageable blocks, which were then classified into codes and groups. The emergent findings are discussed below.

Findings and Discussions

The Attractiveness of Dark Heritage and Political Tourism to out-of-state Visitors

All participants but one agreed that dark and political tourism contribute to attracting visitors to Northern Ireland and, therefore, benefit the local economy. Although some interviewees were uncertain whether dark and political tourism are the main reasons for visiting, the majority agreed that when visitors are in the Province they want to find out more about the dark/political history as well as engage in other more 'traditional' activities. As one informant stated:

There is no doubt that one goes to west Belfast or goes to east Belfast. Tourists now want to go where the conflict took place. We have iconic products within these various areas...They want to learn about it and they want to know why the violence took place when they see the murals...You can use your past as a vehicle to come forward and to attract people here (P. Ramsey, personal communication, July 10, 2008).

This finding supports, Burnhill's (2007) and Kliger's (2005) view that political tourists visit areas currently affected or which once were affected by political unrest to learn about events they have been made aware of and are curious about from the media. In addition, the affirmation above reinforces Crooke's (2001) and Devine's and Connor's (2005) belief that political and dark tourism offer the opportunity to transform the legacy of the Troubles in a positive manner.

That political tourism is a controversial topic, was illustrated by the resistance of some interviewees (both from the public and private sectors) to use the term political tourism. The following was stated by one of the informants: "I wouldn't say political tourism; it's too harsh a statement; once you mention politics or religion that suggests bias, negativity... [Political tourism] might be under this cultural thing, but I wouldn't brand it as political tourism" (Northern Ireland Tourist Board, personal communication, June 10, 2008). The statement above might help to understand why political tourism has been under-researched and the tendency to promote it under the umbrella of cultural tourism.





Political and Dark Tourism Visitor Performance

Because political and dark tourism are relatively new phenomena in Northern Ireland, all participants agreed that it is difficult to compare their performance (in terms of visitor receipts) against other more traditional forms of tourism due to lack of data. One participant affirmed the following: "... I know that there is a tourism monitor but it's confidential...but I know myself from the number of people that are on the sightseeing tour...I would say that the vast majority of people who come into the city are coming for that reason [political and dark tourism...Figures that I have seen have got something like 14% of visitors come to see the politics and the Troubles, and I don't believe that for a second" (J. O'Neill, personal communication, May 21, 2008). This finding reflects the lack of research, a clear definition for a political tourist, and a comprehensive classification of political tourist attractions in the tourism literature.

However, despite the lack of specific statistics regarding the numbers of dark/political tourists who visit Northern Ireland, the general view among the participants was that considerable numbers of people (individuals, journalists, or academics) are intrigued by the physical evidence of the Troubles. This is in line with the dark (Ashworth, 2002; Causevic & Lynch, 2007; Dann, 1998 as cited in Stone, 2006; Seaton, 1999; Shackley, 2001; Slade, 2003; Stone, 2006; Stone & Sharpley, 2008) and political (Brin, 2006; Burnhill, 2007; Causevic & Lynch, 2007; Clarke, 2000; Kliger, 2005; Shackley, 2001) tourism literatures on tourists' motivations, which identify curiosity, educational interest, and search of novelty and authenticity among the main drivers to visit dark and political tourist attractions. **Table 1(b)** revealed that attractions needed to receive in the order of 150,000 people to be seen as major visitor draw and appeal. Given the infancy of museums that feature Northern Ireland's political past (e.g. Museum of Free Derry which received 15,000 in 2008), it will take some time before they become recognised stops in the itinerary of most visitors to the Province.

Some participants though, believed that political tourism should be promoted as part of cultural tourism and not as a niche product/experience. This, in consequence, makes it even more difficult to retrieve specific data on political tourism and political tourist numbers. One interviewee illustrated this point when stating: "We promote what we would see as cultural attractions rather than political tourism. We would find it hard to define what political tourism is..." (D. Harrigan, personal communication, June 19, 2008). Once more, the statement above reflects the absence of specific research on political tourism in the scholarly literature and highlights that politics is often associated with tourism mainly in relation to heritage (Ashworth, 1995; Croke, 2005; Nic Craith, 2003; Timothy & Boyd; 2003).





The Role of Public and Private Tourist Organisations in the Development and Promotion of Dark and Political Tourism

With regard to their role in the development and promotion of political tourism, there was a conflict of views between public and private sector interviewees. In fact, although all public sector institutions believed that the private sector should lead, they admitted that in fact the statutory authorities were leading because the private sector was not yet mature enough. This point was illustrated by one public sector organisation representative, who stated that:

Obviously we would love to be in a position where the private sector makes a bigger contribution to assist us, but the private sector is not a vibrant private sector yet. Unlike other countries in the world that have had good tourism, we are coming out after many years of struggling... (A. Gilchrist, personal communication, June 26, 2008).

This finding supports Boyd's (2000), Wall's (1996), and Wilson's (1993) viewpoint that the tourism industry in Northern Ireland has been affected by the Troubles in terms of receipts and visitors, insufficient investments, and a lack of suitable infrastructure. On the other hand, private sector organisations too believed that they played a major role, but they were limited in what they could do by lack of funding, training, and support on behalf of the public sector. For example, an interviewee argued:

There is an organisation called Epic, they work with Coiste. [Coiste] would do the nationalist and catholic side and we do the loyalist and protestant side. But at the minute they are an ex-prisoners organisation who's not really geared for delivering tours. They are doing it on the back of Coiste's marketing... At the moment we don't have the money to do that (R. Small, personal communication, May 20, 2008).

This affirmation is in line with the view of the main political parties (Northern Ireland Assembly Official Report, 2008), who are critical of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's handling of resources destined to tourism and failure to develop the necessary tourist infrastructure. Most importantly, the findings perhaps highlight the mistrust that the private sector (widely formed by community and ex-prisoners organisations) has in the public sector, which is often associated with the government and on the other hand, the difficulty of the public sector to interact and work with these types of organisations.





The Willingness to Collaborate Among Public and Private Tourism Sectors and Political Institutions

All interviewees agreed that it is essential to collaborate in order to assist opportunities associated with dark and political sites and attractions. This point was illustrated by a public sector body representative, who stated that:

We are not going to be able to develop any sort of tourism product in Northern Ireland without the involvement of other sectors. The government can't do everything itself...The more value we can get in from the private sector, the better...I think there are plenty of people who have an interest in developing them [dark and political tourism products]. They can see the potential of them. (N. McCausland, personal communication, July 10, 2008).

Nonetheless, most interviewees also affirmed that to develop the full potential of dark and political tourism, some mindsets need to change. One informant summed this up: "...But I also accept that there are people with their mind set still in the past and they would resist any change. And we have a job of convincing those on both sides that the best way forward is working together..." (P. Ramsey, personal communication, July 10, 2008).

The findings indicate that dark and political tourism divide the public opinion and reflect the differing views in the tourism literature of those who consider them as an opportunity to positively transform the legacy of the Troubles (Crooke, 2001; Devine & Connor, 2005), and those who consider them as perpetuators of sectarianism (McDowell, 2008).

Some public sector organisations also stated that there is a need for leadership to be provided by the government on how to liaise with political tourist organisations such as ex-prisoners. For example, one informant stated: "...We need some direction from DETI [Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment] and they are currently writing a policy paper on how the last 30 years...Really the barriers and boundaries to it...Once policy has been established and there is agreement about how the story is told, then absolutely [we would collaborate]." (Northern Ireland Tourist Board, personal communication, July 8, 2008).

Despite most participants stating that they already collaborate with both public and private sector organisations, the general view among private sector organisations was that the statutory bodies are too bureaucratic, slow and fragmented. Some private tourist organisations also stated that while they would be happy and willing to collaborate with public tourist bodies, at the same time they would not be prepared to lose their identity or to provide watered down versions of their story.





From the point of view of private sector organisations collaborating with each other, some indicated competition as one of the main difficulties. The findings highlight again how uneasy the relationship between public and some private sector organisations is and the barriers that need to be overcome before trust is instilled and cooperation can take place. What also emerged from the interviews was a strong willingness within sectors to cooperate; for example a number of walking tours are offered by both sides of the community, yet agreed that visitors should be told the story from both perspectives. The willingness exists within the private sector to promote dark and political tourism as an important niche product in Northern Ireland, however they felt the challenges are not to ensure cooperation within but rather to achieve cooperation between the private and public sectors.

The Views of the Communities on the Development and Promotion of Political and Dark Tourism

Most political parties' representatives agreed that the communities forming the Northern Ireland society see favourably the development and promotion of dark and political tourism as means of creating jobs and contributing towards the local economy. For example, one interviewee affirmed: "People on the ground, be it loyalist or republican areas, know the benefits of tourists coming in because many areas are deprived, and the people within these communities can see that it brings extra employment". (P. Maskey, personal communication, June 30, 2008).

Other interviewees, however, were less optimistic as regards communities' attitudes towards the development and promotion of dark heritage and political tourism in Northern Ireland. One informant, for example, stated the following:

I think there is an education process there and comparing Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland, in the Republic of Ireland tourism was always regarded as an important part of the economy, and I think people in the community need to realise the potential there is in tourism, not only from the point of view of hospitality but from the point of view of job creation... (S. Neeson, personal communication, July 7, 2008).

Once more, the findings suggest that public opinion is divided in relation to the development and promotion of dark and political tourism, with some realising their potential to benefit the local economy and others considering dark and political tourism as obstacles to move on towards a more peaceful environment.





Conclusions

Overall, the findings indicated that representatives of the Northern Ireland tourism industry believed that dark and political tourism contribute to attracting visitors to Northern Ireland and, therefore, benefit the local economy. Although accepting that political tourism is a hard concept to define, the general view among the participants was that many visitors are intrigued by the physical evidence of the 'Troubles' and that this aspect of the Province should be promoted.

Secondly, the study revealed that attractions linked to Northern Ireland's troubled past are considered interchangeably as dark and political tourist attractions, thus demonstrating that similarities and interrelationships exist between these two types of tourism and suggesting that they could be promoted alongside each other.

Thirdly, the research indicated that differing views existed between the public and private tourism sectors in relation to the role they played in the development and promotion of political and dark tourism, and their respective responsibilities. Public sector organisations believed that the private sector should be more proactive and less reliant from a financial point of view. On the other hand, private sector organisations believed that the statutory authorities need to do more in terms of provision of advice, funding, and marketing. Additionally, it emerged that collaboration in order to assist opportunities associated with political and dark sites and attractions is welcomed by both sectors. Nevertheless, some public sector organisations underlined the need for the government, particularly in the form of the National Tourism Organisation to identify these niche products within both its corporate strategy and product development portfolio.

What is clear from this research is that there is a strong appetite from the political leaders and the private tourist sector to promote tourism on a wider platform than they currently do. A logical next step is to understand what drives tourists to visit dark and political spaces so that opportunities for political and dark tourism are developed in line with meeting the diverse range of motivational factors, which have been outlined in the literature review section. Northern Ireland would do well to not hide its dark heritage or political history from visitors.





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Promoting Tourist Destinations: A Film Tourism Model



Noelle O'Connor, Sheila Flanagan and David Gilbert





Introduction

In an increasingly celebrity-led global society, the universal opportunities presented through film induced tourism are enormous but are only just beginning to be realised. Many may think that the film or television series speaks for themselves. The film and tourist stakeholders are now becoming very aware that with well-planned industry collaboration, they can take advantage of the interest which it creates. The destination branding strategies in connection with *The Lord of the Rings* (2001 – 2003) and New Zealand are the leading examples of this (Mintel, 2003, p. 21). The primary focus of this research was to design a conceptual framework to be used as a best practice model for the successful integration of film tourism in a destination's marketing strategy. This was achieved through the logical development of a Film Marketing Action Plan (FMAP) based upon a study in Yorkshire, UK. The model was based on a methodical literature review, a tourist survey and strategic conversations with the key tourism and film stakeholders who were involved with the development of the Yorkshire brand. In addition, this research drew upon the most pertinent findings from the literature. Yorkshire was selected as the case study area as it has been the film location for many popular television series and films (**See Table 1**). It is also the subject of much location research within the tourism discipline (see Beeton, 2000, 2005; Mordue, 1999, 2001; O'Connor et al., 2005, 2006, 2008).

Theoretical Insight into the Film Induced Tourism Phenomenon

The tourism industry is a hugely competitive marketplace in which stakeholders are faced with the job of developing successful techniques to reach their target markets. The conventional tourism marketing media such as television promotion and literature has become dull and even though these media tend to be widespread, their success appears to be minimal compared to that of films. Tourists visiting a destination after having seen the location in a film or television series has become an emerging phenomenon and due to the perceived benefits, many films have had tourism stakeholders in their locations explore the issues relating to film induced tourism (Safari Kinkead, 2002). Film induced tourism is partially based on tourist demands to escape reality, to the better world represented in films. By understanding the film tourist phenomenon, tourism and film stakeholders can better meet experiences, thus expanding on the positive impacts in such destinations (Carl et al., 2007, p. 60).





Table 1: Yorkshire Based Film and Television Series (1960s to 2001)

Year	Television Series	Film
1960s	This Sporting Life	—
1967	The Railway Children	—
1970	—	Jane Eyre
1970	—	The Railway Children
1970 & 1992	—	Wuthering Heights
1972	The Darling Buds of May	—
1972–	Emmerdale (Farm)	—
1973–	Last of the Summer Wine	—
1978–1990	All Creatures Great and Small	—
1980s	A Woman of Substance,	Hold the Dream, Act of Will
1981	Brideshead Revisited	—
1985	—	Wetherby
1986	—	Rita, Sue and Bob Too
1989	A Bit of a Do	—
1991	—	Robin Hood – Prince of Thieves
1993	—	The Secret Garden
1992	Heartbeat	—
1995	Band of Gold	—
1996	—	Brassed Off
1996	—	When Saturday Comes
1996–2006	Where the Heart Is	—
1997	—	The Full Monty
1998	—	Elizabeth
1998	—	Little Voice
1998	Playing the Field	—
2001	—	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
2001	The Inspector Linley Mysteries	—

(Adapted from Yorkshire Tourist Board, 2001/2002)

The need for a thorough investigation into the film induced tourism phenomenon was particularly evident from the literature review undertaken, as it showed that there is a significant research gap in the successful integration of this phenomenon and destination marketing. This was supported by Beeton (2005, pp. 17-18) who implied that much of the latest academic literature has not particularly added to the body of research on film induced tourism as it tends to concentrate on replicating and supporting these earlier studies looking predominantly at the promotional importance of film in relation to tourism. Other than the fact that this has reinforced the outcomes of previous research, little new material has been added to the literature on film induced tourism. Every research study published concludes by asserting the necessity for additional research but the minority have followed their own recommendations leaving the feeling that such proclamations are simply escape clauses for those taking on interim or solitary research assignments.



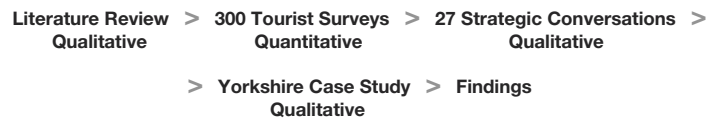


If destinations are to successfully make the most of their own popularity, but within a sustainable framework, the various stakeholders' interests should find a compromise in setting suitable objectives to capitalise on the benefits and reduce costs such tourism (Beeton, 2005, pp. 17-18).

Methodological Approach

The literature reviewed highlighted the need for the development of a model to promote tourism destinations, and to satisfy the specific aims of this research, an interdisciplinary approach was adopted. Insights from a variety of areas such as tourism and marketing were utilised and incorporated into the research. The gathering of data from a variety of disciplines is necessary given the nature of the topic being researched. Following an extensive review of the literature, it was noted that there was a significant research gap in relation to how film induced tourism could be used to market a destination. In response to this gap, a two phased approach (**Figure 1**) was adopted; the first involved gathering and analysing quantitative data (tourist survey) regarding the film induced tourist, while the second phase consisted of strategic conversations with the key tourism and film stakeholders behind the development of the Yorkshire brand.

Figure 1: The Multi Method Approach

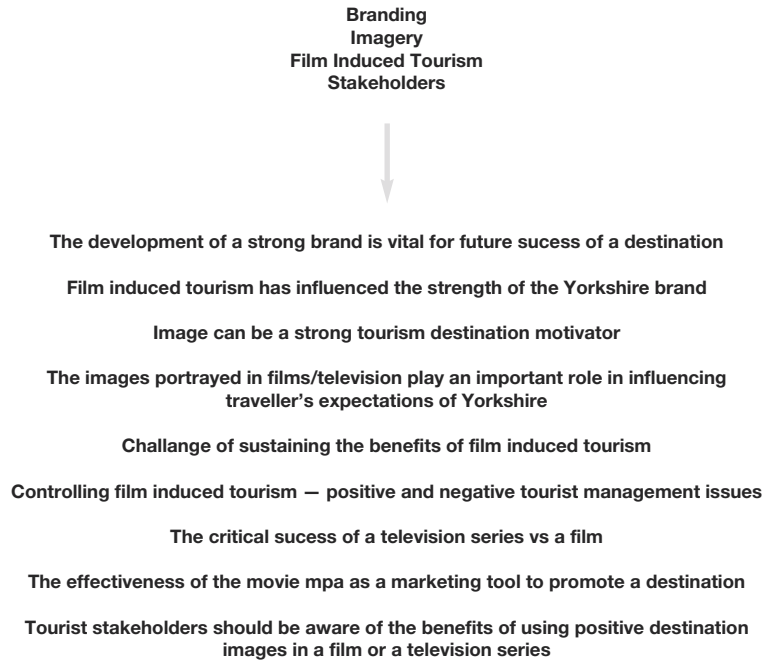


These approaches supplemented one another and each was successful in attaining the necessary information to satisfy the research objectives. The emergent themes and assorted issues that arose from this secondary data (literature review), which form the basis for both the tourist survey and consequently the strategic conversations are outlined in **Figure 3**.





Figure 2: Emergent Themes and Associated Issues



To collect the views and perspective, which allow for informed interpretations to be made, it was vital that the gathered data was collected in a well thought out manner. To establish if film induced tourism could bring significant benefits to the development of a destination, it was necessary to establish a framework for research completion. In this research, the case studies being employed are Last of the Summer Wine, Heartbeat and All Creatures Great and Small. They were chosen because of high levels of visitation due to their filming in the area.





The Tourist Survey

The initial phase of the primary research was a survey conducted through face to face interviews with a sample of tourists to Yorkshire. Brannick (1997) considered that a structured survey is a competent data collection instrument when the researcher knows exactly what data is required. It is typically administered to a large sample of respondents (over 50). The aspects of survey design, question content, question phrasing and survey response format necessitate special attention when putting together a structured interview (Brannick, 1997). A stratified sample was selected for the tourist surveys (300) and the research was conducted in Aysgarth Falls, Holmfirth, Whitby and York. This represents the locations of three television series and also York, the regional capital. Aysgarth Falls is located to the North West in the Yorkshire Dales, Holmfirth in the southwest near Huddersfield, Whitby is on the east coast and York is in the centre of Yorkshire. The two part questionnaire comprised thirty three questions and classified the respondents by age, first visit to Yorkshire, gender, length of stay, origin, occupation, party size, travelling party, whether they travelled independently or as part of a package.

The Strategic Conversation

Since the research on destination imagery for regional tourism locations has been in short supply, an exploratory research design was implemented to exemplify the opportunities in designing a consistent branding strategy for up-and-coming regional destinations. The issue of monitoring of the brand was explored, as it is unclear if this has been carried out in Yorkshire to date. Also more detailed qualitative research explored the extent to which tourism related branding and imagery reflected the wider image, which the county wishes to portray in its Area Tourism Partnerships (ATP). The ATP is a regional tourism partnership, which is in place in each of Yorkshire's tourism regions and it comprises of representatives from the public and private sectors, as well from Yorkshire Forward² and the Yorkshire Tourist Board (YTB)³. These strategic conversations enabled this research to explore the emergent issues. It was also helpful that the researcher is not from or living in Yorkshire, therefore any possible interviewer bias was minimised. Ratcliffe (2002, p. 23) determined that there is in fact no set process for the performing of strategic conversations or rules regarding participants.

2. Yorkshire Forward is the Regional Development Agency, charged with improving the Yorkshire and Humber economy (Yorkshire Forward, 2008).

3. The YTB is the official tourism agency responsible for representing and helping to generate sustainable tourism for the Yorkshire tourism economy, while representing the whole of the Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire's tourism industry (Yorkshire Tourist Board, 2008).





The FMAP

In developing a conceptual framework for the integration of film induced tourism in a destinations marketing strategy, in addition to reviewing the current literature on the topic, the researcher specifically looked at other models that would help create the FMAP. These models represent the theoretical development of destination branding, destination imagery and film induced tourism related models, which in turn have facilitated the creation of the FMAP. The models originated from both the marketing and film induced tourism literature, most notably; Beeton (2002), Hudson and Ritchie (2006a, 2006b) and Macionis (2004a). Beeton (2002, p. 5) introduces a model for an ‘integrated marketing de-marketing strategy’ to tackle issues like detrimental imagery of destinations while Hudson and Ritchie (2006a, p. 258) devised a ‘conceptual framework for understanding the film induced tourism phenomenon’. A variation of this is ‘film tourism; a model for exploiting film tourism marketing opportunities’ which looks at their earlier model but from a marketing perspective (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b, p. 390). Macionis (2004a, p. 22) created a ‘continuum of film induced tourism motivation’, which is a practical classification for examining film induced tourism motivations, as it emphasises the specific media representations and attributes that are imperative for film tourists. Whilst formulating the FMAP (**See Table 2**), the researcher examined these models.

Table 2: The FMAP

A	B	C	D
Phase	Before Release	After Release	After Release
Management Action	Planning	Maximise Positive Impacts	Minimise Negative Impacts
Control Mechanism	Marketing	Marketing	De-marketing
	Workforce Support	Brand Marketing	Business
	Competitive Business	Co-operative Marketing	Economic
	Destination Images	Online Marketing	Environmental
	Marketing Strategy	Marketing Campaign	Quality
	Media Coverage	Marketing Research	Social
	Post-Production Exposure	Product Marketing Techniques	
	Production Action Plan	Relationship Management	
	National Promotion		
	Studio Relations		





Table 2 suggests that each of the stakeholders – Local Authority (LA), National Park Authority (NPA), National Tourism Authority (NTA), Regional Screen Agency (RSA), and Regional Tourism Authority (RTA) – can use a variety of marketing activities both before and after release of a film and/or television series. The focus of this new model is the destination marketing activities related to film induced tourism. In spite of suggestions that destination marketers have discarded this very useful form of publicity (Cohen, 1986), a re-examination of the film induced tourism literature indicates that some destinations have leveraged the visibility that films provide and benefit by representing a considerable rise in tourist numbers subsequent to a film's release (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b, pp. 388–389)

Table 2 outlines the optimum marketing factors that encourage film tourists to visit destinations which are portrayed in films and/or television series. Therefore, **Table 2** is one of the first theoretical models to illustrate the optimum marketing factors that encourage film tourists to visit destinations which are portrayed in films and/or television series. The researcher suggests that the model for exploiting these film tourism marketing opportunities should be divided into three phases;

- Before Release (A)
- After Release (B)
- After Release (C)

These management actions should have a control mechanism in place; marketing and de-marketing. The marketing and de-marketing elements of the FMAP are divided into headings to reflect their associated impact and/or action.

Applying the Model

The next challenge for this model would be to find a destination where the stakeholders are willing to test the model. Testing would necessitate a comprehensive collection of the quantifiable impacts summarised in the model to determine the current state of the film induced tourism industry. Subsequent to this, the model would be used to detect and examine trends of each impact. Depending on the situation in which the model is used, the positive or negative movement of tourists could be used to indicate a move towards or away from the film induced tourism goals that the stakeholders have in place (Flanagan et al., 2007). Hence, in its simplest form the FMAP acts as a benchmark against which, changes (resulting from film induced tourism) in the destination can be measured. In a destination where there is an apparent concern for the lack of such tourism, more resources would firstly be spent on the first part of the model (Before Release – Planning), while this may not be an initial concern for other destinations. In actual fact, the only aspects of the model to be used may be those within **Table 2**.





The manner in which the model is adopted will result from the tourism marketing strategy in which it is operationalised but, to be seen as a true model of such tourism, all aspects of **Table 2** should be implemented for the benefits of this tourism phenomenon to be maximised.

Implementing the Model

Flanagan et al. (2007) argue that tourism marketing and management are currently experiencing great change. As a result, the internet is being used increasingly as a travel planning tool, which is important for both the tourist and the stakeholder. It allows them both to acquire instant access to more information about tourism destinations than ever before and tourism stakeholders are marketing their products faster and cheaper and in a progressively more targeted way. In this research study, all stakeholders are responsible for the delivery of tourism in some form. The FMAP therefore could be considered as a sustainable tourism model for film induced locations. Thus, Denman's (2006) key stages for implementing sustainable tourism management can be used for implementing sustainable tourism management, which can be adapted for usage in the case of the FMAP:

- Form a multi-interest working group;
- Agree on preliminary topics to examine;
- Embark on extensive consultations;
- Plan a situation analysis, comprising destination performance, needs and opportunities;
- Settle on key issues and priorities;
- Decide on strategic objectives;
- Cultivate an action programme;
- Ascertain and reinforce instruments to assist implementation;
- Execute actions;
- Observe results.

A greater than ever number of marketers, irritated by waste and the lack of quantifiable results, are moving away from conventional marketing methods toward new communication concepts like product placement (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004). Hudson and Ritchie (2006b, p. 394) maintain that it is time for destination stakeholders to be more inventive in their marketing. The exposure that a film gives a destination is an advertisement potentially seen by millions of viewers, who cannot be reached through the traditional tourism promotions, hence the development of the FMAP.





In its simplest form, the FMAP forms a benchmark against which change (resulting from film induced tourism) in the destination can be measured. In a destination where there is an apparent concern for the lack of such tourism, more resources would firstly be spent on this aspect of the model, while this may not be an initial concern for other destinations. Depending on the destination in which the model is used, the positive or negative movement of tourists can indicate a move towards or away from the film induced tourism goals that the stakeholders have in place.

Implications

The model proposes that some marketing activities are more successful than others in attracting film induced tourists. Proactively targeting film stakeholders is undoubtedly central at the pre-production stage and in particular, employing a public relations firm and being involved in location scouting. Proactively targeting film stakeholders is undoubtedly central at the pre-production stage and, in particular, some destinations are employing a public relations firm and becoming involved in location scouting. This supports a government report in New Zealand sponsored by the film stakeholders, which implied that getting involved at the beginning of film production is a key success factor for destinations (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2002). A further option is to offer film producers tours, which have been successful for some destinations. Such sales-focused initiatives should be performed by Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO) regularly and they should also be giving educational and scouting trips to film stakeholders (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b, pp. 393–394). Taking on a public relations agency for example, is another alternative. Another option is to offer film producers tours, which have been useful for some destinations (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b, pp. 393–394). Hudson and Ritchie (2006b, pp. 393–394) state that at the pre-production stage, DMOs' should work closely with film stakeholders because this vital for film induced tourism success (Grihault, 2003).

Hudson and Ritchie (2006b, pp. 393–394) state that at the pre-production stage DMOs should work together with film stakeholders because this is critical to film induced tourism success and corroborates earlier research (Grihault, 2003). A further important element of film induced tourism success is the marketing of film locations themselves. Even though DMOs believe the generation of publicity to be the most significant factor for film induced tourism, they should think about placing more effort into having guided tours, film walks, advertising hotels and houses used in films, packaging attractions to extend stays, and constructing film and site maps for tourists. These activities seem to have more influence in attracting film induced tourists. This would respond to the obvious growing desire of film induced tourists to go to see locations that they have seen on the big screen (Riley et al., 1998).





Based on a methodical literature review, a regional survey and strategic conversations at a film induced tourism destination, this research has presented an invaluable insight into what Hudson and Ritchie (2006b, p. 395) describe as a comparatively new phenomenon which offers destinations the chance to create substantial additional income, economic development and tourist visits.

Conclusion

This study provides the theoretical background for this study's research objectives. The issues which arose from the literature review and the findings of the tourist survey and the strategic conversations highlight a number of implications for the future development of such destinations. These implications include the many positive and negative impacts of filming the various television series and the successful use of destination branding in the promotion of a film location. It has been shown that film induced tourism has the potential to offer many opportunities but also has many potential risks.

The development of film induced tourism was reviewed and analysed to provide an overview and evaluation of the present nature and status of film induced tourism. This research study also discussed possible directions and areas for future film tourism research. Studies on issues relating to film induced tourism, such as its nature, forms, characteristics, effects on the residents of destinations and tourist behaviour were not conducted until the mid-1990s. Following a broad search of the existing research on film induced tourism, it was observed that the academic literature on film induced tourism is somewhat scarce, which is in all probability due to its relatively short history (Lam & Ap, 2006, p. 166).

The internet and indeed television offers great opportunities for creating a strong destination brand. There are numerous advantages associated with these interactive marketing tools over the traditional branding methods used to brand mainly the reduction in costs and lead times. Conversely, Palmer (2004) states that having a website in itself is not enough to promise continuous success of a tourist destination. In an age when each destination can create an interactive marketing tool, a website must be able to develop its market position and promote a strong electronic presence. Never before have DMOs' had so many routes to reach their target markets and these should be maximised upon (Palmer, 2004 p. 139). Tourism Australia developed a marketing campaign for the recent film *Australia* (2008). They financed the film director Baz Luhrmann to make a series of commercials generally related to the feature film to accompany its release. These commercials tried to recreate the film's main themes (adventure, romance and transformation). Other marketing tools used in this branding campaign included billboards, themed postcards, a foldout movie map and a booklet containing motivational destination information (Roesch, 2009, pp. 227-228)





Film induced tourism has the potential to offer fantastic opportunities but also creates many drawbacks. The concept of film induced tourism is not widely welcomed by the stakeholders in Yorkshire and the challenge is to retain a transparent balance between Yorkshire's current tourism product and making the most of the opportunities that arise in new markets which may be the most appropriate way forward (Connell, 2005a, p. 774). Investigating this balance has aided the development of the FMAP (see **Table 2**), which is a conceptual framework to be used as a best practice model for the successful integration of film induced tourism in a destination's marketing strategy. This has not previously been undertaken.

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9

**The 5 Ds of International
City Break Travel ***

Gerard Dunne





Introduction

The focusing on cities for leisure breaks, particularly international leisure breaks, has become a contemporary travel phenomenon that has resulted in the enhancement and rejuvenation of many urban areas throughout Europe. Cities are moving centre stage, providing a leisure experience for travellers that is both diverse and immediate. According to IPK International's European Travel Monitor, European city tourism grew by 20% in 2005 compared to an increase of just 3% in sun and beach holidays (Freitag, 2006). Yet in spite of this growth our knowledge of city break travel remains relatively limited. With a few notable exceptions, little research specifically relating to city break travel currently exists. Indeed most of the commentary on the subject has tended to emanate from industry sources. Little academic research explicitly addressing city break travellers and city break trip-taking currently exists, reflecting a significant gap in the urban tourism knowledge base. The object of this research is to address this gap by exploring and highlighting the distinctive characteristics of this form of travel.

City Breaks — A Distinctive Type of Trip

A city break represents a distinctive type of holiday, one that Trew and Cockerell (2002, p.86) define as, "a short leisure trip to one city or town, with no overnight stay at any other destination during the trip." This definition importantly highlights the 'city only' nature of the trips and provides a basis on which to segment such visitors. Indeed segmenting visitor markets along the lines of type of trip can be very effective, particularly for destination management bodies. Such breakdowns generally offer potentially more valuable data than traditional socio-demographic classifications which, as Bieger and Laesser (2000, p.56) point out, are "increasingly less helpful for the segmentation of guest groups." As researchers begin to recognise the significance of type of trip in understanding visitor behaviour (Sung, Morrison, Hong & O'Leary, 2001; Bloy, 2000; Hudson, 1999) it has become more important to focus attention on the characteristics of different holidays and highlight the distinctiveness between them. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) describe type of trip (including aspects such as travel party and duration) as being a crucial factor in people's travel decision process. Examining the city break trip in terms of its distinctive elements is therefore both useful and important in the context of urban tourism research.





Growth of City Break Travel

There are a number of factors that can be attributed to the rising popularity of city break holidays in Europe. Firstly, the increased availability of low cost air travel with its emphasis on short haul, point to point journeys is undoubtedly a significant contributor. This development has made a wide range of city destinations accessible at lower cost. Secondly, there is the increased tendency of Europeans to take additional but shorter holidays. This is an important characteristic according to Trew and Cockerell (2002) who point out that in some European countries overall leisure intensity – i.e. the proportion of the population travelling at least once a year – is reaching a ceiling. At the same time, the total number of trips taken per market continues to grow, as people opt for two or more trips a year in place of, or in addition to, their main annual holiday.

Another reason for the growth relates to people's changing perception of cities as travel destinations. For contemporary travellers the city has increasingly become viewed as, not just an entry, exit or transit point, but a desired destination in its own right.

Finally, the increasing role of the internet in the travel decision making process has also contributed greatly to the city break phenomenon. The ease with which people can access information and make bookings online has greatly facilitated this form of travel. The uncomplicated nature of most city break trips (the majority consisting of just two components, transport and accommodation) reduces the risk element commonly associated with booking holidays online.

These factors have all contributed to the steady growth of 'city only' holidays in recent years and have resulted in city break travel becoming a significant tourism niche in an increasing number of European cities.

Negative Impacts of City Breaks

The city break phenomenon, although generally welcomed by urban tourism destinations, has nonetheless received a measure of criticism from certain quarters in recent years. Some of this relates to the type of tourists commonly attracted to this form of travel, particularly where low cost airlines are involved. For example, in recent times the residents and homeowners of Deauville in Normandy tried to stop the arrival of cheap Ryanair flights from London, believing such a development would encourage an influx of downmarket, short break travellers to their traditionally upmarket resort town. Similar criticisms have also been raised in other cities, particularly in a number of emerging Eastern European cities where stag parties and other relatively invasive forms of tourism account for a significant proportion of the city break traffic.





One of the most pressing issues relating to city breaks concerns the impact the phenomenon is having on regional and rural tourism. There is a fear in some quarters that popular city destinations are 'taking' potential tourists from more traditional non urban holiday areas. This is certainly the case in Ireland where significant dissatisfaction exists among regional tourism bodies at the perceived loss of tourism business due to the increasing popularity of Dublin city. According to a report by the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation on visitor distribution in Ireland, between 2000 and 2005 the number of nights spent by international holidaymakers in Dublin increased by 39% while the number of bed nights spent in the rest of the country declined by almost 11% (ITIC, 2006). This highlights a fundamental change in the spatial spread of visitors to Ireland and one which is clearly worrying the country's tourism authorities. However, a critical question seems to be whether or not cities are actually 'taking' visitors from other regions, or whether it is just a case of fewer people wishing to visit rural or regional destinations.

Another criticism commonly levelled at city break travel relates to the green issue. Significant attention is now being focused on airlines, particularly low cost carriers, in terms of their contribution to carbon emissions globally. Non essential, supplemental trips such as city breaks are increasingly being disapproved of by a growing environmental lobby. As governments begin to levy green taxes on the transport sector and as people become increasingly aware of their carbon footprint it will be interesting to see if this has an impact on the demand for city break travel.

Methods

In examining the distinctiveness of the international city break market to Dublin it was decided to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Within the combined methods design, a sequential triangulation approach, as outlined by Millar and Crabtree (1994), was considered particularly suitable. This consists of conducting two phases to the research project, with the results of the first phase essential for the planning of the next. A quantitative study was undertaken first (Phase One), which provided essential data in relation to the characteristics of city break visitors and their trips, in addition to information necessary to carry out the second phase. Phase Two involved an in-depth qualitative analysis that examined aspects of city break visitor's consumer behaviour. Both phases combined to provide a unique insight into city break travel characteristics and behaviour.





Phase One involved a face to face survey carried out in Dublin where one thousand overseas visitors were intercepted over a twelve month period at locations across the city centre. From this sample two main visitor cohorts were identified and separated. These were, city break holidaymakers (n = 379) and non-city break holidaymakers (n = 416). The former were defined as leisure visitors who were visiting the city only. The latter consisted of leisure visitors who were visiting Dublin as part of a wider holiday (i.e. the city was just a part of their trip). Having isolated both visitor segments it was possible to carry out a comparative analysis. This proved very useful in identifying distinctive characteristics and features of the city break market. It should be noted, only commercial city breaks were considered - therefore people visiting family and friends were not included. In addition, only those who visited the city for the entirety of their trip were deemed to be city breakers (as per Trew and Cockerell's definition).

Phase Two consisted of 40 in-depth interviews with city break visitors to Dublin. The purpose of this phase was to uncover insights from 'thick descriptions,' in the visitors' own words, in relation to their travel behaviour. These thick descriptions, as outlined by Geertz (1973), consist of detailed information about the process being examined from the viewpoints of the participants in the process. Drawing on data from Phase One, it was possible to develop an accurate sampling frame based on the characteristics of city break visitors to Dublin. The interviews were carried out at three locations around the city, at different times of the year, and at different times of the week. Interviews lasted between 25 minutes and 1 hour and were recorded. They were later transcribed and subsequently analysed using a qualitative approach involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). From this, a number of themes relating to people's travel behaviour emerged. The detailed information collected from the interviews consisted of data not just relating to the interviewee's city break but also their last main holiday. This allowed direct comparisons to be made in relation to people's wider trip taking behaviour.

In analysing the results from both phases of the research a number of distinctive features of city break travel became apparent. These were characteristics that emerged from both the quantitative and qualitative data sets and were categorised into 5 main areas. These are conveniently referred to as the 5 Ds of city break travel. Although primarily relating to the city break situation in Dublin they are reflective of city break travel in a wider context also.





The 5 Ds of City Break Travel

The five characteristics (5 Ds) will now be discussed in an effort to shed light on the factors that make city break trips distinctive as a type of holiday. The five specific features are; Duration, Distance, Discretionary nature, Date flexibility and Destination travel party.

Duration

The first distinctive feature of city break travel relates to the length of the trip. The findings in this research support the common view (Law, 2002; Trew & Cockerell, 2002) that city breaks generally consist of short stay trips. The results from Phase One show how city break visitors stay for noticeably shorter periods compared to other leisure tourists — 55% stated their trip consisted of 3 nights or less, compared to just 6% for non city break holidaymakers.

It would be wrong however to assume that all city breaks are short breaks, clearly they are not. Some people come on city only holidays for longer durations, and indeed, there is evidence to suggest that longer city break trips are growing faster than average (Trew & Cockerell, 2002). However, in general, the findings show most city breaks being short, usually 3 nights or less. The results point to three main explanations for this. Firstly, city breaks tend to be secondary trips often supplementing a person's main holiday. In this regard they tend to be of a shorter duration as they are complementing rather than replacing a bigger trip. Secondly, as Law (1993) and Burtenshaw, Bateman, and Ashworth (1991) point out, many people are able to see and experience what they want, in most cities, in a few days. This was confirmed in the Phase Two interviews where a number of people, although generally indicating their approval with Dublin as a destination, also pointed out that a few days or a weekend in the city was adequate to satisfy their city break requirements.

"It's a nice city and we've really enjoyed it but in the end of the day the three days is enough, we've seen what we wanted to see." (James, London)

This was echoed by people who visited the city for concerts or sports games which, by their nature, tend to be short term events. The third reason relates to the international trend towards shorter, but more frequent leisure trips. This trend has been one of the most significant developments in European travel in recent years and the city break phenomenon is testimony to this. Cities, as destinations, lend themselves easily to short break travel. For time pressed travellers, cities can be reached directly, reducing or eliminating transfer issues commonly associated with longer holidays.





In addition, attractions and amenities are generally clustered or located close together, resulting in little time spent moving around the destination. Thus, for many people, cities represent the ideal short break holiday destination.

Distance

The second distinctive characteristic relates to the distance people travel to take such holidays. City break visitors tend to come mostly from nearby source markets. This fact is very much evident in Dublin where 80% of the city break market comes from Britain, a statistic that is much higher than the overall figure for British holidaymakers into Dublin at 50%. Urban tourism demand in many other European cities follows a similar trend. Prague for example, one of Europe’s premier city break destinations, has 221 flights a week with its large neighbour Germany - representing the greatest number of air connections into the city (Prague Airport Statistics, 2006). Because of the limited duration of most city break trips people don’t like to spend much time getting to and from the destination. The increased availability of low cost point to point flights has improved matters greatly in this regard. Cheap frequent access is most prevalent from neighbouring markets. For example, the number of air routes into Dublin is highest from Britain. Ryanair alone flies to 17 different British airports from Dublin. The impact of this cheap air access is reflected in the holiday arrivals statistics, which show growth in air travel to Dublin far exceeding that of ferry services. As **Table 1** shows there has been a significant shift in mode of entry by British visitors over the period 1997 to 2007. The figures highlight a swing of 36% from sea to air transport. Low cost airlines have had a huge influence on this shift.

Table 1: Route of Entry % from Britain (2007 v 1997)

	1997	2007	% Change
Air	39%	75%	+36%
Sea	61%	25%	-36%

Source: Fáilte Ireland Market Trends (Britain)





Clearly for time pressed city break visitors, fast, direct air access is a hugely attractive option. In Dublin's case this is reflected in the large number of city breakers coming from Britain. For these visitors, Dublin represented one of the most easily accessible overseas city destinations available to them.

"It was cheaper to come here than what it is to go to my work, and it was quicker. I mean it takes me an hour-and-a-half to go to my work, whereas I mean I couldn't believe it, it was 50 minutes. We left home at 7 a.m. in the morning and arrived here at 7.52 a.m. I mean it's incredible, I couldn't believe it for 70p each way – I mean that's much less than I pay going to work. Although I know the taxes bring it up but still it's amazing" (Ruth, Glasgow).

Discretionary Nature

Another significant feature of city breaks is the discretionary nature of the trips. During the visitor interviews respondents were asked about their trip taking patterns in the previous year in order to examine how the city break fitted in with other trips (if any) they had taken. The findings showed that people had generally taken the city break as an additional trip to their main holiday. There were only a few cases where the Dublin city break was considered the principal, or indeed only, holiday of the year. In most cases the trip was viewed as a discretionary break, and for some an opportunistic one. This is reflected in the short decision time that was evident with many of the trips. The survey results show almost 60% of city breakers booked their accommodation less than 4 weeks before their trip compared with 37% of non city break holidaymakers. For most people, city breaks were conceived and acted on in a relatively short period of time, with the internet playing a significant role in this behaviour.

The influence of situational factors was also found to contribute to the discretionary nature of city break trip taking. Evidence from the interviews shows that the genesis of many city break ideas can be traced to particular circumstances that people faced, or situations that arose in people's lives. These proved to be quite diverse, however, all had a similar outcome, in that, taking a city break was considered an appropriate response to the particular situation they faced. For example, one interviewee explained how a family bereavement was the catalyst for his trip to Dublin:



“Well to tell you the truth it came about because I lost my brother a couple of weeks ago... I just needed to get away, clear my head like. I went to a travel agent and just said I need to get away for a couple of days - and so she suggested here” (Len, London).

In some cases the city break was organised by a third party, and as such the decision often came down to a simple question - ‘do I join this trip or not?’ Once this decision was made respondents often had very little other input into the trip, except to participate. This usually differed from people’s main holiday situation where the initial generic decision of whether or not to take a trip was, in many cases, already made. For most people the main holiday was an annual ritual, therefore the decision making tended to focus less on whether to go and more on where to go. By contrast city breaks were usually less predetermined and as such the decision making was more discretionary in nature. The decision process did not tend to follow distinctive stages as commonly outlined in the tourism literature. For example, the conventional view is that people first decide on whether or not to take a trip — what Hodgson (1983) calls first order questions — and then subsequently choose what kind of trip to take (second order questions). However, for many city breakers these decisions were made concurrently. In other words, people often came upon a good city break deal or were introduced to one and decided to ‘go for it,’ and as such were making first and second order decisions simultaneously.

“I saw the special offer for the flight and that I suppose started me thinking. And then because we had free time and no real commitments we decided why not” (Fred, Bristol).

This reflects impulsive or opportunistic decision making behaviour that is very much linked to the discretionary nature of the trips. It also shows the strength of special offers and deals when discovered by people at particular times. Advertisements for cheap flights, in particular, were found to stimulate demand in a number of cases.

6.4 Date Flexibility

The fourth distinctive feature of city break travel relates to the lack of seasonal bias associated with the trips. **Table 2** shows findings from the survey which highlight the difference in arrival patterns between city break and non city break visitors to Dublin.



Table 2: Timing of Visit by Type of Holidaymaker

	City Break Holidaymaker	Non City Break Holidaymaker
Winter	17.2%	4.3%
Spring	23.2%	14.9%
Summer	34.0	43.3%
Autumn	25.6%	37.5%
Total	(379) 100%	(416) 100%

Such a demand pattern can be partly attributed to the relative unimportance of weather in city break travel compared to other types of holidays. The findings show 17% of city breakers to Dublin arrived during winter months compared to just 4% of non city break holidaymakers. However besides weather the disparity in arrival patterns can also be attributed to other factors. For example, the secondary nature of city breaks means most are taken outside of peak periods. Sometimes these trips are centred around events such as concerts, sports games, and exhibitions. These are generally spread throughout the year and as such the city break visitors who attend them contribute to the development of a year round city destination.

Yes, I suppose the concert was the main reason for coming (to Dublin), we are big fans and we did not want to miss it. (Christina, Rotterdam)

This non seasonal demand pattern is a crucial feature and one that makes city breakers an attractive market for urban tourism businesses.

Destination Travel Party

The final characteristic of city break travel concerns the composition of the travelling unit. One of the most interesting findings in this regard was the small number of travel parties that included children. Most people either travelled with a partner or with a group of friends. The survey results highlight this, with 60% of city break visitors travelling to Dublin with a spouse or a partner and 19% travelling with a group of friends. By contrast just 13% came with their family (including children). These results concur with previous studies which show a high proportion of urban tourists travel without children (Flanagan & Dunne, 2005; British Tourist Authority, 1988; Trinity Research 1989). Three main factors emerged as the principal reasons why children are not well represented in city break travel parties.





Firstly, a high proportion of city breakers did not have children. The findings show that many of the groups were made up of single people travelling together (friends, affinity groups, stag/hen parties, etc), or couples who either did not have children or whose children had left home (empty nesters). For all these people, ease of mobility was a key factor in their choice of trip. They were not tied to the school calendar and as such were more flexible with their travel plans. This allowed them to avail of special travel offers which tend to be more plentiful and financially rewarding during school term. Childless travellers can also usually take trips without a lot of preplanning, which means they can often make decisions more speedily and spontaneously. For such people city breaks represent a very attractive travel product.

The second reason relates to people who had children at home, but who used the city break trip to escape the stresses and pressures of parenting. This was particularly evident in the interviews where a number of couples described their trip to Dublin as a chance to take a break from their children.

"We have a young son - he's one and a half and he's into everything at the moment. Jane's mother took him for these few days. It's great to just get the break" (Brian, Nottingham).

A city break was seen as ideal in many ways for this purpose - the short stay nature of the trips along with the ease of access made travelling easier in terms of arranging childminding. Interestingly, these people saw the city break as an adult focused holiday centred on themselves. By contrast, the main holiday was seen as a chance to spend time with their children.

The third reason for the lack of children relates to the child-unfriendly perception of cities as destinations. A few of the interviewees commented on the lack of things to do for kids in Dublin or the difficulty in keeping them amused, while others claimed they would never bring their children to a city for a holiday.





Conclusion

Distinguishing between the types of trips people take can be a very useful exercise for tourism researchers. Such an approach focuses on the nature of the trip — its principal characteristics — and as such offers potentially more valuable visitor behaviour data than other approaches. By studying the different characteristics of various holidays, a greater understanding of trip taking behaviour is possible. Certainly this is the case with city breaks, where up to now little empirical data in relation to the nature of these trips has existed. As the changing structure of trip taking by Europeans continues to influence the growth of city breaks, the need for up to date information on this visitor market has become more pressing. This study has shown that the international city break trip has a number of distinguishing characteristics. These are encapsulated in five main features (5 Ds), duration, distance, date flexibility, discretionary nature, and destination travel party. Uncovering these characteristics provides a better understanding of city break trips and in particular their distinctiveness compared to other types of holidays.

Looking forward, it is not certain if cities will continue to enjoy the appeal they do today. Given the increasingly negative economic environment that tourism faces it will be interesting to see if secondary trips such as city breaks manage to sustain the type of demand they have experienced up to now. In order to remain competitive city tourism suppliers will need to have a clear understanding of this important visitor group and be able to respond to the specific requirements they present. For this, in-depth knowledge of city break travellers and the trips they engage in will be crucial.

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10

A Factor Analysis of the North American Coach Tour Sector in Ireland *

Marie Ryan, Jim Deegan and Richard Moloney





Introduction

The Irish Tourism Industry has achieved remarkable growth over the last two decades. Overseas tourist arrivals have increased from 1.95 million in 1985 to 8.00 million in 2007, before falling back to 7.80 million in 2008 (CSO, 2009). Following a lengthy period of growth, the Irish tourism industry experienced a severe downturn triggered by the current global economic crisis. Despite these conditions, the Irish tourism industry remains one of Ireland's most important economic sectors generating almost €5.0 billion in foreign exchange earnings (approximately 4% to Gross National Product).

The tourism industry is at a critical juncture. It must try to ensure the industry weathers the current recession. Competing effectively for business by correctly targeting consumers when the global economy improves, will shape the future of Irish tourism activities. As tourism has grown and becomes more competitive, the country's interest in attracting its share of visitors has also grown (Sheehan, Ritchie & Hudson, 2007). The potential of the North American coach market provides an interesting opportunity for the industry. Factor analysis is used to identify crucial marketing information.

Irish tourism policymakers have limited knowledge of the type of North American tourists who visits here. The information that currently exists is primarily due to research carried out by Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland's Survey of Travellers. Ward noted there is a need for empirical work in this area as it "would be particularly insightful for the Irish tourism industry" (2006, p. 434), since destination choices available to consumers today have proliferated (Pike, 2005).

This chapter reports factor analysis results based on the North American coach tourist. By analysing important travel behaviours and the character types of the North American coach tourist, seven future potential coach market niches are identified. The chapter contributes to the issues raised in the *New Horizons for Irish Tourism: An Agenda for Action* (2003), by way of establishing the factors that encourage and discourage North American coach tourists to go on holiday as well as establish their personality traits.

The chapter is organised as follows: Section 2, examines the North American tourist in Ireland. Section 3 describes the methodology. Section 4 presents the findings of the research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary and policy implications.





North American Tourists in Ireland

North American tourists are important contributors to the Irish tourism industry for two reasons, their market size and their market potential. They are significant contributors to the Irish tourism industry and represent a reliable market. In 2007, the Survey of Overseas Travellers noted 23% of them were repeat visitors and 64% (670,000) arrived specifically for a holiday. Over the years 2000 and 2006, the number of North Americans travelling overseas¹ increased by 17% (U.S Department of Transportation, 2009). From a potential of 64 million North American tourists travelling internationally, the island of Ireland attracted over one million, (Tourism Ireland, 2008). North American visitors stay longer than their European counterparts, averaging 9.3 nights in 2008 (CSO, 2009). Thus, in terms of market size, North Americans are significant contributors to the Irish tourist market.

With a potential expenditure of over \$100 billion, North American tourists are vital due to their market potential. Given the current economic climate the North American market provides a steady income stream (Fáilte Ireland 2007). Statistics indicate North Americans are the second highest spenders on travel abroad spending a greater proportion of revenue (on average 60% more) than other tourists in Ireland (Tourism Ireland, 2006). In 2008 this figure totalled €731million (Tourism Ireland, 2008). They constitute 20% of overall tourism receipts to the island of Ireland (CSO, 2009). Consequently, they signal a great opportunity to help Ireland maintain tourism revenues in such testing times.

Published Irish research detailing this market has been sparse. Work carried out by Tourism Ireland in 2006 profiled Ireland's best prospects by categorising the North American tourists into two groups. The sightseers and culture seekers who have visited Europe in the past and secondly, the better educated, better off urban and suburban tourist who enjoys the finer things in life (Tourism Ireland, 2007). Tourism Ireland further divided the sightseer and culture seeker tourist into three subsets: the luxury traveller, the Scots Irish and the most significant for this chapter; the Group tourist. Tourism Ireland states the opportunity to "target an increasing share of affinity groups from the core target market of sightseers and culture seekers is a niche market with good prospects" (2006, p.8). Group tours increased in market size by 56% between the years 2002 and 2006 (ITIC, 2008). Over the same period, coach tour programmes to Ireland, with North America as its largest individual source, (averaging 35% over the years 2007–2008) increased 160%, the fastest rate of any country (Fáilte Ireland, 2007). This chapter examines the North American coach tourist niche market in detail.

1. Overseas indicates outside the USA, Canada and Mexico





Methodology

A self administered questionnaire was distributed to North American coach tourists at the beginning of their coach tour. The questionnaires were distributed to tourists on their coach bus at the start of their tour and completed surveys were collected at the end of their stay. It was carried out over the period June 2007 to March 2008. A total of 741 North American coach tourists were presented with the questionnaire and a response rate of 69% (n = 511) was achieved. The data was screened for outliers and the out of range values were identified and disregarded. The minimum amount of data for factor analysis was satisfied, with a final sample size of 485.

Participants rated seven questions. The questions assessed motivations for travelling (why go and why not go on holiday), activities sought while on holiday, favoured hotel attributes, constraints that may prohibit travel, life focus over the next five to ten years and character traits of tourists. Responses were on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 = "Not at all important", 2 = "Mildly important", 3 = "Neither unimportant nor important", 4 = "Mildly important" and 5 = "Extremely important". A total of 101 variables were ranked by the coach tourists.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a data reduction technique that groups variables into factors or dimensions that have common characteristics (Nunnally et al, 1994). Variables that are related are grouped into subgroups as they display high within-correlations. Data reduction in this vein means some variables are weighted more heavily and are retained, while others are set aside as they show less influence. Initially, the factorability of all variables, 101 items, was examined. Several well-recognised criteria for the factorability of a correlation were used. Firstly, all 101 variables correlated at least 0.4 with at least one other item, suggesting factorability. Secondly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy over the seven questions measured a minimum value of 0.77. This is above the recommended value of 0.6. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant measuring a minimum value of $\chi^2 = 871.876$, $p < .05$ over all seven questions. The diagonals of the correlation matrix were all over 0.5, supporting the inclusion of each item in the factor analysis. Finally, the communalities were all above .3, confirming that each item shared some common variance with other items. Given these overall indicators, factor analysis was conducted with all 101 variables.



The primary purpose of the factor analysis was to identify and compute composite scores for the factors underlying the 101 variables within the seven questions in the questionnaire. To carry this out, principal component factor analysis (PCA) was used. PCA summarises the relationships that exist among a set of variables into a smaller set of uncorrelated principal components (Pett et al, 2003; Tacq, 1997; Tabachnick et al, 2001). The initial eigenvalue in each question was examined as eigenvalues represent the amount of variance accounted for by each factor (Pett et al, 2003; Verbeek, 2008). Eigenvalues assess the importance of each component in selecting the number of factors. Factor solutions were derived from each of the seven questions when two conditions were met. Firstly, when the latent root criteria (denoting factors with eigenvalues greater than 1) was significant (Kaiser, 1961). Secondly, when a certain amount of variance percentage has been reached, that is between 50% and 60% (Pett et al, 2003). Varimax rotation maximised the factor loading of each variable on one of the extracted factors whilst minimising the loading on all other factors (Tabachnick et al, 2001) and a minimum level of acceptance of 0.4 was used following the tourism methodologies applied in Pennington-Gray and Lane (2001) and Shoemaker (2000). Following these steps the most important factors in each of the seven questions were retained and labelled according to a new dimension. All other variables were eliminated as they did not contribute significantly to the analysis.

Findings

Results found 6.2% of those surveyed were under 35 years of age, 6% were aged 35-44 years, 18.9% were 45-54 years, 26.5% were 55-64 years, 31.7% were 65-74 years and 9.6% were 75 years and over and 1% were non response. One hundred and one variables were reduced to twenty-two more defined dimensions. These were then grouped into the seven factor analysed questions. Details of each question's initial eigenvalues and variance explained using Varimax rotation are detailed in **Table A1 Appendix A**.

Table 1 indicates the push factors that impact on tourist decision making. Nine original variables were reduced to two crucial dimensions: Education and Rest/Relaxation. Coach tourists can be deemed to be active in their learning orientation (.79), albeit in terms of culture and personal growth, while others like to relax (.71), be romantic and reminisce. Knowing this allows for more accurate targeting of this sector of the market.



Table 1: Reasons why Coach Tourists go on Holiday

Push Motivations	Educational	Rest/Relaxation
To learn new things	.79	
Experience new culture	.78	
For personal growth	.77	
For adventure	.63	
For rest and relaxation		.71
Opportunity for romance		.67
For nostalgia purposes		.65
To escape		.63
Quality time with family/Spouse		.60

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 below shows the general components related to holiday activities. Factor analysis reduced eighteen common holiday activities into four critical dimensions. In rank order of importance these are: Physical Activities, Indulging/Entertainment Activities, Cultural Activities and Family Orientated Activities. These findings indicate that coach tourists visiting Ireland are (and perhaps surprisingly) very active individuals. Cycling (.85), water-sports (.83) and equestrian were found to be particularly important. They enjoy fine dining, are culturally aware and are family oriented to a lesser degree (59.)





Table 2: Activities of Coach Tourists

Activities	Physical	Indulging/Entertainment Activity	Cultural Activity	Family Orientated Activity
Cycling	.85			
Water-sports	.83			
Equestrian	.82			
Golf	.73			
Walking/hill walking/hiking	.71			
Spa treatments/massage	.63			
Spiritual activities	.58			
Artistic and literary activities	.56			
Nature activities	.55		.52	
Fine dining	.82			
Music/Food	.75			
Shopping	.71			
Theatre act/stage show	.41		.56	
Historical activities			.79	
Museum/art gallery activities			.74	
Guided tours/excursions			.53	
Visiting relatives and friends				.79
Tracing roots/genealogy			.44	.59

Source: Primary Data





Table 3 details the pull attractions that entice a North American coach tourist to visit a destination. Factor analysis reduced the number of original variables from eight to two important dimensions namely: Location Attributes and Physical Attributes. These indicate components such as nice weather (.76), ease of getting there and interesting history (.85) are forces in attracting North American coach tourists to destinations.

Table 3: Factors that Attract Coach Tourists to a Destination

Pull Motivations	Location	Physical
Nice weather	.76	
Good value for money	.73	
Ease of getting there	.64	
A safe and secure location	.63	
Availability of high quality accommodation	.61	.43
Interesting history		.85
Quality of scenery		.69
Recommendation from friends		.64

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.

Table 4, illustrates how certain travel constraints can curtail tourism behaviour. Two significant factors are identified from the original list of nine: Fear Constraints and Time Constraints. Fear of terrorism (.72) and general lack of time (.84) are found to be key constraint variables.





Table 4: Constraints that Prevent Coach Tourist from Travelling-Rotated Component Matrix

Travel Constraints	Fear	Time
Fear of terrorism	.72	
Health problems	.69	
Lack of interest	.68	
Pets to look after	.65	
Lack of travel companion	.59	
Family commitments	.51	
Lack of money	.45	.42
Commitments to work		.84
Lack of time		.84

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
Source: Primary Data

Applying factor analytic techniques to favoured hotel attributes meant six key hotel factors were extracted from the original thirty-four, namely, Hotel Facilities, Bedroom facilities, Safety Facilities, Health conscious facilities, Hotel Type and Hotel location. Bike-use service, flat screen TVs, internet access, well-lit bedrooms, non-skid material, safe and secure location, availability of 24 hour medical services, special dietary menus, adult-only hotels, an historical property and a location in heart of sight-seeing attractions, are key hotel facilities the industry must recognise, in order to target the coach tourist appropriately.

Table 5 highlights the core life focus factors of the coach tourists. From the original eleven variables, three are deemed critical: Educating Spiritualist, Family Focused and the Luxurious Wanderer. Sharing beliefs with others (.84), strengthening spiritual faith, family and grandchildren (.77) and to the least extent enjoying more of life's luxuries (.60), rank in order of importance what North American coach tourists will focus on over the next five to ten years. This offers a more accurate understanding of future coach tourists.





Table 5: Five to Ten Year Focus of Coach Tourists Visiting Ireland

Life Focus	Educating Spiritualist	Family Focused	Luxurious Wanderer
Sharing my beliefs with others	.84		
Working in my dream occupation	.73		
Strengthening my faith (spiritual)	.72		
Developing new skills	.72		
Technology/Gadgets/Internet	.70		
Caring for the environment	.60		
Family		.80	
Importance over next 5-10 years – Grandchildren		.77	
Looking after my health		.56	.49
Travelling more			.78
Enjoying more of life's luxuries			.60

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
Source: Primary Data

The final question factor analysed illustrated in **Table 6** below, measures the character traits of the coach tourists. From twelve variables, three character dimensions are crucial: Trendy Liberalists, Independent Youths and Traditionalists. These findings inform tourism suppliers that coach tourists are risk takers (.68). They want to keep up with new trends (.67). They enjoy being on their own (.78) while also look forward to retiring (.56). Coach tour providers are now more fully informed and can suitably cater for their diverse tourists.





Table 6: Character Type of Coach Tourists Visiting Ireland

Character Traits	Trendy Liberalist	Independent Youth	Traditionalist
I am a risk taker.	.68		
I always keep up with new trends.	.67		
I consider myself liberal.	.64		
Modern technology challenges me.	.58		
Financial enrichment is important to me.	.53		.47
I enjoy being on my own.		.78	
I choose to associate with younger people		.56	
Cultural enrichment is very important me		.50	
I live a physically active life.	.47	.48	
Traditional values are very important to me			.74
I look forward to retiring			.56
Routine suits me.			.55

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
Source: Primary Data

Factor analysis successfully and very significantly (all factor loadings were 0.5) reduced one hundred and one variables to twenty-two key dimensions. A summary list of the re-labelled factors can be seen in **Table A1 Appendix A**.

Policy Implications

The factor analysis emphasises twenty-two critical dimensions. It enabled correlated variables to be grouped into fewer common categories, known as dimensions. The paper helps the Irish coach tourism industry to compete effectively for the market share of the North American market once the global economy improves. This is important as the Tourism Renewal Group (2009) indicated tourism businesses with strong track records and viable futures are to be protected in current market conditions.





The chapter highlights the issues raised in the New Horizons for Irish Tourism: An Agenda for Action (2003) by establishing the factors that encourage and discourage North American coach tourists to go on holiday in Ireland. This paper uncovers the most important travel constraints, motivation, activities, accommodation attributes, life focus and personality traits epitomising the North American coach tourists. The findings reveal potential niche markets within the broad coach tourism market. Areas of importance for future development are found to be: cycling tours, the spa retreat tours: the spiritual tourist: the historical coach tours: the health conscious coach tourist: the adult-only coach tourist and the family orientated coach tourist. These niches can help tourism policymakers aptly provide appropriate products targeting the coach tourist of the future.

Coach tourists are largely active individuals with a strong propensity for cycling and cycling. Physically active tours are a potential niche. Coach tourists seek attractive location attributes and are drawn by physical features such as historical relics. Coach tours specialising in history is another niche. Fear and time are two travel constraints. Although not a new phenomenon, promoting a peaceful island of Ireland is found to be still a forefront issue with coach tourists. Push motivations defined as educational or restful/relaxing indicates coach tourists are active in their learning prowess albeit in terms of culture and personal growth, while others like to relax, be romantic and reminisce. Offering specialised coach tours such as spa retreat tours or a spiritual tour would target these coach tourists. Given the severity of the recent downturn and reduced yields achieved by the hotel industry, this paper highlighted adult-only hotels, the physically active hotel guest and health conscious guests as future hotel niches. Assessing the five to ten year life focus of the coach tourist indicates a future niche targeting family tours. Findings highlight the importance of not only child/parent holiday facilities but also child/grandparent tours.

This research shows that the coach tourist trade has a wide variety of characteristics. This variety can be used to improve marketing and targeting of potential business. In 2007, 403,000 overseas coach tourists visited Ireland. Extrapolating the results of this paper, the seven niche markets found (Physically active tours, the spa retreat tours: the spiritual tourist, historical coach tours, the health conscious coach tourist, the adult-only coach tourist, and the family oriented coach tourist) are deemed viable as North American tourists constitute on average 37% of the overall coach tourism market to Ireland. Despite the current economic downturn, these tourists are projected to grow over time and are a sustainable target for the future.



The findings demonstrate there is a gap in the supply market. The latent demands of the coach tourists highlight an appetite for facilities that are not currently being provided. Tourism providers can target more precisely the coach tourist of the future if they choose to work in tandem with the best form and adoption of, new innovations and product developments on the web. Interactive websites and advertising, offers ample scope to develop niche markets for the active tourist and the like.

Ireland has a strong tourist infrastructure. There is no need for more development. Merging technology with suppliers' products would cater for several types of coach tourists visiting Ireland. The generic tourist product is a thing of the past. The future for the industry is positive. If suppliers listen to their customers, the long-tail segmentation of the coach market will offer more choice and increase satisfaction. The current work indicates how the niche markets need to be targeted and provided for, in order to maximise benefits for Ireland.

* This chapter is based on funding provided by the Irish Hotels Federation



Appendix A

Table A1: Eigenvalues and Percentage Variance of the 22 Re-Labelled Extracted Factors

Describing the North American Coach Tourist Visiting Ireland

Component	Rotation Sum of Squared Loadings		
	Initial Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Activity 1 (Physical Activities)	7.393	28	28
Activity 2 (Indulging & Entertainment activities)	1.637	14	42
Activity 3 (Cultural Activities)	1.531	13	55
Activity 4 (Family Orientated Activities)	1.097	10	65
Push 1 (Educational)	3.251	28	28
Push 2 (Rest/Relaxation)	1.558	26	53
Pull 1 (Location)	2.993	30	30
Pull 2 (Physical)	1.204	24	54
Constraint 1 (Fear)	3.461	30	30
Constraint 2 (Time)	1.072	20	50
Hotel Attribute 1 (Hotel Facilities)	12.920	24	24
Hotel Attribute 2 (Bedroom Facilities)	2.798	12	36
Hotel Attribute 3 (Safety Facilities)	2.108	11	47
Hotel Attribute 4 (Health Conscious Facilities)	1.310	7	54
Hotel Attribute 5 (Hotel Type)	1.083	6	59
Hotel Attribute 6 (Hotel Location)	1.074	4	63
Life focus 1 (Educating Spiritualist)	3.635	30	30
Life focus 2 (Family Focused)	1.601	15	45
Life focus 3 (Luxurious Wanderer)	1.233	14	59
Character Type 1 (Trendy Liberalist)	3.422	19	19
Character Type 2 (Independent Youth)	1.502	16	35
Character Type 3 (Traditionalist)	1.006	14	49

Source: Primary Data



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**Traditional Versus
Low-Cost Airlines:
Their Competitive Advantages
from the Perspectives of
SERVQUAL and Ticket Prices:
A case study of the
Macao² International Airport ***

Victor K. Y. Chan, Shanmei Wang, Jie Li, Fei Liu and Wai Lam



Flourishing Low-Cost Airlines

In recent years, low-cost airlines (alternatively, known as budget airlines, no-frill airlines, etc.) have been mushrooming everywhere in the world (Liang & James, 2009) and have become a major mode of transport in the tourism industry. Internationally, the most prominent low-cost airlines include RyanAir and EasyJet in Europe and Southwest Airlines and JetBlue in the United States (Anonymous, 2009).

The operation of low-cost airlines substantially differs from that of traditional airlines. The former generally adopts low-cost and low-price strategies (Liang & James, 2009), typically implementing the low-cost general strategy of Porter (1980) and characterised by the following (Anonymous, 2007; Rhoades, 2006) points, although it is true that some of these strategic directions, in particular, the first three below have at least been partially adopted by some traditional airlines in an attempt to counteract competition from their low-cost counterpart.

- Direct sales of air-tickets to passengers, e.g. on the internet, in order to save the cost on travel agents' commission and paper air-tickets.
- Flexible pricing of air-tickets, peaking in high seasons and almost free in low seasons.
- No such auxiliary services as free meals but selling them instead to generate revenue.
- The routes covering only a single country or a small region (e.g. West Europe), and thus saving or even obviating cabin crews' overseas allowance.
- Giving up revenue opportunities that involve disproportionately high cost.
- Only operating hub-to-hub routes but not spoke connection routes.
- Using one single aircraft model, in a move to streamline the training of cabin crews and aircraft maintenance staff and realise the flexible allocation of cabin crews and aircraft to different routes and the economies of scale in the procurement of aircraft and their accessories.
- Preferring less congested and less expensive secondary airports to primary airports.
- Maximising the usage of aircraft by increasing their flying time in a bid to generate more revenue.
- Providing one basic cabin class, making the seats as dense as possible and thus generating more revenue.

2. "Macao" is sometimes better known internationally as "Macau" which is actually Portuguese instead of English.





Among the international airports in the Pearl River Delta region of Southern China, the Hong Kong International Airport is undoubtedly a world-class primary airport (Chen, 2005) whereas the neighbouring Macao International Airport is a secondary airport. Just because of the aforementioned characteristics of low-cost airlines' operation, the latter is well sought after by the low-cost airlines in the region. Moreover, Macao is itself densely populated (United Nations Population Division, 2009). In addition, since the liberalisation (de-monopolisation) of the gaming/gambling industry in 2002 and the implementation of mainland China's "Individual Visitor Scheme (IVS)" (which substantially streamlined the procedures for mainland Chinese citizens to visit Macao and Hong Kong) in 2003, Macao's economy underwent drastic growth, especially in the tourism and gaming/gambling industries (Ma, 2007). Just in 2008, the number of tourists visiting Macao reached 22,907,700 (Statistics and Census Bureau of the Government of Macao Special Administrative Region, 2008) and in addition there is a resident population of roughly half a million, maintaining a high demand for airline service. Such demand had been heightened by Macao's (and Hong Kong's) long being a transit point for aviation and shipping before the realisation of what is commonly called the "large cross-strait links" between mainland China and Taiwan (Anonymous, 2008) late last year. Even now, attributable to such legacy and the limited cross-strait flights at the moment, Macao still for the time being partially maintains its legacy role of being a transit point for aviation. All such factors concur to make the Macao International Airport a favourite of low-cost airlines in the region (Anonymous, 27 January 2007) on top of its being serviced by traditional airlines as well. That is why the research of this chapter was based on this airport.

Although there has been quite a lot of international and local research on traditional and low-cost airlines in respect of their operations and strategies (Anonymous, 2007; Rhoades, 2006), research is almost not in existence on the results from the realisation of such operations and strategies by the two airline categories. To fill this gap, the research team of this chapter conducted some large-scale research at the Macao International Airport, an objective of which was the comparison and contrast of the competitive advantages between these two airline categories in terms of various service quality perspectives and the ticket price. By service quality perspectives, this chapter means measures based on the five constructs of the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1991), namely, "tangibles", "reliability", "responsiveness", "assurance" and "empathy" for measuring the service quality in general. As a matter of fact, such five constructs are refined in this chapter for adapting them for the airline industry, as elaborated in Section 2.



This chapter may contribute substantially to the following aspects. First, it provides revelations to these two categories of airline in terms of their operations and strategies, in particular, those concerning pricing, sales, service levels (Proussaloglou & Koppelman, 1995), overbooking (McGill & van Ryzin, 1999; Suzuki, 2004). Second, it furnishes a basis for the aviation and airport authorities to comparatively evaluate these two airlines categories' value of existence, in order to justify the authorities' allocation of landing rights. It also assists passengers in making more informed consumer decisions on the choice between these two airline categories according to the actual needs.

Research Methodology

This research conducted a large-scale questionnaire survey. The questionnaires have both an English and a Chinese version, so as to cater for both international passengers and regional Chinese-speaking passengers. Irrespective of the language version, each questionnaire contains the questions in **Table 1**, which are actually service quality measures based on the five constructs of the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1991), namely, "tangibles", "reliability", "responsiveness", "assurance" and "empathy" for measuring the service quality of airlines. Also, contained in each questionnaire is a question about the air-ticket price. All such questions let the passenger rate the flight taken in a scale of 1 to 5 to indicate his/her being very unsatisfied, unsatisfied, neutral, satisfied and very satisfied in respect of the corresponding aspect of the flight. In other words, the higher the rating, the more satisfied he/she is with that aspect of the flight taken. Besides, two additional questions in the questionnaire ask whether the passenger is willing to re-patronise the related airline and to recommend the related airline to others. These two questions let the passenger rate on a scale of 1 to 5 to indicate his/her being very unwilling, unwilling, neutral, willing and very willing. In other words, the higher the rating, the more willing he/she is to re-patronise or recommend.





Table 1: Constructs of the SERVQUAL Scale, their Definitions in this Research and the Service Quality Measures or Questionnaire Questions under each Construct

Construct	Definition in this Research	Service Quality Measure/ Questionnaire Question
Tangibles	The facilities and service in direct contact with passengers	Comfort and cleanliness of the cabin Food and beverage provided Newspapers/magazines/other entertainments provided The uniforms of the cabin crew Neatness of the cabin crew's appearance The duration of the check-in process Seat overbooking (e.g. seat rejection or limited seat choices during check-in) Variety of main courses Cleanliness of the washrooms Ventilation in the cabin Availability of blankets Room for luggage
Reliability	The airline crews' professional knowledge and skills and their provision of committed services on time	Skillfulness of the cabin crew e.g. placement of hand-carried luggage and meal distribution Punctuality of the flight In-flight safety Cancellation of the flight Luggage handling The speed of meal distribution
Responsiveness	The airline crews' capability and willingness to help passengers	The cabin crew's capability to resolve incidents (e.g., when facing disorderly passengers) Friendliness of the cabin crew
Assurance	The airline's and its cabin crews' capability to understand passengers' demands and instil passengers' reliance and confidence	Initiative of the cabin crew to provide necessary service Convenience of booking Language ability of the cabin crew Suitability of the flight time The handling of passengers' complaints Incidental travel service (airport shuttle buses)
Empathy	The airline's and its cabin crews' degree of being considerate towards passengers	Personalised service (e.g. special arrangements for seniors, pregnant ladies and the disabled) The timing of meals The timing of duty-free product sales The timing of announcements The volume of the cabin crew's voices Attentiveness of the cabin crew in listening to passengers





In addition, the questionnaire contains two identifying questions, the first being about whether the passenger was in the economy cabin or the only cabin on board the aircraft. Having been in the economy cabin indicates the conclusion that the passenger took a traditional airline whereas having been in the only cabin on board implies a low-cost airline because, as mentioned above, low-cost airlines provide only one basic cabin class. The second identifying question directly asks which airline the passenger took. For this question, we investigated on the internet and/or directly consulted the airlines in Macao by phone beforehand so as to classify essentially all the airlines in Macao as traditional or low-cost in accordance to what the airlines claim to be on their websites and over the phone. Therefore, a passenger's answer to this second identifying question directly leads to the conclusion as to whether the passenger took a traditional or low-cost airline. The conclusions from these two identifying questions together definitively confirm the classification of the airline taken by each passenger.

Prior to the actual survey, researchers conducted a pre-test at the Macao International Airport by simulating the sampling and interviewing of passengers in accordance with the aforesaid questionnaire, with a view to ascertaining the correctness of the questionnaire and its being free of ambiguous wordings.

In the actual survey, researchers adopted simple random sampling at the Macao International Airport to preliminarily pick passengers as interviewees, picking the passenger closest to the researcher or the passenger most easily approached. Then, upon making sure that he/she arrived at Macao by air, he/she was aged 15 years or over and he/she was not in the first or business class cabin, he/she formerly became an interviewee. Subsequently, the researcher conducted the interview face to face according to the aforesaid questionnaire, and filled in the questionnaire based on the interviewee's verbal answers. This research does not take into account passengers in first- and business-class cabins on the ground that only traditional airlines offer such cabins, which are thus no comparison with those of low-cost airlines. The collection of data via the survey was followed by data analysis as detailed in Section 3.





Data Analysis and Findings

Description of Passenger Characteristics in the Sample

This survey collected a sample of 508 passengers, 52.0% having taken traditional airlines and 48.0% having taken low-cost airlines. Females account for 50.4% and males 49.6%. Overall 84.8% of the passengers' region of usual residence is Asia and 7.3% is Europe, the residual minority being from America, Africa and Australasia. Those aged 26-35 and 36-45 account for 34.7% and 31.7% respectively, other age groups being insignificant in number. Almost half of the passengers' possess post-secondary or undergraduate education but 20% have undertaken only secondary education and another 20% postgraduate education. The passengers' average monthly incomes are quite evenly distributed: 23.9% in the range³ HKD5,001-10,000, 23.7% in the range HKD10,001-15,000, 18.1% in the range HKD15,001-20,000 and 15.3% making HKD5,000 or below. As for the passengers' occupations, 24.8% are businesspersons, 22.4% professionals, and 18.7% are white-collar workers. For the principal purpose of the trip related to this survey, the proportions for leisure, business, visiting relatives and other purposes are respectively 49.9%, 30.1%, 14.9% and 5.2% respectively.

Factor Analysis

Each construct in **Table 1** covers several to over ten service quality measures and thus several to over ten questions in the questionnaire (see Section 2). Moreover, each passenger in the collected sample gives his/her own rating for each of such service quality measures. The consequence is that we needed to statistically compare such a large number of service quality measures between traditional and low-cost airlines in respect of each particular construct and this sounds practically unwieldy. Therefore, this survey employed factor analysis to reduce the number of service quality measures in each construct to a few or even one so-called component.

Table 2 depicts the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity for each construct in **Table 1**. For all constructs, the KMO measure is not less than 0.5 and the p-value of Bartlett's test is 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, so it is concluded that factor analysis is appropriately employed in this research.

3. In consideration of the larger circulation and the better popularity of the Hong Kong Dollars (HKD) regionally and internationally vis-à-vis the Macao Patacas (MOP) which is the local currency in Macao where this research is conducted, this research's questionnaire adopts the HKD as the currency while supplemented by the equivalent in the international trading currency of the US Dollars (USD) in a move to facilitate the interviewing of international passengers. For the readers' reference, HKD7.80 is pegged at USD1 whilst MOP1.03 is in turn pegged at HKD1.00.





Table 2: The KMO Measure and the p-Value of Bartlett’s Test for each Construct

Construct	KMO measure	p-value of Bartlett’s test
Tangibles	0.852	0.000**
Reliability	0.855	0.000**
Responsiveness	0.5	0.000**
Assurance	0.609	0.000**
Empathy	0.808	0.000**

** p-value < significance level 0.01

Factor analysis was applied to the service quality measures in each construct based on principal component analysis and varimax rotation, retaining only components with eigenvalues greater than 1. Regression was used to generate factor scores.

Consequently, the twelve service quality measures in the “tangibles” construct are reduced down to three components, which explain 64.6% of the variance in the twelve measures. **Table 3** displays the factor loadings of these measures, of which “comfort and cleanliness of the cabin”, “the uniforms of the cabin crew”, “neatness of the cabin crew’s appearance”, “the duration of the check-in process” and “seat overbooking” have overwhelmingly large factor loadings for component 1 vis-à-vis those for other components (i.e. components 2 and 3). Given that all these five service quality measures are macroscopic items perceivable by passengers once on board, component 1 is thus dubbed “macroscopic tangibles” component. In contrast, “cleanliness of the washrooms”, “ventilation in the cabin”, “availability of blankets” and “room for luggage” have the largest factor loadings for component 2. Since the commonality of these four service quality measures is that they are microscopic items, whose perception calls for passengers’ scrutiny or use of particular facilities, component 2 is dubbed “microscopic tangibles” component. Likewise, “food and beverage provided”, “newspapers, magazines and other entertainments provided” and “variety of main courses” have the largest factor loadings for component 3. All these three service quality measures require prolonged appreciation to rate, so component 3 is dubbed “Subtle tangibles” component. Service quality measures of other constructs are similarly subsumed under several renamed components as delineated in **Table 4**.





Table 3: Factor Loadings of the Service Quality Measures in the ‘Tangibles’ Construct

Service Quality Measure (See Table 1)	Component		
	1	2	3
Comfort and cleanliness of the cabin	0.645	0.238	0.145
Food and beverage provided	0.203	0.102	0.858
Newspapers, magazines and other entertainments provided	0.260	0.140	0.823
The uniforms of the cabin crew	0.667	0.197	0.374
Neatness of the cabin crew’s appearance	0.801	0.163	0.116
The duration of the check-in process	0.868	0.104	0.031
Seat overbooking (e.g. seat rejection or limited seat choices during check-in)	0.589	0.206	0.060
Variety of main courses	-0.045	0.348	0.606
Cleanliness of the washrooms	0.250	0.743	0.166
Ventilation in the cabin	0.235	0.832	0.095
Availability of blankets	0.109	0.761	0.330
Room for luggage	0.274	0.742	0.110

Table 4: Service Quality Measures of the Five Constructs Subsumed Under Various Renamed Components

Construct	Component (Renamed)
Tangibles	Macroscopic Tangibles
Microscopic	Tangibles
Subtle	Tangibles
Reliability	Reliability
Responsiveness	Responsiveness
Assurance	Assurance
Empathy	On-the-spot empathy Subsequent empathy †

† In the “empathy” construct, only the service quality measure for “the handling of passengers’ complaints” (see **Table 1**) has a large positive factor loading, namely, 0.999 for the “subsequent empathy” component. In fact, all other service quality measures of the “empathy” construct (see **Table 1**) has only large positive factor loadings for the “on-the-spot empathy” component.





Independent Sample t Test

Table 5 represents the results from the independent sample t tests as to whether the factor score of each component in **Table 4** for traditional airlines are equal to that for low-cost airlines. For example, the null hypothesis underlying the first row of **Table 5** is that the mean factor score of the “macroscopic tangibles” component for traditional airlines is equal to that for low-cost airlines whereas the alternative hypothesis is that they are unequal. The first row of **Table 5** shows that the corresponding p-value is 0.030 (two-tailed), which is less than the significance level of 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words, the mean factor score of the “macroscopic tangibles” component significantly differs between traditional airlines and low-cost airlines. Subsequently, based on **Table 5** again, the mean factor score of the “macroscopic tangibles” component is compared between traditional airlines and low-cost airlines, finding the former to be higher. In summary, traditional airlines have a significant advantage over low-cost airlines in terms of the mean factor score of the “macroscopic tangibles” component. Likewise, **Table 5** also reveals that traditional airlines have a significant advantage over low-cost airlines in terms of the mean factor scores of the “subtle tangibles”, “reliability”, “responsiveness” and “on-the-spot empathy” components. On the contrary, as for the mean factor scores of the “microscopic tangibles”, “assurance” and “subsequent empathy” components, **Table 5** indicates that the corresponding p-values are all greater than the significance level of 0.05, surprisingly implying that neither traditional airlines nor low-cost airlines are significantly superior in these three aspects. One can conjecture that the first two of these three components may really involve some almost unnoticeable measures (see **Table 1**), so passengers may not be able to discern whether traditional airlines outperforms low-cost airlines in such aspects or vice versa. For the last component, probably the two categories of airline really do not differ much.





Table 5: Independent Sample t Test: each Component in Table 4

Component (See Table 4)	Mean Factor Score		p-value (two-tailed)
	Traditional Airlines	Low-cost Airlines	
Macroscopic tangibles	0.1014	-0.1153	0.030*
Microscopic tangibles	0.0567	-0.0645	0.215
Subtle tangibles	0.1906	-0.2167	0.000**
Reliability	0.1690	-0.1793	0.000**
Responsiveness	0.1520	-0.1687	0.000**
Assurance	0.0052	-0.0057	0.904
On-the-spot empathy	0.1827	-0.1939	0.000**
Subsequent empathy	0.0405	-0.0430	0.402

* p-value < significance level of 0.05

** p-value < significance level of 0.01

Table 6 is about the results from another independent sample t test, which determines whether the mean passenger ratings in response to the questions about the satisfaction with the air-ticket price, willingness to re-patronise and willingness to recommend the related airlines to others do not differ between traditional airlines and low-cost airlines. **Table 6** shows that low-cost airlines have a significant advantage over traditional airlines in terms of the mean passenger ratings for air-ticket price satisfaction and willingness to recommend. However, also from **Table 6**, neither traditional airlines nor low-cost airlines are significantly superior in the mean passenger rating for the willingness to re-patronise.

Table 6: Independent Sample t Test: Air-ticket Price Satisfaction, Willingness to Re-Patronise and Willingness to Recommend (n = 508)

Questionnaire Question	Mean Rating		p-value (two-tailed)
	Traditional Airlines	Low-cost Airlines	
Air-ticket price satisfaction	3.54	3.75	0.002**
Willingness to re-patronise	3.75	3.79	0.554
Willingness to recommend the related airlines to others	3.61	3.77	0.02*

* p-value < significance level of 0.05

** p-value < significance level of 0.01





Conclusion

According to the data analysis and findings of this research, two facts pertaining to the competitive advantages of traditional and low-cost airlines are established.

First, although service quality usually goes with the price, this relationship is not always absolutely true. Traditional airlines have a significant advantage over low-cost airlines in terms of the mean factor scores of most components relating to service quality, namely, the “macroscopic tangibles”, “subtle tangibles”, “reliability”, “responsiveness” and “on-the-spot empathy” components. However, surprisingly, for the mean factor scores of the “microscopic tangibles”, “assurance” and “subsequent empathy” components, neither of the two categories of airline has significant advantage.

Second, the low-cost strategy has its own market in the airline industry. In fact, low-cost airlines have a significant advantage over traditional airlines in terms of the mean passenger ratings for not only air-ticket price satisfaction but also willingness to recommend the related airlines to others. Most likely, this is ascribable to the former’s low-cost strategy, which in turn engenders their low air-ticket prices. If low-cost airlines are to catch up with traditional airlines in service quality, the former can focus on service quality components, for which the latter is proved in this research to have advantage. In fact, such components involve underlying measures like comfort and cleanliness of the cabin, the uniforms of the cabin crew, neatness of the cabin crew’s appearance, the timing of meals, the timing of duty-free product sales, the timing of announcements, the volume of the cabin crew’s voices and attentiveness of the cabin crew in listening to passengers (see **Table 1** and Section 3.3), which can be improved at minimal cost. Hence, these are the areas of improvement to which low-cost airlines should accord priority. Conversely, if traditional airlines intend to rival low-cost airlines’ price advantage, the former may need to design some creative air-ticket discounts or packages and some customer relation management strategies (e.g. new frequent flyer mileage conversions).

In addition, subject to further research, such findings and suggestions of this case study may very likely be generalised to traditional and low-cost airlines serving other similar airports worldwide.





Discussion

This chapter cannot conclude without mentioning the research's limitation. First, the research's questionnaire survey was conducted from March to May 2008, the sampling being unable to cover a full year. Fortunately, airline service quality is not conceived of as being seasonal, so this limitation is not of much influence. Second, although the Macao International Airport runs theoretically round the clock, the survey was conducted predominately from 7:00a.m. to around 8:00p.m. in order to minimise cost. Again it is fortunate that airline service quality is not believed to be very sensitive to the time of the day. Lastly, circumscribed by the languages and dialects that the researchers can master, the survey could not take into account passengers who could not speak English, Putonghua (i.e. official Chinese) and Cantonese (the Chinese dialect popularly spoken in Southern China, including Macao and Hong Kong) and read English and Chinese.

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12

The Role of the Customer as a Quasi-Employee in Service Organisations: Research Agenda

Jennifer Lawlor



Introduction

The travel, tourism and hospitality sectors are increasingly encouraging customers to act as quasi-employees by inviting and/or requiring them to adopt a range of technology-enabled services or self-service technologies (SSTs), i.e. 'technological interfaces that enable customers to produce a service independent of direct service employee involvement' (Meuter, Ostrom, Roundtree & Bitner, 2000, p.50). Specific examples in these sectors include self-check-in online, 'bag and tag' facilities at airports, and electronic kiosks for accommodation booking purposes. Inherent in the use of SSTs is the requirement for the consumer to learn about and develop familiarity with such technology. It is evident that the phenomenon of SSTs and the resulting increased participation by the customer within service environments, is presenting practitioners within the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors with significant benefits but also, several challenges. For example, the consumer's predisposition to utilise SSTs may be grounded in demographic characteristics, e.g. age, education level. Furthermore, technology anxiety may present itself and pose as an inhibitor to a consumer's use of SSTs. Elsewhere, the decision-making/purchasing situation may not always lend itself to SSTs. For example, the relatively stressful and security-driven nature of journeying through an airport may offer a different environment for SSTs versus the requirement to save time and avoid queues in a supermarket.

Given the relative infancy of SSTs, a number of research gaps and opportunities present themselves. This conceptual chapter will therefore present a research agenda in terms of identifying these research gaps and opportunities pertaining to the role of the customer who invariably becomes a quasi-employee in service organisations.

Literature Review

It has been widely recognised that the services sector has been, and continues to be, a key driver of the Irish economy (Forfás, 2008; Lawlor, 2006). Characterised by their varying intangible nature, services such as travel, tourism and hospitality have in recent years sought to differentiate themselves from the competition, by focusing on aspects such as price competitiveness (e.g. Ryanair), an 'experience' aspect (e.g. Newgrange), an enticing ambience (e.g. Patrick Guilbaud Restaurant) and the suggested presence of friendly, attentive and highly-trained employees (e.g. Ritz Carlton).

In the recent past, service providers have increasingly focused on the role of technology which essentially invites customers to 'work for them' for a small period of time (Dean, 2008; Lawlor, 2006). For example, the banking sector professes to offer tele-banking and internet banking in order to offer a convenient and timesaving alternative to physically visiting a high street location.



More recently, supermarkets such as Tesco have introduced self-service checkouts, whilst in the hospitality sector; an emerging trend is the use of self-check-in facilities in hotel lobbies and at airport terminals. For example, in January 2009, the hotel chain, Premier Inn, introduced their first self-check-in property in Sheffield in the UK, thus reducing their average nine-minute check-in process substantially (Ferguson, 2009). Therefore, from the long-established ATM to the new self-check-in procedures at airports, an emerging trend is that of the customer who is now expected to assume some of the tasks and responsibilities of a traditional employee.

Benefits of SSTs

SSTs offer a number of advantages to both the customer and organisation. From the customer's perspective, SSTs can provide the customer with time and cost savings, convenience, and can often add an element of enjoyment to the service encounter (Zhao, Mattila & Tao, 2008). In a study conducted in 2008 in the airline sector, the two top reasons identified by passengers for booking their flight tickets online were (1) 'the ease of use' and (2) that it 'saved...time' (Karp, 2008, p.64). Furthermore, SSTs offer the customer increased control and customisation over a purchase decision, for example, self-packaging a holiday online or utilising Aer Lingus' new bag-and-tag self-service machines. Customers may also receive a positive psychological feeling in acting as a co-producer of a service (Bitner, Faranda, Hubbert & Zeithaml, 1997). Indeed, customers are taking an element of responsibility for their own satisfaction levels and are thereby partially contributing to the quality of the services they receive (Bitner et al, 1997). The same authors also maintain that where customers contribute to service delivery, they may often blame themselves if a problem arises rather than believing that responsibility for the service delivery breakdown lies with the provider. In all, customers favour the use of SSTs when (1) they help the customer solve a problem, (2) when they work better than interacting with another human being, and (3) when they work satisfactorily (Bitner et al, 2002).

A further interesting dimension to the discussion is the suggestion that some customers prefer the removal of the human interface from service encounters. For example, Cunningham, Young and Gerlach (2009, p.11) suggest that some customers favour the reduction in anxiety that can be perceived to occur when dealing with 'judgmental service representatives.'

The role of the customer as a partial employee is a significant trend for the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors and one that has enormous potential to be exploited. From the service provider's perspective, the benefits are numerous. Cermak and File (1994) argue that the service provider benefits from enhanced provider economies and improved backward information flow. Hsieh, Yen and Chin (2004) also assert that the use of SSTs can result in increased organisational productivity, higher efficiency and enhanced service performance.



For example, in May 2009, Ryanair announced their decision to withdraw all physical check-in desks at airports and require all their passengers to check-in online and be able to generate a pre-printed boarding pass for presentation at their chosen airport. Ryanair has defended this decision by highlighting that this will enable them to reduce their check-in fee from €10 to €5 per person per flight, with the exception of promotional fares, and it will also result in passengers being able to avoid check-in queues (Carey, 2009). Furthermore if passengers are unable to produce a pre-printed boarding card, they will incur a €40 penalty charge in order for Ryanair to re-issue a replacement boarding pass (Cullen, 2009). Hsieh et al (2004) also indicate that increased customer participation may lead to repurchase and word-of-mouth communications. All of the above can therefore combine to offer the organisation a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). However, Curran and Meuter (2005) sound a note of caution by highlighting that the introduction of SSTs can constitute a significant drain on revenue streams if there is a lack of customer adoption of such facilities. This observation therefore draws attention to the limitations of SSTs.

Limitations of SSTs

Whilst the literature places substantial emphasis on benefits to customers and organisations, there is somewhat less discussion given to the negative issues associated with using SSTs. For example, some customers may have a fear of technology whilst others simply do not like using technology-based systems (Lin & Hsieh, 2006). More specifically, Bitner et al (2002) highlight a number of occasions when customer resistance to SSTs may manifest itself. Firstly, customers have been found to dislike SSTs when they fail to work properly, for example, websites crashing or customer identity numbers/personal details failing to work. Another problem arises when the SSTs are not user-friendly, in terms of being easy to understand and operate. For example, in May 2009, Ryanair was identified as having the worst website in the budget airline sector by Webcredible, an online usability monitor which rates low cost airline websites in terms of ease of booking flights and the extent to which all fees are apparent (Irish Independent Weekend, May 16th 2009). A further issue is when customers themselves do not follow the procedures, an example being losing a password (Bitner et al, 2002). Indeed a customer may not have ready access to online facilities. For example, Dermot Jewell, Chief Executive Officer of The Consumers Association of Ireland, in responding to Ryanair's decision to remove all check-in desks from airports, suggested that there was a large proportion of the population who did not have access to online and printing facilities (Carey, 2009). However, Ryanair have stated that moving all check-in operations online will not negatively influence their passengers or indeed those who are not computer-literate, as more than 99% of bookings are made online (Cullen, 2009).





The literature also draws attention to a further issue, namely some customers' perceptions that use of SSTs may lead to service failure mistakes (Forbes, 2008). For example, whilst customers may be happy with withdrawing money from an ATM, they may be less predisposed to depositing money there because of the perceived potential for an error to occur.

Indeed a technically proficient customer may simply not wish to use SSTs but no alternative may be available. For example, Erik Weller, Chief Operating Officer of Hotel Concepts gives the example whereby many room service staff are precluded from taking cash and instead presents the customer with a room service docket indicating the charge to their final hotel bill (Freed, 2008). However, the customer may actually prefer to settle the bill and pay in cash there and then, but this facility is frequently unavailable.

A further example is Omni Hotels who are currently testing an SST, whereby hotel customers can order room service from their in-room television or through a laptop. But the aforementioned Erik Weller from Hotel Concepts questions whether such a self-service option will actually become a key trend and queries whether guests will trust these SSTs if they do not communicate with a human being (Freed, 2008).

Having addressed the benefits and perceived limitations regarding the role of SSTs in service delivery, the following section addresses the gaps present within the literature regarding increased customer participation in service environments.

Gaps in Literature

The extant services management literature recognises that further research needs to be undertaken in broadening our understanding of the contributions that customers may make within a service environment (Graf, 2007; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Hsieh, Yen & Chin, 2004). Halbesleben & Buckley (2004) recognise that there is a scarcity of literature pertaining to customer participation from a human resources viewpoint. Furthermore, Graf (2007) questions the roles that customers are willing and capable of undertaking in organisations. An under-researched issue relates to the perceived benefits and rewards of customer participation for the customer. In this respect, Graf (2007) highlights a research gap as being 'what's in it for me?' The time and labour saving benefits of customer self-service are well documented, but the extent to which customers feel that it is worthwhile has been substantially less considered. Bowers and Martin (2007) opine that it is remarkable that more organisations have not recognised or discovered the importance of the role of a customer as an employee. Halbesleben and Buckley (2004) highlight a complex issue and gap in the literature with regard to the role of technology, namely, the extent to which customers are replacing employees or alternatively whether technologies are replacing employees.



The academic literature in this area draws attention to a number of corresponding, under-researched issues arising from the emergence of the 'quasi-employee' (for example, Bowers & Martin, 2007; Meuter, Ostrom, Roundtree & Bitner, 2000). For example, do customers wish to assume such a role? Are certain segments of customers more likely to do so? Apart from the apparent time and convenience benefits, what are the perceived benefits or rewards to the customer engaging in self-delivery of services, for example, with respect to reduced prices? What degree of employee involvement is required to facilitate self-delivery, for example, in terms of customers learning how to use self-check-in technology? How does the use of technology and self-service provision impact on the organisation's brand image if the customer is being further removed from the traditional provider-customer interface? How does the service provider facilitate service recovery when an SST fails? These questions give rise to the following research agenda which should be of interest to both academics and practitioners in the services sector.

Research Agenda

Whilst the literature has prioritised the benefits to the service organisation in using SSTs, noticeably less attention has been accorded to an exploration of customers' willingness to use, and their attitudes towards SSTs in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors. On the basis of the literature review, the author presents the following research agenda which could involve:

- an exploration of customers' awareness and attitudes towards this emerging trend whereby they are required to assume many of the tasks and activities traditionally undertaken by the employee, such as self-check-in at airports and self-checkout/express checkout in hotel rooms;
- an exploration of the degree of participation (low, medium and/or high) that may be required of customers in a service environment context;
- an investigation of customers' willingness and tendency to use new, enabling technologies in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors such as touch-screen kiosks, and on-line sourcing of product information/booking, more specifically to examine the customer's ability to operate SSTs and the benefits and risks associated with their use; and any inhibitors or barriers to same (e.g. fear of new technology, preference for interacting directly with service providers);
- an investigation of customers' perceptions of those organisations that encourage them to act as quasi-employees, specifically to assess whether customers perceive that they are being enabled or prevailed upon;
- an examination of customers' propensity to undertake the role of an employee by virtue of their age, gender, technological competence etc.;
- an assessment of whether such an approach constitutes a sustainable competitive advantage for organisations in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors, namely to address whether the benefits offered by SSTs can serve to foster attitudinal loyalty to the organisation or whether consumers will switch from one organisation to another, due to the increasing ubiquity of SSTs and their facility to allow consumers to make speedier price comparisons and to access other organisational information;



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- a consideration of the ability of SSTs to constitute the primary stand-alone customer-organisational interface, i.e. to consider the extent to which interaction with service employees is considered desirable or necessary.

Benefits of Research Agenda

The pursuit of such a research agenda and findings will be of interest at an academic level and also for practitioners within the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors. It is important to engage with, and disseminate contemporary research with a range of service providers as it may enhance their ability to develop and sustain a competitive advantage in the current turbulent and dynamic business environment. Such a research approach would address the extent to which consumers are prepared to embrace such technological enablers, and whether they feel that they are being empowered or indeed forced into using such technologies by the provider. It would also address whether the benefits offered by SSTs can serve to foster attitudinal loyalty to the organisation or whether consumers will switch from one organisation to another, due to the increasing ubiquity of SSTs and their facility to allow consumers to make speedier price comparisons and to access other organisational information. It would also contribute to our understanding of whether such technologies facilitate consumer empowerment, enhanced interactivity and customer relationship development, from both the organisation's and the consumer's perspectives.

Furthermore, it has been suggested in the context of the current economic downturn and consumers' restrained expenditure, that many consumers are expecting enhanced customer service on the part of service providers, in terms of providing helpful and attentive sales assistants (O'Flanagan, 2009). Indeed, it has been reported that consumers are looking to engage with front-line employees for the specific purpose of engaging in price negotiation. A contemporary phenomenon in Ireland is that of the 'recession discount' or 'haggling' where customers are seeking to deal directly with service providers with a view to securing a further discount on prices specified online and in company advertising (Gallagher, 2009). The pursuit of recession discounts has been evident amongst prospective customers of, for example, insurance companies and wedding service providers.





The hospitality industry is currently witnessing the re-emergence of the price-conscious customer who is prepared to engage in an extensive information searching process, which involves consulting a range of hotels and travel agents with a view to comparing the various prices on offer and then negotiating for the best possible deal (Gallagher, 2009). Within this context, it is interesting to consider how SSTs may militate against such interaction between the service provider and the value-seeking customer.

Finally, this research agenda will be of significant interest to service providers in Ireland and further a field, who are au fait with the benefits of customer participation, such as labour saving costs. However, there are emergent and under-researched issues which merit examination, namely, managing customer participation, training customers in self-provision and use of technology, taking action when the service fails, and developing an appropriate remuneration package for customers.

Conclusion

The adoption of self-service technologies by service providers in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors would appear to be contributing to the development of an organisational competitive advantage within a dynamic and rapidly changing business environment. As discussed above, SSTs are still in their infancy, and to that end, this chapter has presented a research agenda in terms of the key research gaps and opportunities presenting themselves within the literature. It is clear that by inviting the customer to undertake an increased participatory role in service design and delivery, SSTs may offer innumerable advantages to both the customer and the service provider.

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13

Human Factors and their Influence on the Irish Online Hospitality Consumer Process



Manus Ward and Mathew Shafaghi





Introduction

The Internet is fast becoming the hospitality purchase and information source for consumers' world wide (Ward & Shafaghi, 2008). The purpose of this chapter is to examine if consumers of Irish hospitality products specifically trips, holidays or breaks have fully accepted and adopted the Internet as their medium of choice and to examine if factors such as price, trust and loyalty have any implications for the Irish Hospitality industry. International literature was gathered and augmented to the limited Irish specific literature in these particular areas. Research was carried out online and offline with Irish hospitality consumers with contrasting research carried out on owner/general managers to access the divergence or convergence of opinions. This chapter concludes discussing the implications of the observed human factors on the Irish online hospitality consumer process.

Acceptance and Adoption of the Internet Medium

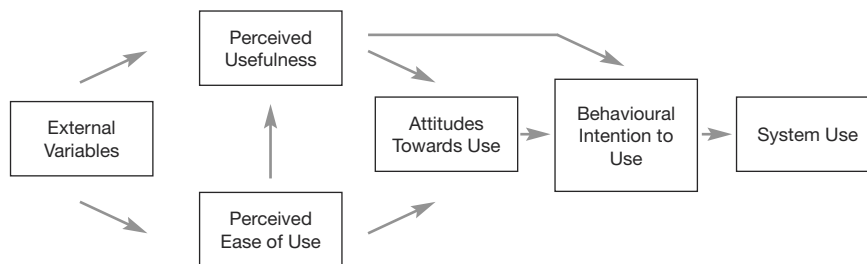
Bonn et al. (1999, p.333) found that "the people who use the Internet to search for information are likely to be people who are (a) college educated owners of computers, (b) less than 45 years of age, (c) stay more often in commercial lodging establishments, and (d) spend more money each day while traveling". This is supported by Heung (2003) who found that Internet travel consumers were highly educated with high incomes. Heung (2003) to an extent is contradicted by Lohse, Bellman and Johnson (2000) who found as early as 2000 the Internet population was already beginning to mirror the general population, at least in the U.S (one of Irish tourism's main markets) thus from a diffusion theory point of view the internet has moved from early adopters (higher income) to being a more early / late majority (normal income) mainstream tool. Given the recent significant reduction in Irish tourism revenue (Fáilte Ireland, 2010) the adaption of Irish hospitality providers' websites to the online search and decision making methodologies of these higher average spending consumers is becoming increasingly importance. Pre-recession Fáilte Ireland research concluded that "In comparing Irish prices with prices in their own country, almost two in three considered Irish prices to be higher, and this view was particularly evident among U.S. (79%) and German (85%) holidaymakers"(Millward Brown IMS, 2006, p.13). The importance of maximum utilisation of the online medium has recently been highlighted as it was noted in our closest neighbour that even in recession, shopping volumes in the UK are continuing with double-digit growth where traditional channels are experiencing zero growth or less (Dennis et al., 2010).





In order to identify these higher income consumers it is important to understand their acceptance and adoption of the Internet medium as a tool to search for or purchase Internet tourism products. The principal theory on which most Internet technology acceptance and adoption is based is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis et al., 1989). The Technology Acceptance Model was used initially to explain computer and spreadsheet technology adoption. This model or variations of the model has been used extensively to explain online channel adoption as Internet tourism is a predominantly technology dependant behavioural process.

Figure 1: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) from (Davis, 1989)



The basis of the TAM is that the perceived usefulness and the perceived ease of use of a technological system lead to the actual use of the system. In the case of the Irish Tourism industry this implies that if the online systems are perceived as being easy to use and useful then higher income tourists will use the Internet to search for or purchase Irish tourism products online. This chapter proposed to see if this is the case, and indeed to see if the 1989 pre-internet research is currently appropriate and if it applies to Irish e-tourism. Research supports this accretion, Moon and Kim (2001) and Teo, Lim and Lai (1999) suggest that TAM is indeed currently appropriate and helps us understand website use. In an attempt to quantify and assess if Irish – tourism consumers have accepted and adopted the medium, research was conducted to access the level of TAM and flow.

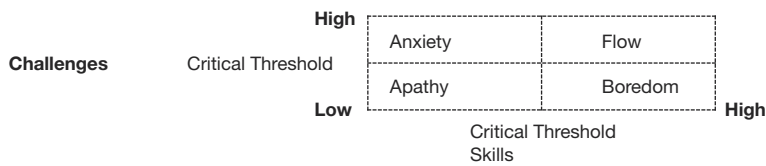
In order to measure the adoption of the medium, an Internet usage standard must be applied. For the purpose of this chapter, Irish e-tourism consumer users were assessed as having adopted and accepted the medium if they have achieved a state of flow. Flow was accessed using criteria taken from **Figure 2**. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) proposed the Flow construct as a state in which the user is in full interaction with the computer technology. Forbes and Rothchild (2000) characterises the flow construct as an internal state that people experience when they fully utilise and extend their capabilities.





Flow is a process that leads to optimal experience. A person in flow experiences a merging of action and awareness, where one maintains control over but loses awareness of the actions of the body. Novak, Hoffman, and Yung (2000) state that when the online challenge can match the skills of the online consumers, flow state will occur. However if the challenges exceed skills or the individual's skills are much superior to challenges, frustration and boredom will occur accordingly (Hahn, 2002).

Figure 2: Flow Diagram Adapted from (Forbes and Rothchild, 2000)



Human Factors

Literature in this section was examined in order to identify if consumers online control factors have any significant impact on the Irish e-tourism industry. Novak, Hoffman and Yung (2000) found that the success of e-commerce relies heavily on the online experience provided by the e-commerce site to the customer. Thus consumers have very tangible controls over Irish tourism businesses transacting using the Internet medium. They have the simple choice of using or not using the Internet medium or deciding who will be the payment recipient. While this may seem insignificant, an intermediary may receive a commission larger than the net profit margin of the business owner. Should the purchase of Irish hospitality products become predominantly intermediated and internet based, the industry may have to significantly increase its prices to cover these intermediation costs despite them currently being considered an overpriced commodity (Millward Brown IMS, 2006). It is therefore essential that we identify and understand the main Irish e-tourism human factors that influence the purchase choice.

Extensive online human factors have been proposed. Jarvenpaa and Todd (1996/1997, pp.61-64) describes four main groups of factors, "Product perceptions, price, quality and variety. Shopping experience, described as a mixture of effort, compatibility and playfulness. Customer service, including responsiveness, assurance, reliability, tangibility and empathy. Customer risk, split into economic, social, performance and personal risks". Lee (1998) found the major factor of using an open technological infrastructure for transactions as uncertainty. Chellappa and Pavlou, (2002) listed risk concerns and Palmer, et al. (2000) found trust-related issues.





Trust

Literature about trust and fraud concerns on the Internet indicate it to be more perceived than real. Forester Research supports this, estimating that fraud on the Internet is about US\$1 per \$1,000, which amounts to 20 times less than the average fraud rate for cellular telephones (Hird, 1997). Ratnasingam, (2001) reinforces Hird (1997) when she stated that trust along with other barriers to electronic commerce acceptance were more perceived than real. A critical issue, which reduces risk, is that if a consumer identifies credit card fraud early, the payment is cancelled and no cost is incurred by the consumer. This may be why Karvonen and Parkkinen (2000) found that trust is different for users having a different amount of usage experience of e-commerce. The Boston Consulting Group (2000) found that 96% holiday online shoppers would purchase gifts online again even though more than half of them experienced a purchase failure in the previous holiday season in 1999. In fact consumers seem to evaluate trust and risk casually on the visual feel of the site. Montoya-Weiss et al. (2000) found that consumer's judge security/privacy based on the professional look and feel of the web site. While the above literature is not specific to Ireland it can be reasonably theorised that consumers are gaining confidence in the Internet medium and indeed are making online purchase decisions.

Loyalty

E-tourist loyalty to the online medium and the choice of search navigational pathway hugely influences the revenue received directly by the Irish Tourism industry. US research indicates that travel intermediaries take between 18% and 30% in commission from all referred e-tourism consumers (Starkov and Price, 2005). A reservation made directly with the suppliers website results in no commission being paid at all and this is obviously the favoured option. Literature indicates loyalty is attained from the consumer in various ways. Flavián and Guinalú, (2006) linked trust and security to loyalty. Yen and Gwinner, (2003), listed perceived control, performance, convenience, efficiency, confidence benefits, special treatment benefits lead to both satisfaction and loyalty, and a proposed model by Yun and Good, (2007) indicated online merchandise, service and shopping atmosphere combined to form the online store image which led to patronage intentions which then ultimately leads to e-loyalty behaviours. Shankar et al, (2003) found that loyalty levels were higher online and that loyal customers are more forgiving and less willing to switch online than when they choose the service online than offline. This loyalty however seems to be contradicted by eVOC Insights (2005, p.1) when they indicated that even "among Expedia and Travelocity "loyalists", 40% are likely to switch to another site to make a purchase".





This loyalty of consumers is essential as Reichheld and Sasser (1990), for instance, found that a 5 percent decrease in customer attrition could translate into a 25 to 85 percent increase in profits and indeed Dierkes and Yen (2004, p.1) found that households with higher incomes are more loyal to “brand specific travel websites for their frequent travel programs”. Research also indicates consumers are loyalty driven ahead of convenience. Bogdanovych et al. (2006, p.1) found “43% book their trips from the same travel agent, while only 29% would go to the closest one and that 38% of respondents believe that their loyalty is not rewarded while 33% believe it is”.

Price

The hospitality industry globally operates a price differentiation policy. Single direct reservations (generally non price sensitive) pay “rack rate” and groups pay a lower rate (Ward & Shafaghi, 2008). The high margin on the single direct reservation makes up for the profit neutral groups. Research by the Horwath Worldwide Hotel Industry Studies, indicate that direct reservations fell from approximately 39% in 1995 to just 34% in 2002, with the corresponding growth being focused exclusively in electronically channels (Scaglione et al., 2009). The single direct consumer is still paying a higher rate but is paying it to an intermediary who then pays the hotel a group rate. This commission paid is called leakage and its cost while recorded in the US is not by the Irish tourism industry and is increasing at an unknown rate. Any concerns felt by the Irish tourism industry are of little concern to the consumer who is orientated by other issues such as the price they have to pay. Consumers in many cases are not even aware that the reservation has been booked through a commission-charging intermediary. “94% of users expect competitive prices from online travel agencies, followed by ease of use (86%), and good customer service (82%)” (eVOC Insights, 2005, p.5). Research by Goldman Sachs in the US in 2006 shows that 61 per cent of the consumers interviewed mentioned price as the key consideration when choosing a travel website, with other factors such as trust, ease of use and convenience mentioned by only around 15 percent (Preston & Trunkfield, 2006). They also found that a substantial numbers of travelers shopping for hotels and car rentals are also willing to switch if they find a lower price, thus intimating the above mentioned loyalty is less important than price. Many consumers are aware of the lower distribution costs associated with Web channels, (Nua, 1998). “Customers now understand that suppliers are cutting costs through this channel and expect savings to be passed onto them, as well as being rewarded for making the booking themselves” (Muqbil, 1998, p.1). The Joint Hospitality Industry Congress (2000) found that there is a real expectation among consumers that Internet prices will be lower than those in the “bricks and mortar” world. “Almost six out of ten leisure travellers now actively seek the lowest possible price” for travel services” and “fully eight out of every ten say they attempt to negotiate the best rates on hotel accommodations” (Yesawich, Pepperdine & Brown 2000, p.1).





Forrester Research (2001) found that 66% of all buyers used an online discount in the past 12 months to buy travel online. While the vast majority of research seems to indicate price as the main factor interesting points were noted. BTC (2003) found that a segment that fly business class and are not at all price sensitive since their company is paying for these travel costs and yet spend in their spare time, hours on the Internet trying to find the cheapest flight for their vacation trip.

Methods

In order to answer the research questions this chapter posed, three specific target populations were identified; offline Irish e-tourism consumers, online Irish e-tourism consumers and controlling stakeholders in the Irish e-tourism industry. It was decided the sample frame of Irish e-tourism consumers would be selected proportionately by nationality with the number of respondents questioned within each nationality based on the individual nationality's contribution to the total 2006 Irish national tourism revenue. A total of 504 respondents were targeted during the research. 304 offline Irish e-tourism consumers (one consumer for every €20m in annual tourism revenue), 100 online Irish e-tourism consumers and 100 controlling stakeholders of the Irish e-tourism industry. General managers / proprietors were selected as the controlling stakeholders of the Irish e-tourism industry and were selected randomly from their respective market segment in proportion to Irish national tourism revenue. The base statistics used were taken from government tourism figures (Fáilte Ireland, 2007). Three distinctive research processes were used for the different target populations. In Sept 2008 offline Irish e-tourism consumers who had just completed their Irish holidays, trips or breaks were questioned by the author in the departures area of Cork International Airport targeting their pre-determined offline tourism decisions and their acceptance and adoption of the Internet medium. Irish e-tourism consumers were separately observed by the author online monitoring their search decisions and control of the e-tourism process. Online consumers were asked to search and purchase holidays, trips or breaks of their choice. Their navigational pathways were recorded with specific predetermined questions asked about their page choices following the conclusion of the navigational process. Irish e-tourism industry stakeholders were interviewed by phone to assess their understanding of their own control factors and the financial implications for the Irish tourism industry. The questionnaires and interviews were pilot tested on a small number of respondents. All research was carried out completely by the author and all questions were fully answered or the questionnaire was discarded.





Results

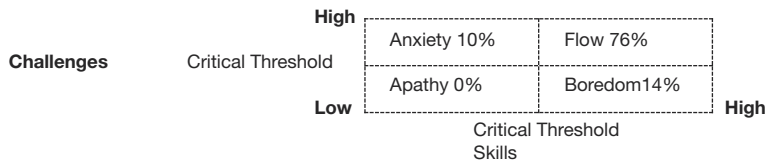
Technology Acceptance

The vast majority of researchers of Irish tourism products who search online were found to be frequent users of the Internet. The vast majority of respondents (74%) used the internet every day. 7% used it five times a week, 5% use it two to three times a week, 4% use it once a week, 3% use it twice a month and 7% use it once a month or less. This indicated that the internet is very accepted as a technology of Irish hospitality consumers. The researchers of Irish tourism products when questioned on the key constructs of the Technology Acceptance Model, i.e. "Ease of Use" and "Perceived Usefulness" were found to have almost fully accepted the Internet technology. The vast majority 99% found the internet to be both easy to use and perceived it to be useful.

Flow

Whilst not as definitive as the Technology Acceptance Model, the vast majority of researchers of Irish tourism products were found to be experiencing Flow whilst using the Internet.

Figure 3: Flow



Consumer Factors (Price/Trust/Loyalty)

Consumers demonstrated in **Table 1** that they are largely convenience driven stating that 97% would pay the price of the Irish hospitality product they found if paying their own money. 91% indicated they trusted the website they found. Some of the 13% who said they would not completely book their holiday, trip or break online indicated they would ring the phone number on the website thus purchasing online through the Internet but using a different medium. An indication of the convenience requirement of consumers was where despite 97% being happy to pay the price on screen 98% indicated they would change loyalty if they found a lower price elsewhere. 97% demonstrated that their selection of Ireland as their destination was fixed and they would have changed website rather than change Ireland as their selected destination.





Table 1: Irish e-Tourism Consumer Human Factors (Price/Trust/Loyalty)

	Yes	No
Were you paying your own money for the holiday, trip or break that you found today, would you think the price was acceptable?	97%	3%
Would you trust this site enough to purchase online or book by ringing the number online?	91%	9%
Would you stay loyal to this or another site if you thought you could get exactly the same holiday, trip or break cheaper elsewhere?	2%	98%
In relation to the holiday, trip or break that you found today would you normally book it completely online (Yes) or book or pay for it in some other way (No)?	87%	13%
If there were no Irish holidays/trips or accommodation on the particular web site or sites that you are loyal to, would you look for a holiday in a different country?	3%	97%

Industry Factors (Price)

In **Table 2** hoteliers believed that their rooms were either the same price (66%) or cheaper on their own sites (33%), only 1% believed an intermediary was cheaper (the hotelier could name the online intermediary). Diligent searching found that a cheaper room price could be found (sometimes only 1% cheaper) could be found 70% of the time with 25% being the same price and in only 3% of cases the hotel's website was cheaper.

Table 2: Irish e-Tourism Prices (Researched from Owner/General Manager)

I searched the Internet looking for a web site that offered your hotel at a cheaper room rate than that offered by your hotel. Did I find?

	Direct cheaper	Intermediary cheaper	Both the same
Industry Estimate	33%	1%	66%
Actual Found	3%	70%	5%

Hoteliers were similarly unknowledgeable when it came to the commissions they were paying to intermediaries. Some estimated extreme rates as high as 35% but anybody stating more than 20% admitted they were not exactly sure of the rate they were paying. 15% admitted they didn't know what commission rate they were being charged by the intermediaries.





Discussion, Implications

Irish literature specific to this chapter was largely unavailable and consequently international literature, mostly American in origin, was used as a foundation for the research. The research concluded that the vast majority of Irish e-tourists have accepted and adopted the Internet in accordance with the main established theories, Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) and Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Irish Online Hospitality purchasers and information searchers use the medium mostly every day and find the medium easy to use and useful and find the Internet matches their skills and is challenging enough to maintain their interest in using the medium. The most significant issues, which relate to the Irish hospitality industry, were that consumers found the prices they found online acceptable but the vast majority indicated they would purchase from a different source if they found a lower price in a different location. Cost had been stated to be a major concern of consumers (Preston & Trunkfield, 2006), they however largely selected the accommodation they located easily. Very little price comparison was observed. Multiple searches by consumers prior to the selection of the tourism products were mostly because of systems failures or the websites found not hosting a booking system. The vast majority similarly were happy with the first price they found indicating that convenience significantly outweighs price and that consumers' loyalties are not established or predetermined in the main. As 58% of Irish tourists (Fáilte Ireland, 2008) are first time visitors, they have a very limited knowledge of Ireland and search extensively using search engines. The research indicates they are comfortable with the medium and use it to decide and book their Irish holiday. The convenience driven online search process indicated that they are choosing the first acceptable site they find and it was noted that the respondents were largely choosing commission-charging intermediaries exclusively because the intermediaries were more conveniently in their navigational pathway than Irish hospitality providers.

Conclusion

The research conducted indicates that online Irish hospitality consumers have accepted the online medium and the results across a range of human factors such as trust, loyalty and price indicate conformity with other consumers noted in the international literature examined. The main differential noted by the author was the significant lack of Irish specific research and the lack of awareness of the influence on their revenue of online hospitality consumers by hospitality industry stakeholders. This area merits significant research in the future and could be highly beneficial to hospitality industry stakeholders through the significant cost savings that could be achieved from disintermediation in these highly challenging times.





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14

**Unravelling the Complexities of
Inter-Organisational
Relationships within the
Sports Tourism Policy Arena
on the Island of Ireland**



Adrian Devine, Stephen Boyd and Emily Boyle





Introduction

In most industrial sectors it has become commonplace for organisations to collaborate in order to achieve the goals they have established for themselves. With the accelerating pace of technological innovation and the ever hastening trend towards globalisation, traditional adversarial relationships among business organisations are increasingly being swept away and replaced by enduring collaborative arrangements (Crotts et al., 2000). This trend is particularly evident in the tourism industry (Telfer, 2000).

Go and Appelman (2001) note how the number and variety of inter-organisational collaborative relationships and networks have grown significantly over the past two decades. According to Fyall and Garrod (2005), those interested in the management and marketing of the tourism industry misunderstand the dynamics of collaboration at their peril. They discuss how collaboration, in its many forms, is not only integral to the management of tourism but is arguably the single most important aspect of management in determining the success, or indeed the failure, of niche markets.

This statement is particularly relevant to sports tourism where the dynamic sport tourism interface offers much scope for collaboration (Higham & Hall, 2003). Standeven and De Knop (1999) discuss how a coherent policy for sports tourism can only be developed through collaboration and coordination. According to Weed (2007), however, there has been little evidence of any sustained strategic collaboration within this policy area.

The aim of this research was to examine the factors which have helped to shape the relationships between public agencies involved in sports tourism. Fifty four in-depth interviews were conducted with public officials in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and the findings are presented in this chapter. The first part of the chapter introduces the reader to the literature on collaboration and collaborative effectiveness. The second part focuses on sports tourism and outlines the area of study. The final section discusses the findings and culminates with the theory of 'Collaborative Advantage in Relation to Sports Tourism'.

Collaboration Defined

Collaboration does not present itself in the literature as a single, tightly defined concept but as a series of concepts that are apparently distinct from one another (Parker, 2000). Bramwell and Lane (2000) discuss a variety of terms used to describe different collaborative arrangements in tourism including coalitions, forums, alliances, task forces and public-private partnerships. There is also a tendency for certain terms to be used in certain contexts. Airlines, for example, are said to form alliances, hotels join together in consortia and when public sector organisations are involved, the term partnership is often preferred (Bailey, 1995).





In an attempt to organise the wide range of terminology that presently exists across the collaborative literature Spyriadis (2002) produced a compilation of terms to describe the positive and negative relationships among organisations. This builds on Himmelman's (1996) work who devised a continuum of definitions that starts with networking, includes coordination and cooperation and finishes with collaboration. According to Fyall and Garrod (2005), however, making such fine distinctions between different forms of collaboration only compounds the problems of understanding rather than solving them. They recommend using the term collaboration as a catch-all term. This view is shared by Selin (1993) who states that whether one refers to such initiatives as tourism partnerships, tourism coalitions or co-operative tourism marketing alliance, collaboration signifies the common ground between them all.

A variety of forces are providing powerful incentives for sport and tourism interests to collaborate. Greer (2002), for instance, discusses how rapid economic and technological change, global interdependence and blurred boundaries between government, industry and the voluntary sector have spawned a diverse array of collaborative responses in order to gain access to new technologies or spread the cost of marketing innovation over several parties. To this list Bramwell and Lane (2000) add the growing awareness that a collaborative approach is required in order to build effective responses to the challenges of sustainable development. Another important driver of public-private sector collaboration is funding. Long (1997), for example, refers to the increasing significance of European Union funding programmes which commonly require a partnership approach.

Oliver (1990) identifies six reasons why an organisation may enter a collaborative arrangement:- necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability and legitimacy. Although each determinant is a separate and sufficient cause of relationship formation, they may interact or occur concurrently. Some of these contingencies can also be linked to the theories of collaboration as discussed by Mohr and Spekman (1994), Long (1997), Barringer and Harrison (2000) and Fyall and Garrod (2005).

According to Murphy and Murphy (2004, p.361) 'taking a collaborative approach to tourism management strengthens the abilities of diverse people to work together and to create something greater than they can produce on their own'. This builds on what Camagni (1993) refers to as 'negotiated convergence' and 'experimentation' in which collaborative linkages allow organisations to learn from each other, generate new radical ideas and adopt compatible strategies. Collaboration can also lead to networking opportunities such as economies of scale, access to professional marketing, the development of technology and distribution networks, educational and training support and pooled financial resources (Augustyn and Knowles, 2000).





Although there are many advantages associated with collaboration, Mohr and Spekman (1994) would argue that the prescriptions for the formation of such relationships often overlook the drawbacks and hazards. Provan (1984), for instance, highlights the increasing complexity, loss of autonomy and information asymmetry which results from entering a collaborative relationship. Murphy and Murphy (2004) also stress that collaborative decision-making is not appropriate for all situations. In the case of a national emergency, such as a terrorist attack or a natural disaster, they feel that highly controlled and centralised measures may be more suitable.

Collaborative Effectiveness

The basic theme of the majority of the articles on inter-organisational relationships relates to collaborative effectiveness. Combining resources, sharing knowledge, increasing speed to market and gaining access to foreign markets are just some of the reasons why organisations are eager to enter collaborative arrangements (Doz & Hanmel, 1998; Barringer & Harrison, 2000). Yet, many empirical studies have reported spectacularly high failure rates of collaborative initiatives (Fyall & Garrod, 2005).

Mohr and Spekman (1994) found the following variables significant in predicting the success of collaborative arrangements: commitment, coordination, interdependence, communication quality, information sharing, participation, joint problem solving and avoiding the use of smoothing over problems or severe resolution tactics. According to the OECD (1997) the primary conditions necessary for the formation and success of a partnership are recognition of a shared problem and an opportunity for each of the partners to benefit from its resolution, motivation and commitment.

Fyall (2003) summarises the main determinants of collaborative effectiveness as follows: involvement of stakeholders; good interpersonal relationships and the development of trust between participants; inclusive management style and organisational culture; domain similarity and goal compatibility among participants; duration and nature of previous relationships among participants; effective contractual conditions and exit barriers; an equity share agreement; balance of management resources and power; well-planned project; carefully chosen partners; balanced structure; high potential payoff relative to cost; decisive leadership; sound administrative support; transparent implementation of policy.





According to Kanter (1994) like the best marriages the best organisational relationships, are true partnerships that tend to meet certain criteria. She identifies the 'eight I's' that create successful 'we's':

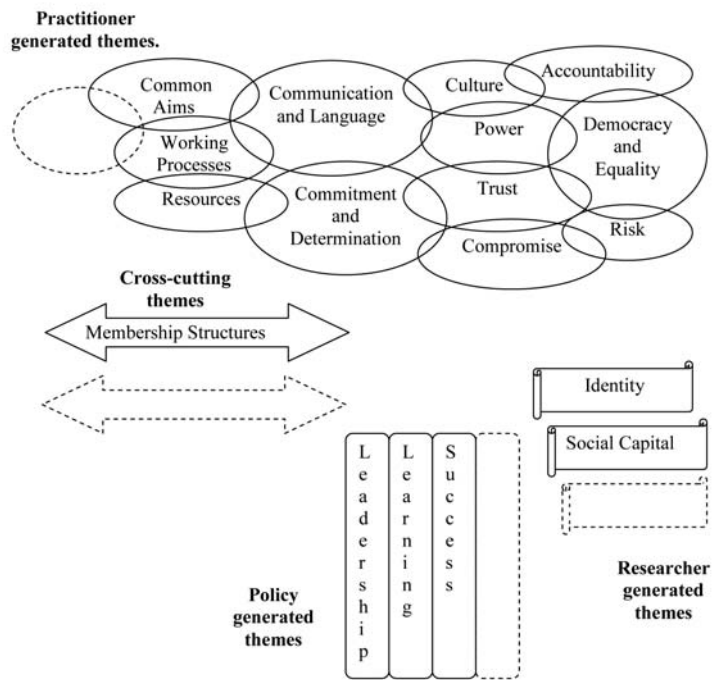
- Individual excellence – both partners are strong and have something of value to contribute to the relationship.
- Importance – the relationship fits major strategic objectives of the partners so that they want to make it work.
- Interdependence – the partners need each other. They have complementary assets and skills. Partners have long-term goals in which the relationship plays a key role.
- Investment – the partners invest in each other (for example, through equity swaps, cross-ownership or mutual board service) to demonstrate their respective stakes in the relationship with each other.
- Information – communication is reasonably open and partners share the information required to make the relationship work.
- Integration – the partners develop linkages and shared ways of operating so that they can work together smoothly.
- Institutionalisation – the relationship is given a formal status with clear responsibilities and decision processes.
- Integrity – the partners behave towards each other in honourable ways that justify and enhance mutual trust. They do not abuse the information they gain, nor do they undermine each other.

In an attempt to summarise the main determinants of collaborative effectiveness, Huxham and Vangen (2005), two of the most prolific writers in this area, have produced the Theory of Collaborative Advantage. In their analysis of collaborative arrangements they introduce the terms 'collaborative advantage' and 'collaborative inertia'. Huxham and Vangen (2005) define collaborative advantage as 'when something unusually creative is produced – perhaps an objective is met – which no organisation could have produced on its own and when each organisation, through the collaboration, is able to achieve its own objectives better than it could alone'. The second concept, collaborative inertia, captures what they found happens very frequently in practice – 'the output from a collaborative arrangement is negligible, the rate of output is extremely slow, or stories of pain and hard grind are integral to successes achieved' (P.23)



If collaborative advantage is the goal for those who initiate collaborative arrangements then why is collaborative inertia so often the outcome? To answer this question Huxham and Vangen (2005) developed the 'Theory of Collaborative Advantage'. This is a theme based approach derived from issues repeatedly raised by practitioners as causing them either pain or reward in collaborative situations. A summary of the themes identified by Huxham and Vangen (2005) following fifteen years of action-research is presented in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: The Theory of Collaborative Advantage



Source: Huxham and Vangen, 2005, p. 38



The strength of Huxham and Vangen (2005) theory is that although it is based on their own research it encapsulates many of the factors put forward by the other authors to explain collaborative effectiveness (Wood & Gray, 1991; Waddock & Bannister, 1991; Kanter, 1994; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Child & Faulkner, 1998; Palmer, 1998; Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Augustyn & Knowles, 2000; Spyriadis, 2002; Fyall, 2003; Frisby et al., 2004; Lank, 2004; Fyall & Garrod, 2005).

According to Fyall and Garrod (2005) and Lank (2004) the theory of collaborative advantage provides rich theoretical conceptualisations of the issues, contradictions, tensions and dilemmas that are inherent in collaborative situations. Although much of Huxham and Vangen's primary research focused on public-voluntary partnerships the theory is designed in such a way that it is relevant to any market sector – including sports tourism, which is the focus of this study.

Collaboration in Sports Tourism

Collaboration is particularly important in a sports tourism context given the many stakeholders involved. According to Higham (2005), strategic planning for sport tourism lies beyond the capacities and resources of just one of the parent disciplines; sport and tourism. However, despite a few examples of good practice such as the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance (Canada), the National Association of Sport Commissions (USA) and the Sports Tropical North Queensland Custer Group (Australia), collaboration between the public sector agencies involved in sports tourism are limited. In fact, many of the collaborative arrangements that do exist are not only driven by the private sector but evolve around one-off events and therefore tend to be ad hoc and short-term.

To reach its full potential sports tourism needs the public sector to provide strategic direction but unfortunately there are few examples of long-term joined-up thinking between the two parent disciplines – sport and tourism (Hinch & Higham, 2004). Glyptis's review of sport and tourism in five West European countries (France, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and West Germany) in the early 1980's concluded that there was a linkage between sport and tourism in the minds of participants, commercial providers and Local Authorities but that a linkage scarcely existed among policy makers and administrators (Glyptis, 1982). Almost ten years later Glyptis (1991) examined the administrative infrastructure of sport and tourism in seven European countries (Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) but once again found the lack of inter-organisational collaboration to be a problem.



In 1997 Weed and Bull's review of regional policy in England showed that many policy initiatives related to sports tourism were implemented unilaterally by agencies from the sport or tourism sector. They concluded that 'while there is an increasing level of sport-tourism activity this has not been matched by an increase in liaison amongst the agencies responsible for sport and tourism policy' (Weed & Bull, 1997, p.146).

Although this comment was based on one case study in England it does appear that similar situations exist in many of the other countries that have targeted sports tourism. South Africa, for instance, identified sports tourism as a key component of its tourism strategy in the post-apartheid era yet both Swart (1998) and Gibson (1999) discuss the lack of planning, coordination and financial investment that has taken place to assist its development. Swart (1998, p.41) refers to the lack of communication and collaboration between sport and tourism agencies as 'a barrier South Africa must overcome'.

During the 1990's there was also growing awareness of the potential benefits of sports tourism for communities in the United States. Unfortunately, this awareness was not accompanied by an integrated policy or even by cooperation among agencies involved in sport and tourism (Gibson, 1999, 2007). Given the sheer size of the country and the complexity of the federal system, it could be argued that this lack of collaboration may be excused. Yet Weed (2005) in his study of sports tourism policy in Malta found that, despite the small-scale nature of the administration, sports officials in the Government did not even know the names of their colleagues in the tourism department.

According to Deery and Jago (2007), Australia's failure to finalise its Draft Sports Tourism Strategy (2000), as a consequence of sport and tourism being allocated to separate government departments, highlights a key problem that has impeded the development of sports tourism not only in Australia but throughout the world. Jago (2003, p.8) commented that 'both sport and tourism can be managed as separate entities but for sport tourism to prosper more coordination and cohesion between the two areas are needed'.

Area of Study

Despite having been recognised as a problem there has been limited research into the reasons why there has been a lack of joined-up thinking in sports tourism policy. Academics such as Glypits (1989, 1991), Swart (1998), Foley and Reid (1998), Standeven and DeKnop (1999), Gibson (2002), Getz (2003), Hinch and Higham (2004), Ritchie and Adair (2004), Gammon (2004) and Deane and Callanan (2004) have acknowledged that collaboration is an issue in sports tourism but it is really only Weed and Bull (1997) who have tried to unravel the complexities of collaboration in this area.



Weed and Bull's (1997) work may have been ground breaking but it has its limitations. They were denied access to the National Sports Council and therefore were forced to confine their study to the relationship between the regional bodies for sport and tourism in England. In addition, although Weed and Bull (1997) do make reference to the 'leisure universe', the role of other public agencies outside the parent disciplines of sport and tourism have not been considered. According to Kerr (2003), tourism planning and policy development, as with all public policy, take place within a framework that is much larger and more complex than any one public sector organisational unit. Therefore, in the case of sports tourism it is important to look beyond sport and tourism agencies and think in terms of what Hall (1994) referred to as the policy arena and include public agencies involved in areas such as events, outdoor recreation and heritage.

This study will therefore build on the work of Weed and Bull (1997). The overall aim is to analyse the factors that affect inter-organisational relationships within the sports tourism policy arena. The study will focus on public agencies involved in sports tourism at local, regional and national level in two countries — Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Although at different stages in their development, the tourism industries in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are going through a transition phase. Northern Ireland is trying to overcome the problems created by its turbulent past while the Republic of Ireland is discovering that it is difficult to maintain the momentum created during the 1990's. Both countries have targeted key niche markets including sports tourism.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate for this comparative study. Using the critical case sampling technique 54 in-depth interviews were conducted over a period of eight months.

Considering that the aim of this study was to analyse collaboration in sports tourism at national, regional and local level it was logical to include key personnel from the National Tourism Organisations in both countries (the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Fáilte Ireland) and the two national Sports Councils.

Earlier in this chapter the author made reference to the term policy arena and discussed how the policy process for sports tourism requires input from public agencies outside of sport and tourism. Gibson (1998) identified three core areas in sports tourism — event, active and nostalgia/heritage. The national agencies directly responsible for these three areas were therefore included in the sample. In Northern Ireland an interview was arranged with the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Events Company.





The Northern Ireland Events Company was established in 1997 and was the first national public agency dedicated to events in Europe. It should be noted that in the Republic of Ireland Fáilte Ireland has a Sports Tourism Unit which sponsors international sports events funded through the Sports Tourism Initiative. This meant that there was no need to arrange an additional interview although an interview was set-up with the Government minister who launched the Sports Tourism Initiative.

Outdoor recreation is an important part of active sports tourism which explains why the Chief Executive of the Countryside Access and Activities Network in Northern Ireland was included in the sample along with the Principal Officer of Comhairle na Tuaithe (the Countryside Council) in the Republic of Ireland. Under the banner of outdoor recreation forests provide a very important resource for the sports tourist and this is why a representative from the Northern Ireland Forest Service and Coillte, the largest public landowner in the Republic of Ireland, were interviewed.

According to Gammon (2004) and Adair (2004) there is a strong link between sports tourism and heritage. Therefore interviews were arranged with the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Museums Council and the Museums Officer for the Irish Heritage Council.

Weed and Bull (2004) argue that the potential for collaboration in sports tourism is greater at the regional/local level. However, due to the size of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, there were no regional bodies for sport, events, outdoor recreation or heritage which meant that the only regional organisations involved in this study were the regional tourism bodies. Three Local Authorities from each country were also part of the sample.

The sample also included the Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland and the Director of Marketing of Waterways Ireland — two 'cross-border' organisations that were set up as part of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Tourism Ireland is responsible for the promotion of the 'Island of Ireland' overseas whilst Waterways Ireland's role is to develop and promote recreation on Ireland's Waterways. The fact that their remit required them to operate in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland meant that they added an extra dimension to the sample in that they were in a position to compare the level of joined-up thinking in the respective countries.





Discussion

Hinch and Higham (2004) urge scholars of sports tourism to move beyond description towards explanation and draw upon research theories, concepts and models from other disciplines. This study has adapted Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage, which was discussed earlier in this chapter (see **Figure 1**), and used it as a framework to compare the factors that have helped shape inter-organisational relationships within the sports tourism policy arena in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

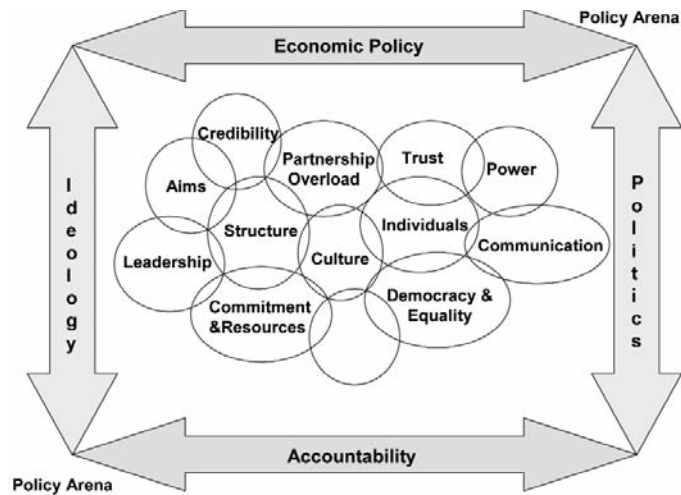
Huxham and Vangen (2005) stress that neither the themes nor the particular labels used in **Figure 1** are fixed or sacrosanct. This flexibility allows the authors to identify themes which are specific to the sports tourism policy arena. Huxham and Vangen (2005), for example, have identified four sources of themes (practitioners, research, policy and cross-cutting) but only two of these are relevant to this study -practitioner and cross cutting. Research generated themes are not applicable here because of the limited extent of research into collaboration in sports tourism. Furthermore, the issues that have been raised in the literature are subsumed in the practitioner generated themes or the crosscutting themes. Given the nature of this topic, and the fact that this study is focused on the public sector and public policy, the policy generated themes are inevitably intertwined with the practitioner generated themes and the crosscutting themes.

A total of twelve practitioner themes were identified from the primary data in this study. However, each theme and the issues and tensions identified within them overlap and are interlinked. There are also four crosscutting themes which, despite not being explicitly raised by the interviewees, have emerged from the thematic analysis as underlying issues that have helped to shape inter-organisational relationships in the sports tourism policy arena. Following the example of Huxham and Vangen (2005) one capsule has deliberately been left empty in the diagram, indicating that neither the themes nor the labels used are inviolable. The Theory of Collaborative Advantage for sports tourism is presented in **Figure 2**.





Figure 2: The Theory of Collaborative Advantage in Relation to Sports Tourism



One advantage of adopting a themed approach is that material can be discussed in manageable chunks, with each theme being considered in isolation from the others while also taking account of issues that overlap between themes. For this discussion the practitioner generated themes have been numbered one to twelve but in real terms there is no set order or sequence.

Theme 1: Common Aims and Mutual Benefits

Oliver (1990) notes that much of the literature on inter-organisational relationships, implicitly or explicitly, assumes that relationship formation is based on reciprocity. The Reciprocity Model is theoretically rooted in Relational Exchange Theory (Emmerson, 1962) which explains how organisations choose to form collaborative relationships because of the mutual advantages to be gained. This is evident in theme one, ‘Common Aims and Mutual Benefits’, which discusses how each organisation has its own aims and objectives in relation to sports tourism with some more aware of the mutual benefits to be gained through inter-organisational collaboration than others. In the Republic of Ireland linking sport with tourism has been an economic policy of the Irish Government since the late 1980s, and this is reflected in both Fáilte Ireland (the National Tourism Organisation) and the Irish Sports Council’s collaborative approach to sports tourism. Fáilte Ireland has targeted sports tourism as one of its key markets and has invested through its Sports Tourism Initiative which targets international sports events.





‘Sport is an excellent hook which you can hang your promotional messages on. Our message for the Ryder Cup (2006), for example, was simple but effective. This is the Irish Ryder Cup — come see Ireland and what it has to offer the golfer’ (Senior Manager, Fáilte Ireland).

A senior manager from the Irish Sports Council also recognises the common aims and mutual benefits that can be gained from working with the National Tourism Organisation, Fáilte Ireland.

‘One of our aims is to develop world class athletes and the international events which Fáilte Ireland sponsor through its Sports Tourism Initiative provide an excellent stepping stone for some of our athletes’ (Senior Manager, Irish Sports Council).

By contrast, in Northern Ireland neither the Northern Ireland Tourist Board nor the Northern Ireland Sports Council place the same emphasis on sports tourism. The Northern Ireland Sports Council’s overriding priority is sports development and although the Northern Ireland Tourist Board identified activity tourism and events as ‘Winning Themes’ in its Strategic Framework for Action 2004-2007 these have been overshadowed by five ‘Signature Projects’.

‘When you are a country as small as Northern Ireland you don’t want to spread the jam too thin. So it’s a case of concentrating on a small number of major projects which will put Northern Ireland on the international tourist map (Senior Manager, Northern Ireland Tourist Board).

Theme 2: Commitment and Resources

For organisations to work in a collaborative arrangement with other stakeholders over a long period of time, they need to bring a high level of commitment to the process (Bucklin and Sengupta, 1993). For Augustyn and Knowles (2000) commitment means resources. Under theme two, ‘Commitment and Resources’, a number of organisations in Northern Ireland complained about the lack of resources and how this had a negative affect on their approach and commitment to cross sector projects such as sports tourism:

‘The Northern Ireland Tourist Board would love to be more involved in sports tourism and to work more closely with organisations such as Waterways Ireland and the Northern Ireland Sports Council but it is very much a resource issue at the moment. We have only one manager and one officer dealing with activity tourism. As a director I have to say what is important and what we can and can’t do’ (Senior Manager, Northern Ireland Tourist Board).





This is in stark contrast to the situation in the Republic of Ireland where a buoyant economy, coupled with the government's interventionist tourism policy, has seen a huge investment in sports tourism which has consequently encouraged collaboration. This is summed up in the following quote by a Principal Officer of Comhairle na Tuaithe (the Countryside Council):

'There is the political will within the department to turn the Countryside Recreation Strategy (2006) into action. The Minister was so impressed with the strategy that within one month of its publication he allocated €12 million to develop walks in the West of the country. Fáilte Ireland will lead this project and will work in conjunction with the Irish Sports Council'.

Theme 3: Trust

Waddock and Bannister (1991) and Bucklin and Sengupta (1993) discuss how trust is a precondition for successful collaboration. Yet, according to Greer (2002), collaborative situations are often characterised by suspicion and mistrust. Theme three, 'Trust', supports both arguments and shows how relationships in the sports tourism policy arena evolve, and in some cases dissolve, because of trust and mistrust. When the Irish Sports Council was set up in 1999, for example, it received a great deal of support from the National Tourism Organisation and this created a strong bond between the two.

'When the Irish Sports Council was being formed the senior personnel within Fáilte Ireland were very helpful and provided us with some much needed advice as we tried to get up and running. This laid the foundations of what is now a healthy relationship with Fáilte Ireland. We respect each other's remit but at the same time recognise the need for collaboration' (Senior Manager, Irish Sports Council).

However, 'historical relationships characterised by long-standing adversarial interactions among parties often create insurmountable obstacles to collaboration' (Gray, 1989, p.249). This was the case with the Countryside Access and Activities Network and the Northern Ireland Forest Service when, despite a verbal agreement, the Forest Service withdrew from a joint project to develop three world class off-road cycling trails in their forests.

'We have made a conscious decision that we will no longer work with the Northern Ireland Forest Service. We invested a great deal of time and energy into the mountain bike project and even secured a £1.8 million grant from the European Union which we eventually had to give back. In the future we will be channelling our energy and resources into projects with partners who are fully committed and who we can trust' (Senior Manager, Countryside Access and Activity Network).





Themes 4 and 5: Culture and Structure (Restructuring)

Themes four (Culture) and five (Structure and Restructuring) discuss how in the public sector an organisation's culture is deep-rooted in the policies, politics and institutional arrangements of the country. This in turn affects the way it approaches collaboration. This study found that the relatively informal and loose institutional structure of public administration in the Republic of Ireland was more conducive to collaboration than the more formal and bureaucratic approach adopted in Northern Ireland. This was summed up in the following quote by a Marketing Executive of Dublin Tourism who, prior to taking up this post in 2004, worked in Northern Ireland for eight years in the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and the Causeway Coast and Glens Regional Tourism Partnership.

'It was a real culture shock when I started work in the Republic of Ireland. In the North the tourism industry is bound up in red tape and everything had to be politically correct whereas down here (the Republic of Ireland) we don't have as much bureaucracy. Therefore we spend more time doing rather than planning to do. I know the heartbreak and time wasted in Northern Ireland on business plans. Each year the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and their consultants would change what they wanted even though the end product was basically the same. You then had to wait forever (almost six months in some instances) to receive any funding which meant you couldn't approach any other organisations with ideas because you were unsure of your budget. Here (Republic of Ireland) we produce an action plan against a budget and get on with it. It may be more ad hoc but you get more done and there are certainly more opportunities to collaborate with other organisations' (Marketing Executive, Dublin Tourism).

In this study the Northern Ireland Tourist Board was also heavily criticised because it was constantly restructuring internally, which, as the following quote suggests, raised doubts over its strategic direction:

'In my opinion the Northern Ireland Tourist Board is disorganised. It is constantly restructuring which suggests there is something wrong internally. It is difficult to have confidence in an organisation that operates in such an unstable environment' (Senior Manager, Countryside Access and Activities Network).





Theme 6: Key Individuals

Theme six identifies key individuals as having a role to play in enabling inter-organisational collaboration. Collaboration is built on a foundation of good working relationships and trust which makes the staff involved in a collaborative venture a critical success factor. For example, Dr James McDaid, the Government Minister responsible for introducing the Sport Tourism Initiative in the Republic of Ireland, admitted that this was not his idea but the brainchild of one of his ministerial advisors.

‘This Senior Civil Servant deserves a special mention because without him the Sports Tourism Initiative would never have got up and running. He worked in the Department of Finance for almost twenty years and during this time he had introduced tax breaks for seaside resorts and was therefore popular with the tourism officials. He was also a keen sportsman and was involved in the setting up of the Irish Sports Council in 1999. He used these contacts along with his financial expertise to convince other officials within the department of the benefits of hosting major international events. (Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, 1997–2002).

It is not just at a national level however that individuals can facilitate collaboration within the sports tourism policy arena. The Events Officer in North Down Borough Council, for example, explained that attitudes towards collaboration have changed there thanks to the appointment of a more outgoing Tourism Manager who organised a number of social events to encourage joined-up thinking between departments.

Huxham and Vangen (2005), however, warn against becoming over-dependent on one person because if this person leaves the trust building cycle is fractured, disturbing the equilibrium and dynamics of the collaboration. This was the case when the Activity Tourism Manager, having spent months consulting and building up rapport with the industry for the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, was transferred just weeks after the Activity Tourism Strategy was launched. At the inaugural meeting of the Activity Tourism Forum the group was told that there was a new Activity Tourism Manager. According to a senior manager of the Countryside Access Activities Network who chaired the meeting the industry representatives found this unprofessional especially as the new Activity Tourism Manager had not even attended the meeting.





Theme 7: Power

Murphy and Murphy (2004, p.350) defined power in a collaborative situation as 'the potential or actual ability to influence others in the desired direction'. Theme seven therefore looked at how individuals and organisations have used and abused their 'Power' to affect the dynamics of inter-organisational relationships in the sports tourism policy arena. In the Republic of Ireland, the Minister for Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was criticised by a number of the interviewees for excluding the Local Authorities from Comhairle na Tuiathe (the Countryside Council) and for abusing his political position to manipulate the political agenda.

Mattessich and Monsey (1992) argue that a collaborative venture can only function efficiently and effectively if power lies with a relatively small team of representatives. Yet, in Northern Ireland inter-organisational relationships have been strained under Direct Rule as public agencies have had to contend with six Direct Rule Ministers from London who, on occasions, have had their own political agendas with the most recent being the decision to build a new national stadium:

'We were consulted. I told them that there was no need for a national stadium and the money would be better spent upgrading the existing facilities around the province. Obviously this was not the answer they wanted to hear and so they never came back' (Senior Manager, Northern Ireland Events Company).

According to Wilson and Boyle (2006, p.30), 'power is in the purse strings in that it is the organisation with the money that controls the inter-organisational relationship'. The following quote would suggest that this was the case in this study with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board being guilty of what Huxham and Vangen (2005) termed as 'collaborative thuggery':

'The Northern Ireland Tourist Board is a core funder of the Countryside Access and Activities Network so the bottom line is that while we fund their work we are in a position to dictate what role they will play in sports tourism' (Senior Manager, Northern Ireland Tourist Board).

Theme 8: Leadership

Theme eight considers the issue of leadership in inter-organisational collaboration contexts. This, according to Connelly (2007, p.1241) "is a topic discussed by very few". Nevertheless from the interviews it became evident that the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism in the Republic of Ireland had provided significant leadership for sports tourism in that jurisdiction by raising its profile as a niche market. This has strengthened the position of Fáilte Ireland and the Irish Sports Council making them more confident and open to collaboration.





This is in contrast to Northern Ireland where, under Direct Rule, the tourism industry has suffered from a lack of leadership resulting in low investment and the absence of clear policy guidelines.

'The Northern Ireland Tourist Board should be the lead agency for tourism but at present we are neither given the power nor the resources and as a result many of the government departments and agencies which have resources for tourism refuse to follow our lead' (Senior Manager, Northern Ireland Tourist Board).

To make matters worse the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has an 'Image' problem with both the Northern Ireland Sports Council and Northern Ireland Events Company:

'I think that closer links with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board would tarnish our reputation given their poor performance and reputation in recent years' (Senior Manager, Northern Ireland Events Company).

Theme 9: Credibility

Credibility (theme 9) can also affect inter-organisational collaboration (Friby et al, 2004). Credibility refers to the 'quality of being trusted or believable' (OED, 2005, p.503). Perceived lack of organisational credibility can discourage other organisations from collaborating with it. This was the case in the Republic of Ireland when the Government Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs excluded the Local Authorities from Comhairle na Tuiathe (the Countryside Council). The animosity this decision created is summed up in the following quote by a senior manager of the Donegal County Council:

'It was a disgrace the way we (the Local Authorities) were overlooked, but typical of the 'we know best' attitude of Central Government'.

Waterways Ireland, a cross-border organisation that was set up as part of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, also faced this problem and spent considerable time and effort building up its credibility with other more established bodies within a policy arena. 'We are the big boys so leave it to us' is how a senior manager of Waterways Ireland described Fáilte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's attitude towards it – this despite not only Waterways Ireland having an annual marketing budget of £1 million but also one quarter of all domestic holidaymakers being engaged in water sports (Fáilte Ireland, 2007).

Lack of credibility can also discourage collaboration on a personal as well as organisational level (Frisby et al, 2004). In Northern Ireland the Tourism Manager in North Down Borough Council experienced this when she took up the post in 2001 but managed to overcome it:





‘We (the Tourism Department) went for every quality award going and our success/publicity has improved the Tourism Department’s credibility within the Council. It showed the other departments that we were able to deliver’ (Tourism Manager, North Down Borough Council).

Theme 10: Democracy and Equality

Theme ten considers the impact of ‘Democracy and Equality’ on inter-organisational relationships. It is not always possible to include representatives from all stakeholder organisations when setting up a collaborative venture. However, the level of democracy in such an arrangement can affect its success (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). The following two quotes, for instance, show how the Countryside Access and Activities Network in Northern Ireland went to great efforts to be as representative as practically possible, whereas the lead Minister for Comhairle na Tuiathe (the Countryside Council) in the Republic of Ireland was willing to sacrifice the principles of democracy for pragmatism.

‘We were determined to be as representative as practically possible but in the end we had to compromise because there are just so many bodies involved in outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland. The larger groups and bodies are represented directly on the Network whilst the others are represented through their membership of liaison groups or other collective groupings associated with the Network (Senior Manager, Countryside Access and Activities Network).

‘In October 2005 an invitation was placed in the national and provincial newspapers and in addition we wrote to groups representing recreational interests, state agencies and relevant government departments seeking their views on the development of countryside recreation. Over two hundred submissions were received and every one of them wanted to be a member but this was not practical so finally the Minister invited twenty organisations to become members of Comhairle na Tuaithe’ (Principal Officer, Comhairle na Tuaithe).

Once the membership of a collaborative network has been decided attention turns to how democratic the processes are within the collaboration. Huxham and Vangen (1996), for example, discuss the need for decisions to emerge from ‘proper democratic discussion’ while Greer (2002) emphasises the importance of consensual decision making. There are, however, examples in this study of ‘collaborative thuggery’ where individuals and organisations play politics and manipulate the agenda. The most blatant example of this was when the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs hand picked the Principal Officer of Comhairle na Tuaithe (the Countryside Council) to ensure that the National Countryside Strategy matched his political agenda.





The Minister also went against the wishes of the majority of members of Comhairle na Tuaithe and refused to set up a national body to coordinate outdoor recreation in the Republic of Ireland.

Another example where 'proper democratic discussion' was sacrificed was when the Northern Ireland Tourist Board refused to attend the monthly meetings of Regional Tourism Partnerships because they were asking too many awkward questions. Instead the Northern Ireland Tourist Board arranged to meet with the Chief Executives of the Regional Tourism Partnerships on a one-to-one basis. According to a senior manager of the Greater Belfast Regional Tourism Partnership;

'The Northern Ireland Tourist Board dictates to the regions rather than consults and we (the regions) have to put up with it because we depend on them for funding'.

This autocratic style of leadership has put a strain on the relationship as the Northern Ireland Tourist Board continues to ignore the problems that are being highlighted by the Regions. This links into theme eleven which emphasises the importance of good 'Communication' and why it is critical to the success of any collaborative venture.

Theme 11: Good Communication

Good communication has a vital role to play in the success of any collaborative arrangement (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Fyall, 2003; Kanter, 1994). Unfortunately for Northern Ireland the formal approach to communication adopted by its public sector officials is not conducive to collaboration. This is summed up in the following quote by a senior manager of the North West Tourism Partnership who criticised the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's insistence that all communication between the Regional Tourism Partnerships and Tourism Ireland should be sanctioned by its central office.

'At present all communication goes through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board which, given the turbulent nature of the tourism industry, is much too formal and bureaucratic' (Senior Manager, North West Tourism Partnership).

The culture in the Republic of Ireland is much more relaxed with a healthy flow of informal communication between the public officials involved in sports tourism. The Manager of the Sports Tourism Unit, for example, noted the constant flow of emails and telephone calls between her organisation (Fáilte Ireland) and the Irish Sports Council.





Theme 12: Partnership Overload

The term used to describe theme twelve is 'Partnership Overload'. This, thanks to its troubled political past is a particular problem in Northern Ireland. Knox and Carmichael (2006) describe public administration in Northern Ireland as 'grossly over-administered' and 'disastrously fragmented'. This is certainly the case in relation to tourism where the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, the four Regional Tourism Partnerships, the twenty six Local Authorities, the Northern Ireland Events Company, the Countryside Access and Activities Network, Waterways Ireland and Tourism Ireland all have a tourism remit. According to a senior manager for Waterways Ireland, this complex mosaic is not conducive to collaboration.

'There are too many local and regional bodies involved in tourism in Northern Ireland and you waste so much time and effort consulting before anything gets done' (Senior Manager, Waterways Ireland).

The Republic of Ireland's centralised approach to government means that partnership overload is not such a big issue although the Walks Manager of the Irish Sports Council believes the Minister's refusal to set up a national body to coordinate countryside recreation could be a mistake in the long term: 'One of the areas we have difficulty with is outdoor recreation in that it is the interest of all but the specific responsibility of none — a problem that exists from central government right down to community level' (Walks Manager, Irish Sports Council).

Cross-Cutting Themes

In addition to the twelve practitioner generated themes this study also revealed four crosscutting themes. These are politics, economics, accountability and ideology. Although they were not explicitly identified by the interviewees these cross-cutting themes affect the dynamics of inter-organisational relationships in the sports tourism policy arena.

According to Huxham and Vangen (2005) and Dredge and Jenkins (2007), collaboration is sensitive to the political climate within the country. Therefore, although sports tourism has never featured in the election manifesto of the political parties in either country, politics cut across all of the themes identified in this study. A blatant example of this was the way the Republic of Ireland's centralised approach to government has kept the Local Authorities on the fringes of the sports tourism policy arena. In Northern Ireland political instability and deep political divisions have inevitably created a culture of confrontation rather than collaboration.





The political aspects of any tourism policy are interwoven with a government's economic policy. In the Republic of Ireland there is a tradition of collaboration in sports tourism because linking sport with tourism has been part of the government's economic policy since the late 1980's. This is in contrast to Northern Ireland where the lack of investment and resources has been an underlying problem for all the organisations involved in this study. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board, the Northern Ireland Events Company and the Northern Ireland Forest Service all complained about dwindling budgets which has made them more insular and territorial.

Accountability is another underlying issue that was found to permeate all twelve practitioner generated themes. According to Huxham and Vangen (1996), an individual's behaviour in a collaborative setting is affected by the fact that they are representative of, and accountable to, their organisation. Public sector officials have the added pressure of spending public monies with their decisions closely scrutinised by public auditors and the electorate. The notion of accountability is therefore at the heart of every decision made by public officials inside and outside of the sports tourism policy arena.

The fourth and final crosscutting theme is ideology. Mullins (1999) explains that the goals of an organisation may be affected by an underlying ideology, or philosophy, based on the beliefs, values and attitudes of its members. This ideology determines the culture of the organisation and provides a set of principles which govern the overall conduct of the organisation's operations, codes of behaviour, the management of people and its dealings with other organisations. Ideology, therefore, underlies all twelve of the practitioner generated themes.

Conclusion

Driven by a range of forces including rapid economic and technological change, global interdependence and sustainable development collaboration is now a vital part of public sector management. To survive and prosper in this environment, managers must be aware of the factors that affect inter-organisational relationships. Of course, no two collaborative settings are the same. The theory of 'Collaborative Advantage for Sports Tourism' developed in this chapter demonstrates the themes that have helped to shape inter-organisational relationships in the sports tourism policy arena in two countries. However by leaving one of the capsules blank the author acknowledges the fact that case studies are neither definitive nor utterly representative. Hopefully the blank capsule will also encourage others to use this model as a framework to conduct similar research and develop new themes in different areas of the hospitality and tourism industry where public sector agencies must collaborate.





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15

‘Making a Difference’ Through Volunteer Tourism



Peter Smith and Jim Butcher





Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed a growing literature on ethical forms of tourism that links the behaviour and purchasing habits of consumers to development outcomes in developing countries (see for example: Krippendorf, 1987; Poon, 1993; Patullo, 1996; Wearing & Neil, 1999; Scheyvens, 2002; Reid, 2003; Fennell, 2008; Weaver, 2008, among others). This literature tends to focus on small scale, community oriented tourism that aims to promote both conservation and community well-being.

This growing focus on ethical tourism is part of a more general trend — the invocation of ethical consumerism as an important way to make a difference to communities in lesser-developed countries (Harrison et al (Eds), 2005). This chapter will argue that ethical tourism, and more specifically volunteer tourism, is part of the growth of life politics (Giddens, 1991, 1994). Giddens has characterised contemporary society as being increasingly concerned with life politics. Life politics involves the reconfiguration of the relationship between the individual and political issues away from the grand narratives of Left and Right, in favour of a politics that takes individual identity as its starting point. Further, life politics revolves around individuals' attempts to reposition themselves culturally and ethically in the context of their own lives and through this to try to act upon their immediate environment and more broadly in the social and political realms (ibid).

The commendable impulse to “make a difference” is characteristic of volunteer tourists (Scheyvens, 2002, p. 108, Simpson, 2004b; Raymond, 2008). What is at issue in this chapter is the politics through which this impulse is channelled – life politics.

Volunteer tourism is a part of the wider category of ethical tourism, and, as such, a 'life political' strategy for 'making a difference'. It will be argued that its rise in profile and popularity reflects the changed politics of our times. Volunteer tourism is rapidly emerging as an area of research in tourism studies yet other than a few key texts, it remains under theorised. Therefore, this chapter is exploratory in nature and introduces a discussion on 'life political' volunteer tourism. The chapter also suggests that volunteer tourism is part of a limited and limiting development agenda. The aim is to situate recent research in tourism development within wider sociological insights into contemporary society and the construction of identity through consumption: in particular the consumption of tourism products.

This study takes examples mainly from UK outbound volunteer tourism to illustrate a trend that is also evident in other western countries. By way of a formal definition, it takes the view of Wearing, who argues that volunteer tourism, 'can be viewed as a development strategy leading to sustainable development and centering on the convergence of natural resources, locals and the visitor that all benefit from tourism activity' (2001, p.12).





Volunteer tourists devote a proportion of their leisure time and assist alleviating material poverty, restoring particular environments or engage in research into society or the environment (Wearing, 2001, p.1) largely, although not exclusively, in the global South. The types of projects discussed in the emerging volunteer tourism discourse (small scale, community-based integrated conservation and development projects) are a staple of volunteer tourism and are the principal focus of this paper.

Who are the Volunteers?

There is no fixed definition of who is and who is not a 'volunteer tourist' and indeed some would regard the term as an oxymoron – after all, tourism is usually considered as time away from social and political obligations: whilst volunteering involves a desire to help others, and is associated with altruism. Certainly, in the past volunteers for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) from the UK, the Peace Corps in the USA or the Australian Volunteers Abroad programme would not have been seen as tourists, but as skilled people, committed to spending a protracted period of time working in communities in the developing world. Tourists, on the other hand, have been characterised in tourism literature as being motivated by self-interest – the desire for time off, relaxation and fun (Krippendorf, 1987; Croall, 1995; Scheyvens, 2002; Hickman, 2007).

However, the term 'volunteer tourist' is appropriate today for three reasons: First of all, the term is in usage – a number of key texts have been written on volunteer tourism (notably Wearing (2001) *Volunteer Tourism: Experiences That Make a Difference* and Lyons and Wearing eds (2008) *Journeys of Discovery in Volunteer Tourism: International Case Study Perspectives*) and the *Journal of International Volunteer Tourism and Social Development* is due to commence publication shortly. Volunteer tourism has also been the focus of a growing number of academic papers that interrogate volunteer tourists motivations and experiences (see McGehee, 2002; Brown & Lehto, 2005; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Cousins, 2007; Coghlan, 2006, 2007 and 2008; Gray & Campbell, 2007; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; ATLAS/TRAM, 2008; Lepp, 2009; McGehee & Andereck, 2009).

In the media too, gap years or career breaks taken for volunteer tourism have been the subject of commentaries and critiques (e.g. Barkham, 2006; Frean, 2006; Kelly, 2006; VSO, 2006). Hence it is a feature of academic and public discourse on the global South and development.





Second, the gap year companies, charities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that organise volunteer placements explicitly link altruism to some of the more traditional pleasures of holidays (Coghlan, 2006). These holidays amount to fun with a social purpose, that purpose being teaching, working with children or, what is the principal focus of this paper, community oriented projects with a conservation or well-being focus. Volunteer tourists, for Wearing, '... are seeking a tourist experience that is mutually beneficial, that will contribute not only to their personal development but also positively and directly to the social, natural and/or economic environments in which they participate' (2001, p.1).

This focus of the gap year and volunteer tourism companies seems to resonate with significant numbers of people seeking to act upon their world, outside of traditional political channels, in the realm of the ethical consumption of holidays. For these people the erstwhile assumed boundaries between political and personal life no longer apply. Rather, they can be seen as engaging in life politics, through which the two are closely related.

Third, the term volunteer tourism also seems appropriate, given the context of the growing advocacy of 'ethical tourism' (Honey 1999; Weaver, 2001; Hickman, 2007; Fennell, 2008). This advocacy holds that tourism to the developing world should aim to address community well-being and conservation. Typically, tourists are encouraged to visit projects that use some of the revenue from the industry to conserve wildlife and to protect local traditions. NGOs of both a conservation and well-being orientation, as well as the commercial sector, have become increasingly involved in such projects since the early 1990s (Ghimire & Pimbert (eds), 1997; McShane & Wells, 2004; Butcher, 2007), and generally promote such projects as ethical, sustainable development in rural areas. In fact, in both the ethical tourism, and development discourses more broadly, a confusion is to limit discussion of development to the provision of 'basic needs', which brings to rural poor communities fairly meagre development benefits (Sharpley, 2002; Liu, 2003; Butcher, 2006). Indeed, the concept of 'basic needs' in development discourses introduces Maslow's (1943) psychological interpretation of an individual's 'needs' into the wider discussion of economic development. The focus on alleviating 'basic needs', such as hunger and shelter, and subsequent orientation around these limited development options in effect depoliticises the debate over economic development by limiting communities' aspirations to their most pressing necessities.



It has been argued that volunteer tourists are simply at the committed end of a spectrum of ethical tourism (Coghlan, 2006; Cousins, 2007). Their holiday involves more structured and explicit action for conservation and development, but the desire to address well-being and conservation through purchasing ethical holiday is a shared feature with a burgeoning number of alternative, 'ethical' niches. Volunteer tourism is the committed end of a growing band of 'new tourists' (Poon, 1993; Mowforth and Munt, 1998) seeking to make a difference to development outcomes through their holidays. Whilst the desire to 'make a difference' is a key motivation for volunteers (Scheyvens, 2002, p.108; Simpson, 2004b; Raymond, 2008) a number of studies have suggested that participation in volunteer tourism projects is often motivated by factors other than mere altruism (Halpenny & Caissie, 2003; Cousins, 2007; Weaver, 2008, p.45).

Who/How Many Are They?

A number of studies have surveyed and estimated the number of volunteer tourists and the size (and monetary value) of the volunteer sector. Research has also been undertaken into the gap year phenomenon. Given the range of organisations operating within the sector and the differing agendas the conclusions vary. However, all the surveys demonstrate a marked increase in the numbers of volunteer tourists in the last 10-15 years (ATLAS/TRAM, 2008).

The Tourism Research and Marketing report on the global volunteer tourism market published by the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education in 2008 surveyed over 300 volunteer tourism organisations worldwide. The report concluded that the market now caters for 1.6 million volunteer tourists a year, with a monetary value of between £832m and £1.3bn (\$1.7bn – \$2.6bn). Growth in the sector has been most marked since 1990 (ATLAS/TRAM, 2008, p.5).

According to UK government's commissioned report on gap year provision (defined in the report as 'a period of time between 3 and 24 months taken out of education or a work career': therefore a narrower category than volunteer tourism), internationally there are over 800 organisations offering overseas volunteering placements in 200 countries. In total these organisations offer around 350,000 placements opportunities annually worldwide (Jones, 2004), though many of these placements will not necessarily be in the developing world.

Estimates from the UK gap year industry suggest that in the region of 200,000 British youngsters aged 18-25 annually take a gap year (Simpson, 2005, p.447). Within this group of volunteers The Year Out Group, a group representing the gap year industry in the UK, estimate that 10,000 young people a year are involved in placements in third world countries (Interview with Richard Oliver of the Year Out Group, cited in Simpson, 2004a, p.109).



Cousins (2007) has estimated that in 2005, UK based conservation tourism organisations sent approximately 7550 volunteers, to over 341 conservation projects, in 71 countries; the major recipients being developing countries. These volunteers' principle activity is to engage with nature and gain experience of conservation work (ibid p.1029).

Tourism Concern, a UK based charity who tend to look specifically at development and community based tourism, estimate that there are now around sixty organisations in offering volunteer tourism placements (Tourism Concern, briefing paper, 2007, p.1). These range from commercial companies to organisations operating in the NGO and voluntary sector.

However, the large number of organisations involved in this gap year sector makes it hard to accurately assess the absolute number of places from existing data. There is also wide variety of possible types of voluntary work with the commonest types being community and social work, teaching, conservation and environmental projects (Jones, 2004).

Although the numbers of volunteer tourists in the developing world are unclear, that their number have risen and are rising is broadly acknowledged in tourism discourse. The UK Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) figures demonstrate a steady rise in students opting to defer entry to higher education some of whom will participate in a gap year project overseas (Simpson, 2004, p.11). Finally, the discussion of gap years has a high profile in universities, tourism and geography departments and the media indicating that it is a significant phenomenon in public consciousness. The UK government has acknowledged that volunteering through gap year participation makes a small but significant contribution to development in the developing world (Jones, 2004, p.55).

New Volunteers and Old

Modern development volunteering emerged after the Second World War. Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) was founded in 1958 in the UK and the Peace Corps in the USA in 1960. Other examples of state involvement in promoting development volunteering include; Australian Volunteers Abroad founded in 1963, the Dutch SNV, founded in 1965, the Japan Overseas Corporation volunteers (JOVC) founded in 1965 and the Canadian Executive Service Organisation (CESO) founded in 1967. There has been an emphasis in these organisations on practical, technical skills, to help third world societies on their path to modern development, a path favoured not just by western governments, but also by many newly sovereign third world states (Preston, 1996).





Post Second World War volunteering was both altruistic and also tied up with the politics of the period. The Peace Corps was certainly motivated by the desire, as its first director put it, to 'help in the world wide assault against poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease' (Shriver, 1961 cited in Roberts, 2004). However, Amin (1999) claims that this was also part of promoting an image of US altruism as well as helping the third world to modernise, thus reducing the threat to western interests through communist influence.

In the case of VSO, Bird's history of the organisation shows that the founder of this organisation, Alec Dickson, in appealing for funding for the organisation, pointed out that communist countries were better at such overseas work than the west, and appealed to British pride (Bird, 1998).

These organisations harnessed the desires of able, idealistic young people to play a role in economic and social modernisation in the developing world. However, this, for 'anti-development' thinkers, is precisely the problem – the assumption that the countries concerned needed advice and assistance from without on how to modernise, and indeed whether to modernise at all in the sense accepted at the time (Escobar, 1995; Esteva & Prakash, 1998).

Simpson (2004a) argues that today's volunteering has some roots in volunteers signing up to fight in the Spanish civil war in the 1930s and struggles for independence in Latin America in the 1980s. These volunteers, she says, were inspired by 'a mixture of idealism, expediency and opportunism; a mixture that continues to influence contemporary international volunteers' (Simpson, 2004a, p.30). Similarly, McGehee and Santosa (2005) suggest that volunteer tourism has common characteristics with the social movements in the US for civil rights and modern labour movements.

However, historical comparisons such as these are very limited due to the wholly different political and historical contexts of the volunteers. To compare volunteers fighting in the Spanish civil war, assisting struggles for third world national liberation in the 1970s and 80s or fighting for civil rights in the 1960s to today's development volunteers is to trivialise the former and flatter the latter. The comparison only serves to emphasise what is new and distinctive about contemporary volunteer tourism – that it is influenced by the lack of grand political narratives of Left and Right or of national self determination: the sort of narratives that characterised the combatants in the aforementioned causes.





Even comparisons with VSO and the Peace Corps indicate more change than continuity. Whilst in the 1960s these organisations can be seen as part of Cold War politics, and hence part of the western modernisation of the third world in the name of capitalism (or indeed communism via volunteers from the Soviet bloc), the narrative of contemporary volunteering is clearly a personal narrative that eschews grand political projects in favour of providing, '...an opportunity for an individual to engage in an altruistic attempt to explore 'self' (Wearing, 2001, p.3).

In the past selfhood was often linked to class interest or national mission (Laidi, 1998; Sennett, 1998; Bauman, 2000). Today, as has been suggested, in the discourse of volunteer tourism the narrative of the 'self' replaces these grand narratives. In short, volunteer tourism participation replaces the political project of transformation through modernisation or national self-determination. The social and economic transformation of the developing world was the shared goal of the competing political theories of modernisation and under development (Harrison, 1988; Chang, 2010): in contrast to the more modest developmental claims of sustainable forms of development (Sharpley, 2002; Butcher, 2007).

It is the absence of collective politics that elevates ethical consumption, including that of volunteer holidays, to the status of a new politics. Hence whilst it would have been bizarre in the 1960s to talk of volunteer tourism, today it makes some sense.

Volunteer Tourism as Life Politics

Anthony Giddens identified a shift from the traditional politics of emancipation, embodied in collective identities informed by the politics of Left and Right, towards 'life politics' (1991). For Giddens contemporary society is no longer bound by the fixities of tradition or custom; we are living in a post-traditional world. Life politics represents the attempt to create morally justifiable lifestyles when we are no longer guided by such traditions as class, religion or even family (ibid).

Giddens argues that life politics is a reconfiguration of the relationship of the individual to their society through which individual identity becomes the key site of political change (ibid.). This chimes with the literature on volunteer tourism (Wearing, 2001), and also with the publicity put out by gap year companies (Bindloss et al, 2003).

Life politics has a strong affinity with ethical consumption — what and where we buy the things we need and desire is not only a part of the process of negotiating one's own identity, but can also connect with the lives of others who have produced these same things, as well as with other issues such as the environment (Giddens 1991, p.215). For example, it is argued that consumers can force a more ethical agenda onto companies through exercising choice in favour of products that are deemed more sustainable or that involve a 'fairer' outcome for workers (Hertz, 2001; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Jackson (ed.) 2006; Paterson, 2006).





This shift to the politics of consumption is often regarded as in part due to changes in production in western economies and the nature of work. 'Post-industrial' writer Andre Gorz (1982, 1985) identified a shift in the technical organisation of production that led to a more individuated, less collective experience in the workplace — contributing to a decline in traditional collective allegiances relating to work. This is mirrored by the post-Fordism thesis, developed in the pages of the left journal, *Marxism Today*, (see for example; Hall, 1988; Leadbeater, 1988; Hall & Jacques, 1989; for a wider discussion of these themes see Kumar, 1995). For Bauman (1996) the result of these trends is that contemporary society engages its members primarily as consumers rather than producers. As a consequence of these changes Bauman characterises contemporary society as moving from 'heavy' and 'solid' modernity to 'light' and 'liquid' modernity (Bauman, 2000).

Post-Fordism, or 'liquid modernity', is notable in that it marks a shift from the politics of production (and social class) to consumption (and individual identity) in radical thinking. The consumption of alternative, ethical tourisms is just one example of the wider consumption of ethical products (Paterson, 2006) and the radical credentials of these activities are prominent in the debates (Butcher, 2007).

Most profoundly influencing the growth of life politics is the collapse of perceived alternatives to capitalism. It has been argued that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism seemed to confirm that alternatives to the market do not work (Giddens, 1994; Jacoby, 1999). This has been reinforced by the adoption or at the very least acceptance of market forces as positive or inefaceable, even by capitalism's erstwhile critics on the Left, as, apparently, "no one any longer has any alternatives to capitalism" (Giddens, 1998, p.43).

Fukuyama's 'End of History' thesis, following soon after the end of the Cold War, presenting a contemporary world in which all the big ideological issues have been settled, is perhaps emblematic of a sense of closure of grand politics (Fukuyama, 1992). For Laidi (1998) the end of the Cold War precipitated a far-reaching 'crisis of meaning' whereby few institutions today can claim to provide meaning in an increasingly globalised world. It is this wider absence of meaning that pushes ethical consumption to the fore. More pointedly to the discourse of volunteer tourism, Mouffe argues that in contemporary society moral issues have become central to contemporary political life and the struggle between 'right and wrong' has replaced the struggle between 'right and left' (2005, p.5).





Whilst the current global recession has forced a reappraisal of neo-liberal thinking and to some extent a resurgence of a Keynesian economic outlook (Krugman, 2008; Mason, 2009; Skidelsky, 2009), there is little to indicate a resurgence of traditional left orientated politics (Zizek, 2009).

The apparent decline of allegiance to big political ideas or party based politics has contributed to a disconnection between individuals and their governments and has led to a preoccupation with re-establishing this connection in some way (Laidi, 1998; Bauman, 2000). Indeed, it is in this spirit that gap year projects are often encouraged by the authorities (Jones, 2004; Heath, 2007). Volunteering is seen as a way of developing a sense of 'global citizenship', with concepts of 'citizenship' increasingly being a part of the remit and curriculum of schools and universities (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998; Bednarz, 2003; Standish, 2008). Traditional political channels, on the other hand, increasingly invite cynicism, and many feel alienated from the institutions of government (Giddens, 1998; Devji, 2005; Furedi, 2005). Chandler (2007) has argued that the decline of traditional territorial politics has led to the individuation of 'being' political; today it is suggested 'being political' means taking some form of individual ethical activity frequently through the act of consumption.

This process through which the world of consumption and lifestyle has become prominent in the search for selfhood, and the latter prominent in social and political issues can only be briefly outlined here. But it is in this spirit that volunteer tourists seek to affect change as a part of a self-conscious shaping of their own identity: their own sense of self. The trip can be a prominent part of a person's 'biography' in this respect. Indeed, a biographical approach to selfhood is associated with life politics generally (see Bauman, 2000) and travel specifically (see Heath, 2007). The narrative is that of the individual rather than of the society visited. The reflexive character of the trip is evident too, it is suggested that as part of the volunteer experience, '...interactions occur and the self is enlarged or expanded, challenged, renewed or reinforced. As such, the experience becomes an ongoing process which extends far beyond the actual tourist visit' (Wearing, 2001, p.3). Similarly, for McGehee and Santos (2005) participation in the volunteer project is the key element in the consciousness-raising of the individual participant or volunteer.

Life politics, as advocated by Giddens, urges a reconfiguration of the relationship of the individual to society against an historical backdrop where 'the terms left and right no longer have the meaning they once did, and each political perspective is in its own way exhausted' (1994, p.78). Whilst this description of the categories of Left and Right may well contain some truth, it is not necessarily the case that life politics represents an advance.





As we have seen, life politics poses the formation of a self-defined identity as the key site of political change. That the individual is only able to form their identity through the act of consumption, at best, limits the focus of change to the individual in the private sphere (Bauman, 2000) and, at worst, represents the degradation of the idea of the historical subject (Heartfield, 2002). Further, the growth of life politics represents a narrowing of human subjectivity away from collective solutions to social problems towards individual life choices. Pointedly, the growing importance of life politics and the politics of consumption more broadly mirrors the decline of social explanations of and collective solutions to human problems.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the contemporary emphasis on volunteering as a way to 'make a difference' is in contrast to the decline of macro political agendas based on economic growth and social transformation of the global South. Indeed, increasingly such 'macro' agendas of growth and transformation are frequently charged with being unsustainable or unrealistic.

Volunteer tourism seems to fit well with the undoubted growth of life political strategies; in this case for development, conservation and community well-being. Yet such limited strategies, aimed at a humble 'making a difference', can appear positive and attractive in an anti political climate. The personal element appears positive – it bypasses big government and eschews big business. Yet it also bypasses the democratic imperative of representative government and reduces development to individual acts of charity or voluntary undertakings, most often ones that seek to work around rather than transform the relationship of poor, rural societies in developing countries to the natural world.

Cynicism at the act of volunteering is certainly misplaced. The act of volunteer tourism may involve only simple, commendable charity and personal commitment. However, where volunteer tourism is talked up as sustainable development and the marketing of the gap year companies merges into development thinking, this is symptomatic of a degradation of the discourse of development. The politics of volunteer tourism represent a retreat from a social understanding of global inequalities and the poverty lived by so many in the developing world.





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