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Tourism stakeholder exclusion and conflict in a small island

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Abstract
Research in the Isle of Man, British Isles, reveals limited and dysfunctional collaboration between stakeholders, and in particular between public and private sector actors. Power and influence over tourism decision making is generally felt to be restricted to a small and opaque network. Moreover, different levels of interest in and support for tourism further divide stakeholders. Various negative consequences are shown to arise from this absence of collaboration, including a lack of shared vision or future strategy for local tourism, and high levels of mutual mistrust between stakeholders. Resulting conflict, wasted resources, lost enthusiasm and lack of strategic direction appear to undermine the current and future management of island tourism. Emphasised by research is the importance of stakeholder collaboration to sustainable tourism management and underlying factors which may enhance or undermine. Focus on dysfunctional collaboration and the small island setting makes a unique contribution to the existing literature.

Keywords: Stakeholder Collaboration; Exclusion; Island Tourism; Sustainable Tourism;

Introduction

Based on in-depth interviews with tourism industry stakeholders this paper explores collaboration, or rather, dysfunctional and limited collaboration, in a small island, and the implications of this for sustainability of local destination management. The small island setting; one where stakeholder proximity is heightened, informal networks may be influential, and power distribution opaque, can be particularly susceptible to dysfunctional collaboration. Islands may also be places where the impacts of tourism are especially noticeable. They are henceforth an ideal location for exploring underlying causes and subsequent effects of dysfunctional collaboration.

Community involvement is a widely appreciated factor in the sustainability or otherwise of tourism destinations. Briefly speaking, collaboration is associated with coordination of resources, competency recruitment, creativity and conflict resolution, that together may help to manage the increased complexities a sustainable development approach entails (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005; Tao and Wall, 2009). The importance of collaboration is perhaps heightened in small island communities moreover. These have been typified as close knit communities with high levels of informal networking and unofficial self-determination (Chaperon and Bramwell, 2013). Here, proximity of hosts and guests and close involvement of residents in tourism are typically intensified (Wilkinson, 1987; Keane, 1992). This can reinforce involvement with or sense of ownership over industry amongst community members (Tsartas, 1992; Andriotis, 2005). Impacts of tourism tend also to be heightened due to the limited cultural and natural resources of small islands (Royle, 2008). Likewise the challenges of inhabiting what are peripheral locations mean that communities have particularly acute development needs and desires (Andriotis, 2005). These need on-going monitoring therefore. Hence Keane (1992) calls for mechanisms that will give opportunities to islanders to define the terms under which tourism growth will take place in order to address specific local needs and concerns.

Small islands are therefore an interesting context in which to investigate dynamics of stakeholder collaboration. They are places where it may be especially relevant as well as practicable to conduct multiple stakeholder analysis, as has been called for in the literature (Byrd and Gustke, 2007). However, prior island tourism research has tended to overlook cold water and secondary destination islands, which typically have a more niche development orientation (Ritchie and Inkari, 2006). Likewise islands at post-maturity stages of tourism decline are underrepresented (Canavan, 2014). This is despite the numerous and increasing numbers of destinations which may be reaching (Chapman and Speake, 2011) and the significant challenges that decline might pose to such communities (Canavan, 2013).

This research contributes to the established literature emphasising the importance of stakeholder collaboration, and drawing links between collaboration and tourism sustainability. By taking an underrepresented location for this, this study extends current debate through the additional context generalizability it may bring. Illustrating the perspective of dysfunctional collaboration in stakeholders' own words is unusual meanwhile, as this is a viewpoint currently underdeveloped in the literature, although perhaps often inferred.

The Isle of Man

At just over 588km² the Isle of Man is home to around 75,000 people. Characterised by a diversity of natural habitats, from coastal plains, dune, heath and cliffs, to central moorland bisected by wooded glens, these support rich flora and fauna including significant rare bird populations. A distinctive local culture is informed by its geographical position in the centre of the Irish Sea. Celtic, Norse, and later English influences manifest in a variety of cultural sites, practises and events.

From the 1890's to the 1960's, the Isle of Man was a significant British domestic tourism destination (Rawcliffe, 2009). However, from the mid 1970's onwards, visitor arrivals declined to levels around one third of past levels, with long-term and on-going stagnation illustrated across tourism indicators (Figure 1, see Cooper, 1995 for historical analysis). Once the mainstay of the local economy, today tourism generates around 5% of GDP and 14% of jobs. This compares with 36% and 23% respectively, for the now dominant offshore finance sector (Isle of Man Digest of Economic and Social Statistics, 2014). The principle reason behind decline has been described as the rise of foreign travel. Traditional north European, primarily domestic resorts, have struggled to compete against more exotic, fashionable, and climatically stable competition (Walton, 2000).

The island's tourism decision making is characterised by few major (such as the Steam-Packet ferry operator) and many small (such as accommodation providers) business stakeholders, and high levels of government influence. An independent kingdom until 1266, the Isle of Man is today a self-governing crown dependency of the UK. Members elected to the Tynwald Parliament are responsible for legislation that affects the island. The Department for Economic Development, has responsibility for overall tourism management and marketing strategy and budget, as well as ownership and management of the island's public transport network, Villa Marina entertainment complex, and Wildlife Park visitor attraction. In addition, as a large landowner, and through ownership of the island airport, and ferry terminal, government has direct responsibility for and influence over many of the aspects which make up the local tourism economy.

[Figure 1 near here]

[Figure 2 near here]

Literature Review

Stakeholder Collaboration and Tourism Sustainability

Freeman's (1984: 46) seminal definition of a stakeholder as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisations objectives, has subsequently been developed to suggest a stakeholder is any group or individual with a legitimate interest in these (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). In the case of tourism, a complex, collaborative industry, multiple stakeholders have interests in industry impacts and management (Ayres, 2000). In small islands furthermore, small communities may have high levels of formal and informal involvement with and a strong sense of ownership over local tourism (i.e. Hampton

and Christensen, 2007). Thus in such context the pool of potential stakeholders interested and involved in tourism and with potential influence over or to be affected by is diverse.

Stakeholder collaboration, essentially understood as a process of joint decision making in a domain about the future of that domain (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Adu-Ampong, 2014), is widely viewed as both a source and sign of tourism sustainability (Hardy and Beeton, 2001). Findings have demonstrated variously that destination branding, impacts management, benefits distribution, community cohesion and visitor experiences can be enhanced through collaboration (Go and Govers, 2000; Almeyda *et al,* 2008; Morgan *et al*, 2009). By providing a basis for developing mutually beneficial solutions, collaboration minimises potential tensions and fosters more successful host-guest relationships (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005). By contrast, exclusion of certain stakeholders from decision making may risk creating resentments towards tourists amongst disenfranchised groups (Sanchez and Adams, 2008).

Furthermore, new perspectives, innovative thinking and local in depth knowledge can variously be brought by different groups within communities with which to develop best practise for local tourism planning (Bramwell and Lane, 1999; Yuksel *et al*, 2009). Thus learning, innovation, and fundamental transformation, have been linked to effective collaboration (Sloan, 2009). Collaboration likewise fosters an entrepreneurial, open, problem focussed culture (Go and Govers, 2000), and pools local talent, resources and enthusiasm (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999). It may also reduce potential for conflicts between stakeholders and reduce associated management costs (Jamal and Getz, 1995).

Such contributions are important in the context of the deep and rapid changes often faced by tourism destinations (Chapman and Speake, 2011). The fragmented nature of the tourism industry creates a need for coordination and collaboration in planning meanwhile (Hall, 1999; Adu-Ampong, 2014). Networking can pool together disparate resources, knowledge and capabilities into a sum greater than the individual parts, with which to respond to such structural challenges (Healey, 1997; Bramwell and Lane, 1999; Aas *et al.*, 2005). For example, enhanced and more consistent destination marketing has been noted as a result of successful stakeholder collaboration (Cai, 2002; Morgan *et al.*, 2009).

Finally, collaboration is closely associated with managing the impacts of tourism. Noted are benefits enhancement and negatives negation due to the widened pool of expertise that can be called upon (Gursoy *et al.* 2002; Ladkin and Bertrami, 2002). Innovative planning and management may also be enhanced through the creativity benefits of collaboration (Go and Govers, 2000; Byrd and Gutske, 2007). Collaboration likewise allows for more appropriate development plans to be established, which take account of and respond rapidly to local stakeholder needs, ambitions, and sensitivities (Tao and Wall, 2009; Almeyda *et al.*, 2010). The involvement of host communities is thus a precondition for a sustainable industry (Tovar and Lockwood, 2008) and sustainability is most likely to be achieved where communities engage in decision making (Southgate and Sharpley, 2002). Without stakeholder support in a community it may be almost impossible to develop tourism sustainably (Byrd *et al.,* 2009).

As such, stakeholder collaboration at all levels of tourism planning and management is closely associated with successful implementation of sustainable development: that is to say development which at the most basic level means that the natural and cultural resources

underpinning, are not degraded or overexploited, and which brings long-term, widely distributed, economic, social and environmental benefits to a community (Hoyt, 2005; Almeyda *et al.*, 2010). Collaboration may foster management approaches able to rise to the complexities of implementing sustainable development (Tao and Wall, 2009). Similarly it fosters awareness of the benefits of the approach which may take longer to accrue, thus pre-empting short term opposition (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005). Other benefits closely associated with sustainability and fostered by collaboration include monitoring of impacts (Almeyda *et al.,* 2010), spread of conservation ethos (Hoyt, 2005), and exchanges of ideas and best practise (Go and Govers, 2000). Hardy and Beeton (2001) elaborate how the difference between maintainable tourism whereby the status quo is managed short term, in which stakeholder interests are presumed rather than thoroughly researched, and sustainable tourism, which involves the needs and requirements of all stakeholders to create a sense of ownership. Inclusive, effective stakeholder management is a prerequisite of achieving sustainable tourism development.

Nonetheless, obstacles to collaboration remain. These may serve to limit and contribute to dysfunctional collaboration. The diversity of stakeholders in a destination is complex, as are their goals, objectives, opinions, outlooks and agendas (Bramwell and Sharman 1999). Aggravated fragmentation may arise from the contradictions that can be inherent within (McCamley and Gilmore, 2015). Balancing inclusiveness with direction complicates selection of which stakeholders to include where (Jamal and Getz, 1995). A further complication is the extent to which the stakeholders involved can represent the local community (Aas *et al.*, 2005). Moreover it can be difficult to identify let alone engage stakeholders due to issues of capacity to participate, informal networks, hidden groups and cultural barriers (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999). Vested interests, power dynamics, history, culture, politics and many other dimensions can further complicate the process of identifying and including stakeholders (Hall, 1999; Tosun, 2000). These may be particularly the case in small islands. Thus stakeholder involvement can be costly, unwieldy, and lead to unsatisfactory compromises (Aas *et al*, 2005). Managing such diversity is an often expensive challenge (Swarbrooke, 1999). Skills and investment needed to overcome such barriers might not be available (Adu-Ampong, 2014). Again small islands, with their limited resources, may find such challenges heightened. The risk of dysfunction in such places is therefore both heightened and increasingly difficult to manage.

Methodology
Research sought to explore the attitudes of stakeholders towards impacts and management of tourism on the Isle of Man and their sense of involvement and control over this. Fieldwork in the Isle of Man was conducted during a period of semi-residency on the island from March 2011 – September 2013 as part of a wider investigation exploring peripherally, tourism and sustainability in north European small islands. This involved field trips to tourist attractions, participant observation of and with island tourists, residents, and tourism employees, literature reviews of government statistical data, local newspapers and local tourism literature, and a quantitative postal survey of island residents. These were used to immerse within local culture, tourism dynamics, and the surrounding context embedded within.

Subsequently in-depth qualitative interviews with island tourism stakeholders were conducted during May – September 2013, and used to analyse local attitudes towards tourism. A total of 29 interviews lasted for an average of 30 minutes (see Table 1 for list of interviewees). Recommendations for good interview practise were followed, including use of a standardised discussion guide (McGivern, 2006). Research thus took a more holistic approach to tourism studies related to that outlined by Hartmann (1988), albeit with a purely qualitative focus. This was chosen in order to explore in depth and present findings both within local context and participants own words (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), rather than seek to generalise results; something which may be undermined by the heterogeneity of small islands (Milne, 1992).

The aim was to recruit a wide sample of tourism stakeholders, in order to capture an extensive range of views and compare based on their interests (Byrd and Gustke, 2007). Thus a normative approach (outlined by Hardy and Beeton, 2001) was taken, whereby all potential stakeholders were given an equal weighting. Purposive sampling was used to target stakeholders (as with Aas *et al*, 2005; Adu-Ampong, 2014). Snowball and network sampling occurred to an extent due to the nature of building contacts within a small island tourism network. The flaws of this are noted (see Creswell, 2003), albeit theoretical sampling is frequently opportunistic in this way (Eisenheardt and Graebner, 2007) and pragmatic benefits may outweigh disadvantages (Flick, 2002). It should be noted that many interviewees might be considered as having multiple stakeholder roles (as may commonly occur amongst small populations Hardy and Beeton, 2001). Several had or did hold multiple roles, such as tourism employee and special interest group member. Analysis therefore considered the primary stakeholder role identified with by the participant during interview stages (i.e. *"Putting my employee hat on…"*), in order to maintain analytical and narrative clarity.

Interviews were live recorded and then transcribed within 72 hours by the researcher in order to assist immersion in the data. Research was an inductive process based upon pragmatic use of principles of social constructivism to explain how data is created (see Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). As such a loosely constructivist approach to grounded theory allowing for a back and forth approach to data construction and emergence of concepts through data analysis, rather than a testing of preconceived hypothesis, was used to interpret data and build conclusions (as per Thornberg, 2012). Thus interview data was coded and interpreted in an on-going basis, with patterns allowed to emerge from. NVIVO software and traditional colour coding/copy and paste techniques were used in this process.

[Table 1 near here]

Findings and Discussion

Identifying Stakeholder Groups
During research and subsequent analysis several patterns emerged which could be related back to the extant literature and which could be used to group and label interviewees according to their experiences, descriptions and attitudes towards tourism and collaboration on the Isle of Man. Descriptions relating to sense of *power* and *influence* over tourism decision making, and *interest in* or *support* for tourism, were identified and judged as the

most significant, consistent, and expressive. These are moreover some of the most commonly used dimensions in stakeholder mapping (Markwick, 2000; Newcombe, 2003; Hardy *et al.,* 2013).

These findings were reviewed using stakeholder mapping techniques as developed by Markwick (2000), Newcombe (2003) and Hardy *et al.,* (2013). Accordingly, stakeholders could be broadly categorised into relatively cohesive groups based upon their interest in or support for tourism and perceptions of influence and power over its management. This was plotted on a power/influence and interest/support matrix (Figure 3). It is important to note that such a matrix is interpreted loosely and is not expected to reflect the true nuance, multiplicity or changeability of attitudes encountered (i.e. Tovar and Lockwood, 2007).

Broadly speaking, a large majority of interviewees felt that they had limited influence over tourism decision making which was viewed as resting mainly in the hands of government stakeholders; something largely agreed with by planners and politicians themselves. Managers and some interest group members did perceive themselves as having some influence through their networks with these government stakeholders. Residents, employees and accommodation providers meanwhile felt that they had limited power and often discussed sensations of being ignored and overlooked.

Regards support for tourism meanwhile, some participants tended to be less enthusiastic. This included planners and politicians who took a more pessimistic view of future industry growth and hence saw themselves as more pragmatic managers investing resources in niche tourism if not other industries altogether. Other stakeholders including employees, managers, many residents and interest group members expressed a strong desire for increases in tourism in order to enhance the perceived benefits brought by the sector. Some residents and interest groups expressed relatively little interest in tourism one way or another as this was not seen to directly affect their personal goals to great extent.

Stakeholder perceptions of power and support will now be discussed, before reviewing the implications of these dynamics from a tourism management perspective.

[Figure 3 near here]

Power and Influence
Sustainable planning is arguably dependent on community participation and transparency of decision making (Diamantis, 2004). Yet research in the Isle of Man found a lack of these in both respects. Regards a sense of power and influence, much described was confusion over key decision makers and a lack of formal communication channels.

"If you want to do something who the hell do you get in touch with?" (SIG 2).

"Who decides these things; none of us have any bloody idea!" (Employee 1).

Informal ones meanwhile were widely believed to be the way in which most decisions were made and things got done.

"I know who to speak to if you want to get the ball moving… you need to know who to ask where" (Attraction 1).

Yet these were also commonly believed to exist only for a privileged few insiders, again emphasising the disparities in access to power and influence felt by many stakeholders.

"On the island it all very much depends on who you know" (Resident 8).

Thus stakeholders found it difficult to contact relevant tourism officials in order to develop ideas or share concerns. Many felt that they were not listened to when they did. Hence influence was frequently felt to be limited. Decision making was also considered to be highly centralised and as residing with a small number of insiders and therefore difficult to access. Levels of perceived influence and power appeared to be particularly low amongst residents, employees, and interest group members who tended to characterise decision making authority and network access as held by government officials. Findings reflect previous research identifying limited collaboration between public and private sectors (as with Marwick, 2000; Tosun, 2000; Yodsuwan and Butcher, 2012; Adu-Ampong, 2014).

To illustrate, a common view was of island tourism being run by and listening to a narrow spectrum of stakeholders. This led to a perception that they had frequently narrow, out of touch, or biased attitudes. Tourism appeared for many to be managed by a small number of inaccessible official, and influential unofficial figures, with roles and responsibility unclear.

"X pops up everywhere. I don't know what he does; nothing, but he is always there doing it" (Employee 1).

Additionally, it was often assumed that those with influence over decisions had little interest in or awareness of wider community opinions.

"I have tried so many times to make contact, but I never get anywhere" (Accommodation 1).

Dismissive comments aired by one planner suggested that this may indeed sometimes be the case.

"People are always complaining and saying 'why don't we try and appeal to families... sun, sea and sand, that kind of thing, that kind of out-dated view of tourism. It's because we're not interested in that... The public think they want sandcastles and families on the beach, but we don't want that so we're not pursuing it" (Planner 1).

Lastly, several participants spoke of the difficulty of challenging opinions of powerful insiders or speaking out in a small and often traditional community. Discussed were risks of being labelled as 'fringe', 'negative', or an 'outsider'.

"I've tried to share (conservation) ideas, but you just get the response that 'this isn't what we do here'" (SIG 3).

"Oh yeah, standard response you get to any input is 'if you don't like it you can get the boat in the morning'" (Accommodation 1).

"If you say anything against them they will remember it... you can't speak out if you want to keep your job later" (Resident 10).

Discussion of power and influence imbalances felt between stakeholders, particularly those associated with government and those more general ones, may be related back to the island governance literature. An absence of local political accountability and independence may characterise small islands (Lim and Cooper, 2009). Decision making in small island communities may often be informal (Chaperon and Bramwell, 2013). It can therefore rest in the hands of local elites and stifle wider participation and debate (Hampton and Christensen, 2007). Likewise the close networks and proximity of voters and politicians may stifle dissent (Chaperon and Bramwell, 2013). They may additionally lack strong, localised, or independent governance, potentially undermining local nuances and rigor in planning and

leaving prone to 'political capture', by particular interest groups (Hampton and Christensen, 2007). Thus power often lies with an established local elite, with the silent majority and any local minorities often superseded (Hall, 1999, Tosun, 2000).

As such, research identifies with previous studies in developing states, which find similar obstacles to effective collaboration, and imply that too much power and decision making control rests with centralised authority (Tosun, 2000; Aas *et al*, 2005; Adu-Ampong, 2014). Parallels between small islands and developing states in terms of their economies, governance and availability of human resources have been noted (Milne, 1992).

Interest and Support
A further limitation to and source of dysfunction in exchanges between stakeholders was occurrence of noticeably different attitudes towards local tourism. This was towards both the overall importance of the industry and strategies for its future.

Regards interest in and support for tourism, research found some interviewees taking a largely economic approach to analysis of the sector, These were more likely to take a pessimistic view of industry prospects, more willing to see a managed tourism decline, and invest limited resources in other sectors of the economy which promised greater growth such as offshore gaming.

"That is where the growth is, that is where we are focussed now" (Planner 1).

"I don't think tourism really contributes anything to overall GDP... Looking at the overall economy it is not really insignificant" (Attraction 1).

Further emphasising the public-private divide government planners and politicians tended to comprise this group. Most other stakeholders however, placed greater significance on wider social, cultural and environmental tourism impacts. This was particularly the case for residents, attraction managers and interest group members. The sector was viewed amongst these as bringing many, diverse, relevant and significant impacts to the Isle of Man. These helped to diversify economic, social and environmental landscapes and to bring opportunities regards. For example, employment, social opportunities and urban landscapes were described as being enhanced by tourism.

"People don't always appreciate it but things would be very different without tourism... a lot of the shops, pubs, rely on to survive" (Employee 1).

This group tended to desire expansions in tourism to increase such benefits and believed that investment in achieving was worthwhile.

"You need to see it (tourism spending) as an investment, not a cost. For what you put in you get more back down the line" (Attraction 2).

Conversely, declines in tourism were viewed as detrimental and to be avoided (see also Canavan, 2013; 2014).

Related differences were encountered between groups in terms of vision for the future of Manx tourism. Again public sector stakeholders tended to be pessimistic in terms of competing for tourist attention in the face of changing tourist tastes, strong competitors, and wider economic pressures faced by the island. Public sector stakeholders thus spoke pragmatically about achievable or realistic tourism strategies. Often these centred upon acceptance of an increasingly niche role and focus for the industry. Niche tourists were described in terms of being more upmarket, desirable and higher spending, whilst traditional

tourists, namely families and older persons, were viewed somewhat negatively by this group of participants.

"That is the sort of visitors we want. Not VFR who come over here and never spend any money" (Planner 1).

Special interest group stakeholders also believed niche tourists would be an ideal target for the Isle of Man, due to the likely appeal of natural and cultural landscapes to these.

"Yeah nature and culture, I'd say that is what we have and that is who would come" (SIG 2).

Yet many other stakeholders tended to disagree with attempts to position the Isle of Man as a niche destination. Traditional visitors were popular amongst because of economic, social and cultural traditions they were associated with. Families for instance were welcomed by some residents for the atmosphere they create.

"Is there anything nicer than seeing children playing on the beach?" (Resident 4).

Consequences of a Lack of Collaboration

Various impacts upon Isle of Man tourism were noted as a result of the limited and confused communications between local stakeholders. Firstly a lack of commonly agreed valuing of or vision for tourism became clear. This emerged from the significant differences in attitudes towards the role and significance of tourism, and hence interest in or support for its future management.

"We don't know what we want... there is no collective, I would say no collective vision for where we go in the future" (Accommodation 2).

Shared vision has been described as fundamental as a starting point in the collaborative planning process (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Huxham, 2003), which should start with joint formulation of aims and objectives (Healey, 1997). Furthermore, existence of a shared vision is fundamental to coordination of resources, problem solution, conflict avoidance and future planning (Bramwell and Lane, 1999; Bramwell and Sharman, 1999). Yet a common strategy or vision was not present amongst Isle of Man stakeholders. Limited collaboration between appeared to have contributed to a gulf in opinion emerging at the same time as it reduced abilities to mutually negotiate solutions in order to bridge divides.

According to interviewees, the lack of strategy direction or agreed common ground affected the ability to drive change, coordinate resources, plan for the future, or minimise conflicts.

"They (plans) are changing all the time. This month it might be about wildlife (tourism). Next it is motorbikes or whatever" (Attraction 2).

"I'd say that there is a lack of consistency... because of this nobody wants to commit" (Politician 2).

Many interviewees detailed the enthusiasm, motivation, good ideas and talent perceived to have gone unused due to absence of strategy or communications channels.

"They just let ideas go... no support, enthusiasm, organisation capability or anything like that... it is like banging your head against a brick wall" (SIG 2).

"There are a lot of talented people out there with good ideas; the island could have a lot more about it if they just put a bit of effort in" (SIG 3).

Poor communication was also related to duplication or wasting of resources. Evidence was of frustrated stakeholders going it alone and insiders narrowing collaboration in order to avoid conflict, reduce negative feedback and streamline decision making (as per Healey, 1997; Morgan *et al.*, 2003). Yet by not sharing their knowledge or success, such acts raise the risk of conflicting strategies and wasted resources (see Bramwell and Sharman, 1999). Interest group members talked about frustrations of lost opportunities for instance.

"We could have snowballed you know like make it a bigger deal with more resources behind" (SIG 4).

Another interest group member gave an example whereby they and government operated in direct opposition to each other regards land management issues.

"We see it one way and they see it another... it is sad really (because) it is a waste and it is kind of just undermining everything we do" (SIG 5).

Conflict arising from such differences in opinion and action were also suggested in several cases. Talked about in particular by interest group members and several other stakeholders including residents, was long term conflict regarding motocross riders. This is a tourist group associated with significant natural landscape damage controversially targeted in official marketing.

"Many of the paths you just can't walk anymore" (SIG 1).

"The erosion is horrible, even up to the summits it is now... looks horrible. It makes me really sad and angry actually" (Resident 10).

Pursuit of motocross riders was discussed by these stakeholders as emblematic of the failure of communications between stakeholders.

"They continue to promote despite all the damage and all the opposition... it is depressing really" (Accommodation 1).

"You have this huge and sustained weight of opinion against this and no response from government I don't think ever on the issue" (SIG 1).

Furthermore, the issue was described as symptomatic of failure by public officials to appreciate or protect natural resources, target appropriate niches or sustainably manage tourism.

"Where are the mentions of nature? They have a few references on their website to I think, wallabies, and that is it. Where is the birdlife? Where are the habitats we have?" (Attraction 2).

"We could have had a national park years ago: it is down to the stupidity and incompetence of government that we haven't" (Politician 2).

Many stakeholders felt concerned by perceived neglect or mismanagement of tourism by an unrepresentative, biased and not necessarily competent clique. Limited skill sets, fear of change, fragility of egos, potential corruption and vested interests were all talked about.

"Through their inability and incompetence they are letting (tourism) die" (Resident 9).

In turn, it appeared that key decision makers tended to perceive other stakeholders in terms of their relative inability to make meaningful contributions (as per Aas *et al.*, 2005). Government stakeholders questioned the competencies of others. These were characterised as small scale, focussed on own immediate personal problems or desires, with an inability to see

the bigger picture. For instance, small business owners were characterised by one interviewee as self-interested, unknowledgeable and constantly demanding attention.

"They call you up all the time wanting your help, expecting you to do this and that for them... (but) if it is something broader they just don't want to know... they're never grateful" (Politician 1).

Extensive criticisms illustrated what became identified as high levels of mutual mistrust, frustration and resentment between stakeholders in the Isle of Man. Collaboration depends upon presence of and confidence in leadership, as it does a sense of shared trust and respect for contributions (Huxham, 2003; Yodsuwan and Butcher, 2012), and faith in the competencies of parties involved (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Bramwell and Lane, 1999). Such confidence seemed largely absent in the Isle of Man.

Conclusion

Research in the Isle of Man revealed a lack of formal collaboration between tourism stakeholders. Confused, inefficient, fragmented, mistrustful and overall dysfunctional relationships between stakeholders were widespread. Perceptions of relative power and influence over tourism decision making revealed a strong sense of disparities in terms of access to formal and informal networks. Stakeholders felt they should be involved in tourism decision making, yet few structures were in place to facilitate this, and few felt they actually were involved. Decision making was viewed as an opaque process dependent on a small group of somewhat unknown actors. Regards support for tourism meanwhile, considerable imbalance in attitudes was identified through the island tourism community. In both cases the divide between government stakeholders and most other stakeholders was particularly notable.

This dysfunctional collaboration was found to bring a range of negative consequences that serve to undermine local tourism management including a lack of overall strategic commitment. This in turn contributed to problems of duplicated or conflicting strategy, wasted resources, lost enthusiasm and potential conflict. Significant stakeholder mistrust emerged as a result, again between government and other stakeholders especially.

These emergent patterns largely agree with and follow those established in the literature (i.e. Jamal and Getz, 1995; Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Adu-Ampong, 2014), albeit from an untypical case study perspective. Past research suggests that without cohesion amongst stakeholders, strategies will not experience success, or at least not to the same extent (i.e. Cai, 2002; Morgan *et al.*, 2003; Marzano and Scott, 2009). This research also extends such findings by illustrating dysfunction specifically; whereby stakeholder relationships may for various reasons become unbalanced and unproductive. Similarly negative consequences may emerge as to when collaboration is absent. However, dysfunction may be a particularly intractable situation, being not just a result of neglect, but also increased hostility, mistrust and disagreement between stakeholders established over time.

By demonstrating the negative consequences where it is dysfunctional, this paper reiterates the importance of collaboration to successful tourism management. Present limited collaboration could be seen as a major weakness of Isle of Man tourism. Although affected by many wider issues surrounding first generation resort downturn (Walton, 2000; Chapman and Speake, 2011), this could at least partly explain the long-term decline of the local

industry. Research suggests there is presently no clear agreement over the fundamental role and position of tourism in the Isle of Man or its future direction. Nor is there agreement on what a future strategy should seek to achieve and how. Such fundamental concepts are necessary for dealing with the challenges of tourism lifecycle management from development to decline and addressing the significant and diverse challenges which can face communities at different stages therein (Almeyda *et al.,* 2010; Chapman and Speake, 2011; Canavan, 2014).

If the tourism industry in the Isle of Man is to be revived and the associated concerns of local stakeholders addressed, needed is the creativity in the face of significant challenges (i.e. Chapman and Speake, 2011), coordination of limited available resources (Ayres, 2000), and recruitment of significant local competencies brought by collaboration (i.e. Chaperon and Bramwell, 2013). Obstacles to collaboration are significant. The diversity of stakeholders in a destination such as this is complex, as are their goals, objectives, opinions, outlooks and agendas (Bramwell and Sharman 1999). Managing such diversity with both inclusiveness and direction is an often expensive challenge (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Swarbrooke, 1999). Questions remain in particular regards informal networks, hidden groups and cultural barriers (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Aas *et al*, 2005), as well as vested interests, power dynamics, history, culture and local politics (Hall, 1999; Tosun, 2000).

There is clearly a need to rebuild trust between stakeholders through transparency of decision making (Diamantis, 2004) which is moreover more open to and inclusive of various stakeholder groups (Hardy and Beeton, 2001). Yet the strong underlying interest in and support for tourism identified suggests a healthy debate may readily be stimulated on the Isle of Man through which common ground, solutions and future vision may rapidly coalesce. This debate now needs to be enabled by establishing and maintaining formal collaboration exchanges open to diverse stakeholders. In addition to this, currently dysfunctional relationships need to be improved. Building trust by communicating tourism roles and strategy publically and transparently, addressing power imbalances, and through on-going research that seeks to understand the current and evolving perspective of multiple actors, would help to stabilise relationships. Such processes require significant investment and commitment to establish. Yet this will ultimately contribute to a stronger, more strategic, cohesive, and overall competitive local tourism sector.

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