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IDENTIFICATION, MOTIVATION AND FACILITATION OF DOMESTIC TOURISM IN A SMALL ISLAND

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a case concerning domestic tourism in the Isle of Man, British Isles; a small maritime nation with Norse heritage. Qualitative interviews find the existence of considerable domestic tourism activity conducted by island residents, including daytrips and overnight stays, and explore the motivational and facilitating factors which underpin this. Such behaviour is identified by residents as touristic and distinct from other leisure pursuits. Yet recognition of domestic tourism in small geographic spaces is currently almost entirely absent. This article attempts to highlight the issue and draw attention to attendant benefits of domestic tourism which include economic and social inputs. These may be relevant to a small island community, and in the case of the Isle of Man help to support an otherwise ailing tourism industry.

Key Words: Domestic Tourism; Small Island Tourism; Isle of Man; Qualitative Research

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to explore the occurrence of domestic tourism in a small island. This is the pursuit of travel, leisure, entertainment, social and educational experiences by island residents, within the spatial confines of a small island. Such experiences, shown to be widespread, are related to but distinct from more general leisure activities due to their deeper novelty, commitment and importance. By identifying this phenomenon, and subsequently describing the motivations which drive and factors which facilitate, it is hoped that increased attention will be brought to the marketing and management possibilities of a potentially significant and attractive, yet currently overlooked tourism niche. Findings are important in that they draw attention to and outline dynamics of highly localised domestic tourism activity. The potential benefits of this domestic tourism, also explored through literature review, have implications for theory and practise. These may be particularly relevant for tourism planners in the Isle of Man and similar North Atlantic destinations. Initial recommendations are made as a result.

The stagnation of many resorts hit by changing consumer tastes and new competition (see Chapman and Speake, 2011), particularly those cold water coastal resorts of Northern Europe (i.e. Cooper, 1995; Baum, 1998; Baldacchino and Pleijel, 2010), has hastened the search for methods of destination revitalisation. Niche tourism focus is a frequently advocated strategy for recaptured differentiation and industry rejuvenation (i.e. Scherrer *et al*, 2009). However, revival strategies in post-mature destinations have so far largely overlooked the potential for the domestic tourism niche to contribute to industry maintenance and revival (Secklemann, 2002). In general meanwhile, domestic tourism is a subject area which tends to be neglected by the wider literature (Cortes-Jimenez, 2008).

This oversight is compounded in the case of small islands. Domestic tourism by island residents is almost entirely ignored. Such tourism faces the problem of falling outside of many considerations of domestic tourism activity, whereby travel has to be above a certain distance to qualify, frequently greater than that which is possible in a confined geographic space (Canavan, 2013a). This is despite evidence that island residents support many local tourism activities such as festivals (Tsartas, 1992; Smith, 2003), or that definitions of domestic tourism need to be more flexible in light of the subjective and context specific nature of these (Canavan, 2013a). Where rare attention is given to domestic tourism, distinctions between macro and micro levels are often not made (e.g. Cooper, 1995). Most domestic tourism research focuses at a national level, and thus relatively little is known about more localised contexts, such as in-state versus national and international (Bonn *et al,* 2005). One area of exploration is island-to-island tourism, where island inhabitants are shown to pursue diverse tourism activities on a smaller island neighbour (i.e. Malta and Gozo; Boissevain, 1979, Trinidad and Tobago; Weaver, 1998). Additionally, whilst many small islands are part of larger national entities, residents may associate with an island specific identity. Henceforth all arrivals from overseas may be viewed as foreign. To illustrate, Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) discuss in Samnos, Greece, that residents distinguish between Greek and foreign visitors to an extent, yet also view them as having much in common, with all arrivals distinct from local islanders.

As a result detailed understanding of and nuances within domestic tourism may go unremarked, unexplained and unaddressed. Subsequent strategies and recommendations outlined in the current literature neglect a significant potential market, and one which might be particularly relevant to those less well known destinations unable to follow unrealistic, generic strategies, competing with a global network of destinations for elusive international travellers (Chapman and Speake, 2011). What is often generalised discussion of niche

tourism strategies in secondary and cold water small islands (i.e. Cooper, 1995; Ritchie and Inkari, 2006), might be made more specific, actionable and useful. Those many peripheral, secondary, and less well known destinations of Northern and Nordic Europe, often struggling to compete for tourism, yet with strong local traditions of domestic tourism, may find of particular relevance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research illustrates how domestic tourism accounts for upwards of four fifths of all tourism flows (Scheyvens, 2002). Even in nations with internationally orientated tourism industries domestic tourism is demonstrated to be greater in terms both of size and economic contribution (i.e. New Zealand; Pearce, 1990, Spain and Italy; Cortes-Jimenez, 2008, Italy: Massidda and Etzo, 2012). Estimates put the value of the UK domestic tourism industry in 2014 at around £63bn, more than three times the size of international (VisitBritain.org).

Yet domestic tourism tends to be under-investigated in the tourism studies literature. One reason for this may be ambiguities in distinguishing between tourism and leisure activity; the difference between which may be considered somewhat arbitrary and subjective (McKerchner, 1996). Both tourism and recreation share the same resources, use the same facilities, exert similar impacts, and produce common social and psychological outcomes for participants (Fedler 1987). And the two should arguably not be seen as separate phenomena, but rather as sides of a continuum (McKerchner, 1996; Carr, 2002a). Nevertheless, tourism has been described as a richer experience than the more everyday ones of leisure associated with entertainment and enjoyment (Ryan and Kinder, 1996). Although these are components of touristic trips also, tourism relates to those richer and less typical experiences associated

with deeper motivations of escapism and exploration, perhaps contributing to fulfilment (Fodness, 1994; Adams, 1998; Klenosky, 2002).

Tourism has been emphasised as an act of differentiation from the regular, monotonous and mundane (i.e. Urry, 2002), with even small changes making this possible (Jaakson, 1986). Additionally outlined is the importance of seeking out novel spaces for exploration and learning as a motivator for tourism (i.e. Archer, 1978; Adams, 1998). As such escapism and exploration tends to be associated with greater distance, time and effort invested in pursuit of (Crompton, 1981). Thus descriptions tourism takes place in destinations away from area of origin (Pearce, 1995). Holiday environment is geographically separate from the space inhabited during the rest of the year and is where tourist rather than leisure behaviour is exhibited (Carr, 2002b).

Ambiguities of distinction between leisure and tourism may be complicated further when considering the domestic niche. The typically shorter distances travelled or greater cultural proximity between them and their hosts may serve to make domestic tourism less easily observable and contribute to current neglect of this area. Minimum distances travelled in order to qualify as a touristic rather than a leisure trip for example, may fail to accommodate the variety of individual and context specific settings these take place in (Canavan, 2013a). In a small island notions of time and distance may be localised and it may be that certain factors can facilitate the pursuit of deeper tourism experiences even in a confined geographic space (Canavan, 2013a).

Research focus tends moreover to be on international tourism because of the export income generated (Neto, 2003), yet a range of benefits emphasise the advantages of domestic tourism also. Domestic tourism tends to be even more significant outside of the few highly internationalised destinations each country may host, typically capital cities and first order natural or cultural sites. Secondary attractions and landscapes can particularly benefit from

domestic tourism (Secklemann, 2002). Domestic tourism is widely acknowledged for inducing a redistribution of national income from richer typically metropolitan areas, to poorer usually rural and isolated ones (Archer, 1978, Pearce, 1990, Neto, 2003). Hence domestic tourism can offer opportunities for wealth transfer to and sustainable development of poor regions, and without having to rely on further expansion of international mass tourism and its associated problems (Secklemann, 2002).

This latter point may be especially pertinent to island communities, which face a dilemma of needing economic development to counter landscape restrictions, yet have finite and fragile landscapes vulnerable to environmental damage (see Chaperon and Bramwell, 2013). Domestic tourists tend to travel shorter distances, often by rail rather than plane for instance, thus demanding less of finite natural resources (Fennell, 2008). Furthermore, domestic tourists may be more sensitive to local cultural and natural carrying capacities, due to cultural proximity, shared values and resources (Ryan, 2001). Carr (2002b) suggests tourists may indulge in less hedonistic and potentially problematic behaviour domestically than when abroad. Travel by nationals within their own country may also promote national unity and integration (Archer, 1978, Sindiga, 1996), contribute to increased interest towards, understanding of, and pride in local landscapes (see Adams, 1998; Canavan, 2013a). Hence, domestic tourism can be associated with deepening collective identity and understanding (Archer, 1978).

Domestic tourists have additionally been suggested as providing more economic input to local communities because they tend to use locally owned facilities, reducing leakage rates; a particular problem in many small island destinations (Buhalis, 1999). For example, domestic tourists are more likely to use small businesses in different places, rather than be concentrated in a few major resorts, to avoid pre-paid packages, and purchase local products and services (Gossling *et al*, 2005, Schmallegger *et al*, 2011). Domestic tourism may also be

a means for destinations to reduce seasonality and dependence on few originating markets, or declining markets (Sindiga, 1996). Moreover, Mykletun and Crotts (2001) note in Bornholm, Denmark, that whilst international arrivals spend more per head, they have far lower propensity to revisit, thus over time their spending is lower as well as less reliable. Hence, domestic tourists may offer a more stable, reliable, realistic, and less seasonal development option for many resorts.

THE ISLE OF MAN

Located in the centre of the Irish Sea, British Isles, the Isle of Man is a north European maritime nation with ancient Norse roots. Many cultural, genealogical, political and ideological influences can be traced back to the period of Norse rule from the 9th to 13th centuries (McDonald, 2007). The Norse-established Tynwald parliament for instance, related to the 'Things' of Iceland, Faeroe, Shetland and Orkney, is reported to be the world's oldest in continuous existence. The island's current political status is that of a UK crown dependency with locally held power over legislation which affects the island.

The island has an area of 588km² and is home to circa 70,000 people, around a third of which live in the capital, Douglas (Isle of Man Digest of Statistics, 2014). Smaller towns and villages are located throughout. A distinctive island culture is informed by its political and geographical position. Celtic, Norse and later Anglo-Saxon influences manifest in the unique Manx Gaelic language, events and traditions such as the Tourist Trophy (TT) motorcycle races, as well as the many heritage sites from these different periods. The island's natural landscape is equally varied, with a diversity of natural habitats ranging from peat moorland, through agricultural plains, wooded glens, coastal heath and cliffs.

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 began to fall, to levels around one third of past levels. The principle reason behind decline, as with other north European coastal resorts, has been described as the rise of cheap foreign travel, which tends to be more exotic and climatically stable (Walton, 2000). Today tourism is only the sixth biggest sector of the island economy, creating around 5% of GDP and 14% of jobs. Tourism indicators depict an on-going period of stagnation. Offshore finance and related industry now accounts for the bulk of local economic activity: 23% of jobs, and 36% of GDP (Isle of Man Digest of Statistics 2014).

METHODOLOGY

This article is based upon fieldwork in the Isle of Man conducted during a period of part time residency on the island from October 2010 – October 2013. This involved field trips to tourist attractions, participant observation of and with island tourists, literature reviews of government statistical data, local newspapers and local tourism literature. These were used to immerse within local culture, and to build a broad understanding of local tourism and the surrounding context embedded within.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

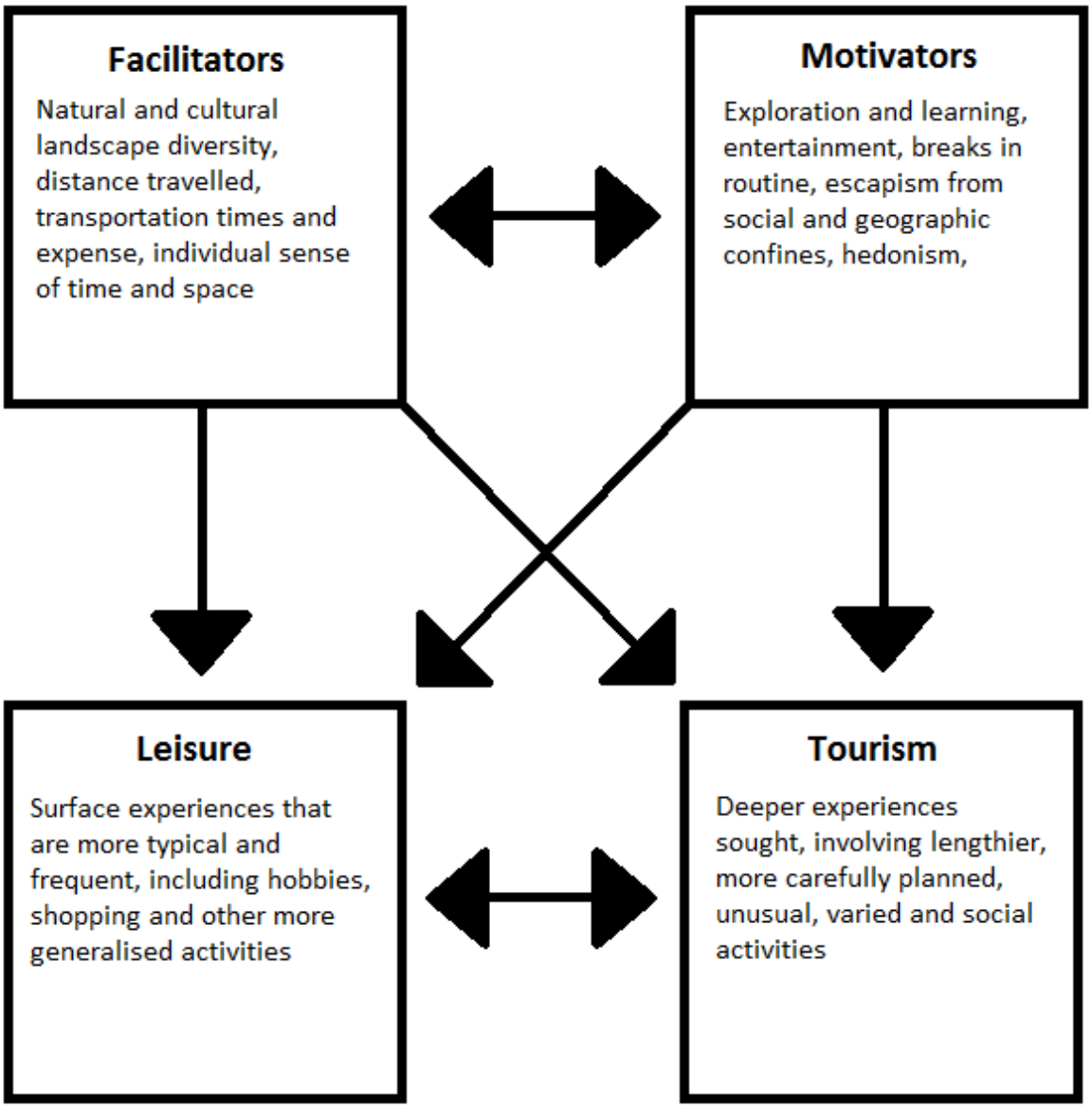
Subsequently depth qualitative interviews with island residents were used to investigate and then analyse local descriptions of domestic tourism, motivations for pursuing, if at all, and any factors which might constrain or contribute to this, such as distance travelled (See Figure 1). Themes relate to the established literature analysing and describing domestic tourism, which distinguishes in terms of the particular activities and motivations this may involve (i.e. Archer, 1978; Sindiga, 1996; Neto, 2003).

As such questions related to eliciting descriptions of travel for purposes of entertainment, escapism, exploration or education. Such behaviour where it occurred was probed and prompted in order to build up rich descriptions of local domestic leisure and tourism activity and the motivations which underlined. In accordance with the literature distinctions between these were made relating to depth. Although an interview guide was prepared, in most cases this was stuck to loosely amidst more free ranging discussion of the topic, and used mainly to ensure overall direction of conversations and coverage of topics (see McGivern, 2009).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several broad themes underpin and frame the analysis and narrative of this article. Common motivations underpin both leisure and tourism, but the latter may be seen as having greater depth (Pearce and Lee, 2005). Interview descriptions could therefore be broadly classified accordingly. Facilitators were those things such as landscape diversity and access, which may help to both drive motivations, in that they influence a desire for exploration or create conditions to seek escape from, and can also fulfil those by providing variety and novelty in which to pursue tourism. Facilitators and motivators were considered to underpin and help identify behaviour that could be broadly classified on a continuum from the more surface, mundane and everyday domestic leisure, to the deeper, richer and more meaningful domestic tourism (McKerchner, 1996).

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



SAMPLING PROCEEDURE

29 interviews were conducted, lasting for an average of 30 minutes (see list of interviewees Table 1). Interviews were live recorded and then transcribed within 72 hours by the researcher. Many more informal interviews and short discussions occurred during research and these helped to inform and develop the overall conclusions. The aim was to speak to a range of Isle of Man residents of varying length and location of residence, to present findings both within local context and participants own words (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), and wider social specific context (Milner and Mezias, 1996). The sampling process used a combination of purposive sampling and snowballing, with new interviewees recruited based on recommendations from other participants (as with Schmalleger *et al*, 2011). Potential respondents were identified during fieldwork at various public sites and events. These were both broadly touristic, such as attractions, and non-touristic, such as sports events. Following these initial brief contacts, those which suggested a positive response in terms of being a Manx resident and receptive to taking part in research were contacted via email or telephone requesting a further meeting at a time and place convenient to. Some network sampling occurred due to the nature of building contacts within a small island society. Creswell (2003) describes the risk of backyard sampling, whereby only similar opinions to one's own emerge due to tendency for commonality amongst group members, albeit Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) do suggest theoretical sampling is opportunistic. As with Hartmann (1988) therefore, research limitations are acknowledged explicitly, and in light of, attempts to generalise findings are not made. Yet insight into and description of an overlooked topic may be realistically provided.

SAMPLE

Table 1: List of Interviewees

Interviewee Code	Gender, Location, Residence	Interviewee Code	Gender, Location Residence
A	Male. West. Young resident always lived on island	P	Male. N.A. Moved to island over 20 years ago
B	Female. North. Elderly resident moved to the island over 60 years ago	Q	Male. East. Young resident moved to island c. 2 years ago.
C	Female. East. Moved to island c. 10 years ago	R	Female. South. Moved to island c. 10 years ago
D	Female. East. Young resident always lived on island	S	Female. North. Moved between IoM – UK - IoM
E	Female. South. Young resident always lived on island	T	Female. North. Moved to island c. 6 years ago
F	Female. North. Young resident always lived on island	U	Female. North. Moved to island c. 5 years ago.
G	Male. South. Always lived on island	V	Male. North. Moved to island c. 10 years ago
H	Male. East. Elderly resident always lived on island	W	Female. North. Always lived on island.
I	Male. North. Moved to island c. 15 years ago	X	Male. North. Moved to island c. 5 years ago
J	Female. North. Moved to island 6 years ago	Y	Male. East. Always lived on island
K	Male. West. Young immigrant moved c. 3 years	Z	Male. North. Young resident always lived on island
L	Female. East. Young resident always lived on island	KA	Female. East. Young resident always lived on island
M	Female. North. Moved to island c. 6 years ago	JJ	Male. North. Retired to island c. 5 years ago
N	Female. North. Elderly resident moved over 20 years ago	CC	Female. North. Elderly resident always lived on island.
O	Female. North. Elderly resident moved over 20 years ago		

ANALYSIS

Due to the exploratory nature of the project, limited past precedent, and the desire to uncover the descriptions of participants, 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). A constructivist approach to grounded theory was used to interpret data and build conclusions (see Thornberg, 2012). The technique, allowing for a back and forth approach to data construction and emergence of concepts through data analysis, rather than a testing of preconceived hypothesis (as per Glaser, 1992; Thornberg, 2012), was felt to be

valuable in this research context. Briefly speaking, prior researcher knowledge of the subject was limited as is the literature being engaged with, limiting the ability or desirability of hypothesis testing. Thus interview data was coded and interpreted in an on-going basis, with patterns allowed to emerge from based loosely around the themes outlined using traditional colour-coding/copy-and-paste techniques.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Evidence from the Isle of Man was of domestic tourism activity pursued by island residents within island in the form of daytrips and overnight stays. This was distinguished by participants themselves from more general leisure or entertainment activities in terms of greater time spent, distance travelled, and communality of experiences, as well as in the deeper motivations for undertaking. Motivations for domestic tourism were associated with a desire for escapism and exploration, and particular factors were identified that helped to facilitate the pursuit and fulfilment of these despite a confined geographical space. For example, long travel times and landscape variety in the Isle of Man enhance possibilities for exploration of less well known places or escapism from geographic and social familiarity.

These descriptions regarding the extent, motivations for and facilitators to domestic tourism in the Isle of Man will now be looked at in detail before implications for theory and practise are discussed.

OCCURRENCE OF DOMESTIC TOURISM

Research began by exploring the extent and type of domestic tourism activities on the Isle of Man. Interviews demonstrated that there was considerable and distinguishable tourism activity by Isle of Man residents within island. All participants described taking tourist

daytrips multiple times per year. A quarter of interviewees had also taken overnight stays in a variety of accommodations including holiday cottages, campsites, and hotels or B&B's.

Frequently used during interviews were terms such as tourist or holiday when describing particular leisure activities on the Isle of Man. Further discussion and prompting illustrated these descriptions of touristic activities shared common elements which distinguished for interviewees from more general leisure pursuits. Leisure tended to be seen as those enjoyable, but more frequent and less special activities such as shopping. Tourism however was described as a more unusual and richer experience. *"It's (tourism) more special like a full day out with the family sort of thing… Not just like shopping and that; like you do something more interesting" (L.).* Albeit such distinctions depended on individuals; some participants considered relatively local travel to be touristic, for others greater distances were required. This may relate to facilitators such as access to private transport.

What was considered as tourism included a greater element of preparation; packing picnics, planning routes or arranging with group members for example. Activities were also usually described as combined with other pursuits such as hiking, shopping and eating out, and hence were expected to take a prolonged period of time. *"It is nice to go down south with the grandchildren and make it a full day out. You can go to the castle, take them to see the trains... we always stop for an ice cream, even if it's raining" (B.).* Tourist activities were also communal, with all respondents describing partaking with family and friends. Hosting visiting friends and relatives was also commonly discussed and an important reason to pursue domestic tourism was for entertaining guests. *"I love having (family) over. It makes you go out and do things and you get a lot out of it yourself" (KA.).*

Destinations visited were moreover distinct, with well-known natural and cultural attractions important. Castles, glens, the Laxey Wheel, museums and beaches, representing typical cultural historic and scenic sites of the island, were commonly highlighted for

instance, and the coastal towns of Peel and Port Erin were popular destinations because of their picturesque nature and perceived resort qualities. Both towns are centred on sandy beaches and have historic centres with small shops and cafes. *"Everyone seems to go to Peel don't they? There are always people out having a good time, having ice-creams. It is always busy, even in winter" (G.).* Interviewees generally appreciated a sense of holiday atmosphere discussed in terms of busy spaces. *"The Sound is really nice... I like that there are always a lot of people there enjoying the setting... It (the island) can get lonely; it's nice to share it with people" (J.).*

Questions were asked where possible to elicit estimated spend and spending habits of respondents when undertaking local tourism. Specific values could not usually be provided and are an obvious avenue for future research, however broad discussion was shared of spending on attractions, food and drink, transport and local shopping. Local data regards the prices of public transport and entrance to attractions does suggest a significant outlay. A family of four visiting the Curraghs Wildlife Park for instance; frequently mentioned as a popular tourist attraction, will pay entry of £26 (http://www.curraghswildlifepark.im/plan-your-visit/opening-times-2/ as of 11/03/15). Budget concerns were however frequently described as influencing the decision to travel locally in the first place, with this being a lower cost option than overseas travel. *"I don't think it costs anything to be honest; that is kind of the point. I haven't got any money so this is a cheap holiday" (L.).*

MOTIVATIONS FOR DOMESTIC TOURISM

Interviews illustrated several important motivators for island domestic tourism. These were distinguished by being more deeply felt. Thus a passive urge to explore might trigger a few hours leisure activity, but a more strongly felt sensation might drive one of the more ambitious, time consuming and distant tourism breaks identified.

Escapism was an important motivator for participants. This could also be considered socially in terms of the pursuit of social or romantic desires. Several respondents discussed social claustrophobia in terms of feelings of social obligation and peer observation in public spaces. *"Everybody knows your business" (KA.).* Hence travelling to a less frequented location, where one is unknown, could be particularly relaxing. *"It's so nice to go in the shops and just be able to browse... You can just space out. Here I am looking through the window to see if anyone I know is at the till" (F.). "I don't normally consider those sorts of shops... they're a bit embarrassing to go into. So it's nice to have an excuse and think 'oh I will go in those', and you find some interesting things" (C.).*

In addition to social escapism, geographic and personal escapism could be identified in the commonly expressed drive to do get away from familiarity of immediate surroundings or daily routine; a desire frequently discussed and related to visiting somewhere unusual or doing unusual things. These changes were usually modest, eating ice-cream on the seafront for instance, but were a break from the everyday and mundane. *"It's just trying to have a little fun" (P.). "You get tired of doing the same thing don't you? So I just sometimes decide to run down for the bus and go out, you know, before they can come in for their coffee. That way... I don't have to worry about them coming in and wanting feeding" (B.).*

There was additionally a clear desire to explore the diversity and contrasts of the island, both to experience in itself and also to get to know the island as a whole. For example, camping gave access to enjoy tranquillity, romance, isolation and time to appreciate the natural beauty of surroundings. *"You can get really close to the wildlife. There was this hen harrier just sat on a fence post about twenty feet away from my mum. I don't know if it's because they're not used to seeing people. It's really good if you are into that sort of thing" (W.).*

These motivations were perhaps particularly important to those staying overnight. For those who had done so, pursuit of deeper experiences relating to exploration and learning, or escapism and hedonism, were explained as the main reasons behind. Regards hedonism for instance, shared was a sense of increased privacy from usual social surroundings of family and community, allowing for more hedonistic behaviour to be expressed. To illustrate, two participants who had rented holiday cottages, and intended to again, did so because they travelled with a group of friends who had a good time together. These and two campers described hedonistic behaviour associated with staying overnight with friends, such as sexual activity, drinking, and smoking marijuana, with a perception of being 'away from the rules'. *"Oh my God we all got so drunk... x and y got together and it was so funny. We had the best time" (K.). "It just like really brings you like together. Like, it is away from parents and everybody else, and so you can like really get to know each other" (A.).* Similarly, all those who had stayed overnight discussed the advantage of being able to stay in a place for longer, and hence get to know more intimately than a day out would allow. *"We go all over. It's the best way to see a place; to stay in it, and then you get to know it at all times of the day, not just the afternoon" (O.).*

FACILITATING DOMESTIC TOURISM

Research found that a number of factors facilitated the occurrence of domestic tourism on the Isle of Man. These provided the conditions to both stimulate and satisfy motivations for pursuing domestic tourism.

Although a small island, public transport connections can be disjointed and private ones restricted by small roads. Longer distance travel is therefore relatively time consuming, and was thus discussed as infrequent and associated with more special occasions. *"It's a lot of effort to go all the way down Castletown. Takes like nearly an hour" (X.).* Infrequency of

travel appeared to reinforce a sense of distinction between and unfamiliarity of different island regions, thus adding to the sense of going somewhere different when leaving a more immediate area. The island's range of habitats, attractions and even intangible atmosphere was likewise talked about as diverse and associated with particular regions. *"Going down south for a holiday; it's like going to a different country!" (S.). "It is surprisingly different down there... Like it doesn't seem like it is the same island" (J.).*

Also discussed was an individual sense of space felt by island residents themselves. The Isle of Man might seem geographically small to an outsider, but for those resident it may not seem so. Conversations were of long periods without visiting entire regions because of how far away they seemed and how much effort would be involved. *"I haven't been to Castletown in about six years!" (D.).* Several immigrants described how original concerns of life in a small island evolved, further emphasising nuances in perceptions. *"When I first came here people said they only went to Port Erin once a year and I didn't believe them, but now I am like that too. It gets like it is a big effort" (X.).* As is commonly noted in anecdotes, a short flight might seem nothing to an Australian accustomed to vast landscapes. It appears the opposite is perhaps true for small islanders.

DISCUSSION

A unique contribution of this study is to raise awareness of the incidence of domestic tourism in a small island. This is demonstrated through certain, typically deeper activities, linked to strongly felt motivations and enabled by certain facilitating factors linked to geographic variety, access, and individuals' sense of space. This has important theoretical implications in terms of recognising nuances within definitions of tourism that currently all too often overlook untypical incidences such as this. Increased appreciation of the significance and

diversity of domestic tourism may result. Likewise important practical implications that emerge from the existence and development potential of what may be a significant and attractive tourist niche.

Domestic tourism as opposed to domestic leisure activity is distinguished by the motivations which underlie. Although some differences between domestic and international tourists have previously been noted (Awaritefe, 2004) a core of travel motivation factors including escape, relaxation, relationship enhancement, and self-development, seem to comprise the central backbone of motivation for all travellers (Pearce and Lee, 2005). Research concurred, illustrating residents seeking escapism from routine, geographic and social surroundings. Related to this desire to do something different was a desire to explore and learn more about the island. Noted was the additional depth of experience and motivation held by any overnight visitors. Although a small sample size precludes generalisations, this may suggest further nuance within the leisure-tourism continuum, with those committing to longer overnight stays perhaps seeking the greatest depth.

Thus identified were both socio-psychological factors such as entertainment or escapism; where the destination acts as a function through which such needs can be satisfied, and cultural factors such as discovery and increasing knowledge; where the emphasis is on the destination itself as a place of novelty, interaction and learning (Crompton, 1979). Likewise it could be seen that both push factors, relating to needs and wants of the traveller, and pull factors, or features of the destination itself, motivated Isle of Man domestic tourists (as per Klenosky, 2002). Both positive escapism; that concerned with learning and broadening minds, and negative escapism; seeking fun, pleasure, and getting away from responsibilities and stress (Fodness, 1994), were identified.

As such what can recognisably be defined as touristic rather than leisure motivation and resulting expression occurs within a small island by island residents themselves.

Findings illustrate that limited size is not a barrier to pursuit of domestic tourism, nor does it lessen the motives which drive demand for. If anything the opposite may be true, given that the social and spatial confines of small islands have been associated with an increased desire for anonymity, space and escapism (i.e. Duffield and Long, 1982). As Jaakson (1986) notes, escapism, relaxation and proximity to nature underlie second home tourism, even when the second home may be within visual range of the first. Rather several factors identified appear to facilitate domestic tourism. Landscape variety, infrequency of travel, travel times and expense, and embedded nature of many residents in a local area were found. Certain landscapes, such as those with a more touristic atmosphere, may have more hedonic and social meanings to residents, than more utilitarian areas and facilities (Snepenger *et al,* 2007). These contrasts and localised attitudes towards space and time enabled the sought sense of differentiation from normal geography, society and the sense of routine and mundane associated with these. They facilitated the feelings of exploration and gaining new knowledge about the island that were identified as important motivators for domestic tourism. They also satisfy definitions whereby domestic tourism involves travel outside of the normal place of residence to other areas within the country (Burkart and Medlik, 1981).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that research identifies existence of a significant local niche, managerial implications arise for destinations which like the Isle of Man may be able to identify, respond to and build upon. The many similar small islands and peripheral communities of the Nordic and North Atlantic region, destinations which are moreover frequently faced with issues of tourism seasonality, competition, decline and sustainability (i.e. Baum and Hagen, 1999; Ritchie and Inkari, 2006; Baldacchino and Pleijel, 2010), might be able to harness the economic and social input of domestic tourists, enabling maintenance of key infrastructure and facilities. As

Crouch and Ritchie (1999: 141) identify: “Foreign demand thrives more readily when domestic tourism is established”. In turn benefits brought by the industry as a whole are more likely to be maintained, and negative consequences caused by industry decline avoided (Canavan, 2013b). It may at least manage the tourism de-growth process in a more sustainable manner (see Canavan, 2014).

Currently little recognition exists of the role domestic tourism may play in local area success (Neto, 2003). This undermines basic research into and understanding of the niche that would enable relevant management and marketing strategies to be developed. Due consideration should be given to the potential of a readily available, potentially significant and arguably attractive niche.

In the Isle of Man for example, resultant marketing which emphasises motivational factors relating to escapism or exploration would be likely to foster domestic tourism activity and attract niche visitors to specific sites and attractions. Less well known places, new trails and experiences could be promoted as diversity and contrasts were shown to be particularly important. More generally signage could be increased in order to stimulate exploration, and provide interpretation at these, helping to meet educational expectations.

Findings that domestic tourists tend to spend carefully mean tourism planners might be able to increase spending through targeting of relevant promotions and offers. For example, the high costs of attractions in the island may be prohibitive to residents, who having been once forego returning due to the expense. Offering low-cost passes or discounted entry days for residents might stimulate attendance, in turn fostering a more touristic atmosphere at sites which would benefit all visitors. Noting that domestic tourism daytrips and stays had a strong social component, potential may be to develop and promote group packages and experiences differentiated to specific user groups, such as families, couples, or hosts entertaining guests. That only a minority of interviewees had stayed overnight on island

would suggest increases in this area might be possible. Again careful pricing might foster, whilst specific promotions could stimulate interest during off peak seasons where there are few international visitors.

Tourism planners ought furthermore to protect and celebrate through strong conservation measures those facilitators of domestic tourism, such as landscape diversity, which make possible. Quality of natural and cultural landscapes is well known as a prerequisite of any long term sustainable tourism strategy (Fennell, 2008). This is as relevant when considering the domestic tourism niche as others. Establishing conservation areas, potentially an island-wide national park, would be a relevant planning decision that would help to ensure geographic and cultural variety, which underpin escapism and exploration, are preserved.

CONCLUSION

Found to be widespread in the Isle of Man was pursuit by local residents of distinct domestic tourism activity, motivated by a desire for escapism and exploration and facilitated by local landscape diversity, limited transport infrastructure, and local sense of space. Together, these make tourism activity possible in a confined geographical area. Understandings of domestic tourism need to be open to such variety and nuance and increased attention needs to be dedicated to recognising, researching and responding to this niche. This is particularly important in light of the potential benefits of local domestic tourism which henceforth ought to be considered by practitioners in the Isle of Man and other Nordic and North Atlantic small islands, coastal or peripheral destinations; many of which are facing similar challenges of maintaining local tourism industries.

Due to the small sample size involved, generalizability of the findings is limited. Moreover the lack of homogeneity between small islands may limit findings to a case by case

basis (Milne, 1992). Further research is needed in comparable and contrasting small islands in order to better understand the extent of and conditions for such domestic tourism. Quantitative research with larger samples would meanwhile help to better assess the scale and contribution of this type of tourism.

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