PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Abstract

If tourism is to become part of a more sustainable lifestyle, changes are needed to the patterns of behaviour adopted by the public. This paper presents the results of research conducted amongst members of the public in England on their understanding of sustainable tourism; their response to four desired tourism behaviour goals, and expectations about the role of government and the tourism industry in encouraging sustainable tourism. The research shows a lack of awareness of tourism's impact relative to day-to-day behaviour, feelings of disempowerment and an unwillingness to make significant changes to current tourism behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Urry (2008) argues that social sciences have no choice but to engage with various futures, principal amongst which is the challenge of climate change. While technological innovations in alternative fuels and energy saving devices may provide some comfort (or distraction) the scale of advance needed means they are unlikely to produce the efficiencies necessary to avoid the dangerous climate change territory described by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) and Stern (2006). Hence, this original work is situated within the literature of behaviour change and considers whether members of the public are willing to consume differently, and/or consume less through changes to their tourism behaviour in order to progress the transition towards a more sustainable lifestyle.

The UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy and report by the Sustainable Development Commission and National Consumer Council through the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (2006) recognised the need to explore public responses towards actions for sustainable lifestyles and their interactions with broader lifestyle aspirations. Addressing this strategy, this paper presents results of empirical research conducted for the UK government Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), on public understanding of sustainable tourism, as part of Defra's programme of work on sustainable consumption and production. The remit of the research undertaken for this project was to investigate people's understanding of sustainability as it applied to tourism and leisure, although this paper presents the results of the findings related only to tourism. The findings from the research are designed to feed into a Behaviour Change Strategy and the Citizens and Mass Engagement Programme. Parallel projects examined public understanding and willingness to change behaviour related to energy use in the home, transport, finance and investment and food, and some of the synthesis findings of these projects are incorporated within this paper.

Recognising the alternative futures possible, Defra felt that to make the transition towards a more sustainable lifestyle, a fuller understanding of residents' response to sustainable tourism was needed. The three research objectives set by Defra and addressed in this paper are: firstly, to explore public understanding of sustainable tourism; secondly, to establish responses by members of the public to Defra's four tourism behaviour goals, and finally to establish expectations about the role of government and the tourism industry in the supply of sustainable tourism opportunities. The four behaviour goals were: first, to encourage the UK as a holiday destination; second, to travel less or combine travel; third, to choose more sustainable travel methods; and fourth to choose more sustainable activities whilst on holiday.

PRO-ENVIRONMENT BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

A common premise of work promoting sustainability has been that an increase in awareness and education amongst the public will encourage more pro-environmental behaviour (Devine-Wright, 2004). Within the literature on sustainable tourism, raising awareness amongst consumers has also featured heavily as an approach to making tourism more sustainable (Dolnicar, Crouch & Long, 2008). For authors such as Johnson (2006) the need to raise the awareness of visitors is incumbent on business operators, but the link between this rise in awareness and any change in behaviour is not questioned. Amendah & Park (2008) believe raising knowledge can change consumption patterns while Lee & Moscardo (2005) find that environmentally aware consumers *may* be more likely to exhibit pro-environmental behavioural intentions than other consumers. Boon, Fluker & Wilson (2008) test the effect of a 10 year programme of awareness raising to promote ecological sustainable tourism in south east Australia and conclude that the programme had almost no effect over the period. In response, different education programmes are proposed.

Such studies are based on the rational 'deficit model' of behaviour change whereby information creates awareness of the problem, which leads to the individual changing their behaviour appropriately. As an example, Hariott (2002) reports tourists to the Great Barrier Reef reflecting that if they had more information about their impacts they would have made different consumption decisions. Yet research by Association of British Travel Agents (2002), Becken (2007), Bohler, Grischkat, Haustein and Hunecke (2005), First Choice (2005) and Gossling, Bredburg, Randow, Sandstrom & Svensson (2006) all demonstrate various populations of tourists and leisure tourists to be largely ignorant of the impacts of their behaviour. Coupled with this low level of awareness, findings suggest pro-environmental behaviour for tourism is low. Aguilo, Alegre & Sard (2005) argue that despite the claims by Poon (1989) of the rise of 'new tourists' armed with greater environmental concern, tourists visiting the Balearic islands have largely not changed their behaviour and still demand an 'old tourist' product. More broadly, evidence in the UK shows that less than 1% of all outgoing holidays booked in the UK give any real priority to the environment (Mintel, 2005).

Yet, despite the intuitive and optimistic appeal of the deficit approach, Hounsham (2006) in his meta-review of behaviour change initiatives concludes that information programs offer very little on their own, as they assume the receiver makes rational decisions based on all the information available. This does not mean the provision of information has no value, instead, information alone does not necessarily lead to increased awareness and increased awareness does not necessarily lead to action (Jackson, 2004; Defra 2005). Continuing this critique, Kurani & Turrentine (2002) and Owens (2000) question whether the level of awareness can make any significant difference to pro-environmental behaviour as it relates specifically to travel. Situational constraints and the complexity of assessing practical alternatives may mean that action inspired by high levels of awareness are frustrated, with little consequent change in behaviour. Responding, Barr (2007) separates our general environmental knowledge from more specific 'behavioural knowledge' about how we translate our general interests into specific actions. Barr's (2007) study of waste management shows that it is the specific knowledge of how to act with regards to an issue that is a greater predictor of action and behaviour rather than the more general interest and awareness that is frequently obtained by quantitative 'superficial' studies (Rose, Dade, Gallie & Scott, 2005).

The evident gap between general environmental intention and specific behaviour within tourism would suggest that tourism will be a difficult behaviour to change. 'Foot-in-the-door' strategy describes the experience of small environmental actions that lead to bigger environmental actions, through creating awareness as a kind of snowball effect develops. Yet, the snowballing effect of ever larger pro-environmental actions does not appear to have reached tourism to any significant degree (Miller, 2003). The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF, 2008) agree that for smaller pro-environmental actions it is possible to change behaviour without changing values through techniques such as celebrity endorsement, demonstrating financial savings or invoking guilt. However, for flying and holidays, such appeals to extrinsic goals will be less effective, and there is a need to target values and intrinsic motivations. This suggests tourism sits a long way along the continuum of possible pro-environmental actions and pro-environmental tourism actions will be difficult for the public to take. Yet, Macey & Brown (1983) argue in criticism of the classic Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) that behavioural experience is the better predictor of action, not intention. Hence, without experience, it is difficult to elicit a change in attitude, so there is less social proof of people operationalising their interests, and so consumer demand for sustainable tourism products is limited.

One of the key facets of the most prominent theories of behaviour change, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) is the sense of perceived behaviour control, or the extent to which

people feel they can achieve the result they want. Marshall (2005) believes action on climate change suffers because of the way the debate has been projected, describing the enormous potential impacts in a global and future-oriented manner. Given this, a sense of disempowerment to effect change can occur, a malaise of absent agency. Anable, Lane & Kelay (2006) describe climate change as an issue which sits within the public's 'sphere of concern', but not within their 'sphere of influence'. Indeed, the framing of the problem as a global problem identifies it as a problem for which we all need to take responsibility, and so no one does. Lowe et al. (2005) describe this as the 'bystander effect' whereby mass paralysis of action is caused when people as a group are confronted with something that demands intervention. For climate change, the remoteness, contested and complex discourses and intangibility of the problem add to the difficulty of understanding how our individual actions can make a difference (Des Jardins, 1997). Worse, it is possible that where we are unable to change our behaviour, then additional information can result in a state of denial about the message. Cohen (2000) believes that climate change challenges our sense of moral responsibility to such an extent that we have to deny the problem exists given the fundamental changes to our behaviour necessary to make an appropriate adjustment. Individual, deficit theorists would see the inaction as a result of a lack of information rather than too much.

Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) believe the lack of agency can be overcome in part by modifying behaviour through the power of social norms. Recycling is a recent example where behaviour has been significantly changed, and values modified subsequently to avoid cognitive dissonance, through regular public demonstration of a household's commitment to recycle. Barr (2007) showed that for reduction and reuse of waste, social norms were less important as these were activities which took place away from the view of neighbours, friends and peers – those who reinforce social norms. Hence, where the behaviour is less tangible, or publicly exposed, so social norms may be less powerful. For tourism, although the act of holidaying takes place in public, any guilt at the decision to fly is diluted immediately upon arrival at a busy airport, and any decision to stay at a hotel without any environmental management systems, accreditations etc is dispelled by the fact that the hotel is full of other people who have made the same decisions. The Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (2006) deliberative forum heard one respondent suggest anyone who had not chosen to offset the carbon emissions from their flight be compelled to sit at the back of the plane. While the idea was made in jest, the suggestion shows the challenge of creating situations in tourism where social norms can influence those with undesirable behaviours to follow the lead of those with more pro-environmental behaviours. With a lack of social proof as to what sustainability in tourism is, we are locked in to a system of feedback that confirms our decisions to ignore sustainability in our tourism consumption.

To escape from this impasse, Halpern et al. (2004) posit sociological theories revealing the importance of social networks and community role models and stressing the interpersonal nature of behaviour change may represent a way forward. Devine-Wright (2004) suggests there is something about the topic of environmental challenge, and 'carbon-citizenship' in particular that makes it suited to binding self-interested people together as we recognise the mutuality of our survival. Thus, social capital may be enhanced at a local level as groups of people strive to make bigger and more permanent changes to their lifestyles. Halpern et al. (2004) suggest the co-production of solutions and more frequent contact with a support network enhances trust in the message, has an empowering effect and strengthens the perceived behaviour control of individuals. Within tourism greater empowerment of tourists could serve to create new norms about the way we travel for holidays, and the amount that a responsible citizen should undertake.

Anable et al. (2006) conclude there is also no single unifying theory to achieve behaviour

change, and instead the authors encourage researchers to consider alternative approaches beyond those reliant on increased information, or the established Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Similarly, Jackson (2004) argues that because our individual motivations are so complex and multifaceted, it is virtually impossible to design a model that will explain these different processes across different aspects of life. The behaviour change literature underlines the necessity of examining tourism and people's willingness to adapt to more sustainable lifestyles. To this end, three research objectives were set: firstly, to explore public understanding of sustainable tourism; secondly, to establish members of the publics' response to Defra's four tourism behaviour goals, and finally to establish expectations about the role of government and the tourism industry in the supply of sustainable tourism opportunities.

Study Methods

Much of the work on pro-environmental behaviour has focused on domestic behaviour as this is where the majority of our carbon emissions occur (Anable et al., 2006; Commission for Integrated Transport, 2007). However, with the increasing recognition of travel and tourism's potentially deleterious effects it is appropriate to begin by investigating members of the public's understanding of the issues and crucially, their willingness to change, before designing strategies to change behaviour. Specifically related to travel, Anable et al. (2006:80) describe the state of the art of the application of behaviour change theories as 'currently immature', with a preference for closed questions and a reliance on self-reported measures of behaviour.

In the light of this criticism, this empirical research adopts a qualitative approach, utilising a focus group method. Fourteen focus groups were conducted in total, of these fourteen groups, six discussed the topic of sustainable leisure, while eight focus groups discussed sustainable tourism, and are the subject of this paper. 62 people attended these eight groups, which were hosted in Brighton (South East), Bournemouth (South West), Manchester (North West) and Watford (Outer London). These locations were chosen primarily because they are all close to large regional airports, rather than to try to identify any regional differences. Two focus groups were held in each location, with one group for high income households, and another group for low income households, with housing tenure used as a proxy for assessing income. While there are regional variations in income level throughout the UK, the intention of asking about whether participants owned their own home or not was to ensure people from a range of income levels were spoken with in each location. Each group comprised both men and women, a range of ages and ethnicity, different frequency of holiday-taking, different holiday destinations and with different levels of activity and views about environmental issues. It was not the aim of the research to achieve a representative sample of 'the public', but instead to ensure a range of people were recruited. Hence, a recruitment questionnaire administered on the street in each location was used to select potential participants for the groups. Anyone who had not taken a holiday in the previous two years, people who had not flown for environmental reasons (so excluding 'deep-greens'), and people who had no interest in the environment were rejected from participating further. Participants were paid a small fee for their time.

Insert Table One here:

Table One: Focus Group Characteristics

Defra have been keen to develop a segmentation approach to understanding pro-environmental behaviour, which has led to their creation of a typology reflecting how much people do for the environment (See Table one). Ahead of participation in the groups, all respondents were asked to say which of the statements most closely reflected their own beliefs.

Insert Table Two here:

Table Two: Defra Environmental Segments

The recruitment process revealed a difficulty in finding 'green activists', so a decision was made to dedicate one group only to 'green activists' and this was hosted in Brighton, a city with a strong reputation for environmentally minded citizens. Additionally, a group comprising only 16-21 year olds was held in order to establish if there was anything distinct about the views of these participants. Each focus group was two hours in length and facilitated by two moderators. Having two moderators as well as a well-crafted topic guide was crucial to be able to manage the focus groups and achieve a balance between a free-flowing discussion and the need to answer set research objectives.

In order to encourage conversation, visual stimuli were developed by the researchers in the form of coloured picture cards illustrating a range of examples relating to the behaviour goals including: Australian wine-tasting, Caribbean cruise, a beach holiday in Cornwall, Edinburgh city break, EuroDisney, skiing in France, a beach holiday in Greece, trekking in Nepal, a New York city break, a Paris city break, golfing in Scotland and a Thai beach holiday. While these served to provide respondents with a range of possible experiences, discussion was not contained exclusively to the destinations and practices pictured. Rather, they served to stimulate a wider discussion of respondents' actual and desired experiences as well as the perceived impacts of the scenarios identified. As such, visuals became referents (Barthes, 1981); catalysts through which respondents were able convey meanings and facilitate understanding (Pink, 2002).

On the back of each picture card information was presented about the carbon emissions of travelling to that destination expressed both as tonnes of carbon dioxide, and in terms of the length of time a 100W light bulb would need to be left on to emit an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide. This approach was taken in order to try to make the impacts seem more tangible and understandable for respondents. The percentage GDP contribution from tourism to the destination was also included as stimulus for discussion.

All focus groups were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data were analysed manually and thematic matrices created, from which key issues were identified (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Defra had hoped for the environmental segmentation model to be of value in analysing the respondents' discussions and although descriptors are used alongside quotes in the results section that follows, the explanatory power of this typology seemed weak for tourism (perhaps reflecting the difference between tourism and other forms of consumption). It is worth reminding readers that given the research objectives the focus group method was not able to explore differences between the views of men and women, young and old, rich and poor, or regional variations. The findings presented in this paper use selected excerpts from interview transcripts in order to support arguments. These are anonymous to ensure confidentiality.

Study Results and Discussion

> *Public Understanding of Sustainable Tourism.* As a warm up activity the use of the picture cards allowed for respondents to sort the cards according to places they most and least wanted to visit, which allowed for a discussion of what aspects of a holiday were most appealing. Respondents were then asked to sort the cards according to which holidays they thought would have the greatest negative impact. The task was not defined any further in order to allow respondents to define 'impact' themselves. These initial 'warm up' tasks allowed for a free discussion of what respondents understood by sustainable tourism rather than having any perspective imposed on them.

Overall, respondents' understanding of how tourism relates to the environment seemed weak,

largely perhaps as a consequence of a generally low level of awareness about the environment and global issues. Respondents recognised their own confusion at the relationship between 'buzz words' such as 'ozone' and 'climate change', while black smoke from buses was equated to carbon emissions:

"Well I don't really know. Just the effects of our everyday lives in terms of pollution. How everything we do [like] recycling affects the planet. Obviously that's why we've got blistering hot days and tomorrow it could be snowing for all we know. It just affects the ozone layer and all that sort of thing." (Woman, 16-21, basic contributor, Brighton)

Despite this confusion, respondents often described themselves as concerned about environmental issues, although this was frequently for the sake of their children or grandchildren. The research did also uncover respondents who said they were not concerned about the environment and chose to dismiss global warming instead as something that was part of a natural cycle, or would not happen within their lifetimes, or was something to be welcomed as it would improve the weather for the better.

Specific to tourism, respondents often struggled to cite the kind of impacts tourism might have while day-to-day environmental impacts and actions such as saving energy by turning off lights, or saving water were not considered relevant to tourism. When pressed, tangible impacts such as traffic, litter, noise, water and landscape were mentioned, with social impacts more readily suggested than economic or environmental. Although air pollution and global warming as intangible impacts were raised, there was much confusion about these topics beyond the superficial level, a finding consistent with the findings of Becken (2007), Bohler et al. (2005) and Gossling et al. (2006) who also identify the low level of connection between general understanding about the environment and possible impacts of tourism.

Placing respondents' willingness to act on tourism's impacts in context with day-to-day environmental actions revealed further confusion. Respondents reported a widely held belief that small and everyday actions in the home could have a greater impact than any possible changes to tourism behaviour. Key to this position seemed to be the frequency with which these actions were taken. For instance, a frequent flyer believed that reusing carrier bags, changing to low energy light bulbs, and insulating his home were more important for the environment than changing his holiday behaviour. Although this consumer with a conscience had a sophisticated understanding of environmental issues he recognised he had little feel for the relative impacts of everyday and tourism behaviour. An interesting development to this argument is that where the impacts of tourism were recognised, some participants felt they earned the right to fly because they took pro-environmental actions throughout the year, suggesting an attempt to be 'green on balance' (Anable et al., 2006) might be the best that can be hoped for. To achieve this delicate calculation, a much more refined understanding of tourism's role within global environmental challenges is necessary, to say nothing of the competing discourses of social and economic sustainability.

A similar confusion existed with the impacts caused by different aspects of tourism. Hence, aviation's impacts were seen as being distant, and so of less concern than the pollution caused by cars and buses, which is more obvious:

"Aeroplanes are right up there [so] by the time it gets down to us it's pretty diluted" (Man, 30-60 Consumer with a conscience, Bournemouth)

Some respondents recognised that even the cleanest of trains and cars relied on electricity, the impact of which depended on how that power was produced. Yet, there was disagreement over whether long haul was much worse than short haul flying, how cruise ships compare to other

forms of transport, and what the impact of tourist attractions and shopping malls might be. Destinations that were seen as unpopulated and rural were ranked as being more sustainable than urban destinations with larger populations. Thus, holidays to Paris and New York were seen as having greater impact than wine tasting in Australia, or trekking in Nepal, despite the huge travel components for Australia and Nepal from the UK.

This phenomenon of calculating equivalencies between activities appears fatally flawed given the misunderstanding and lack of recognition of the impacts of tourism. Where pro-environmental actions are taken without changing values, there is always likely to be the risk of a 'rebound effect' (WWF, 2008) where consumers feel they earn 'environmental credits' through one set of actions that are relatively easy to take, only to then cash these credits by not acting in a pro-environmental manner because the pro-environmental choice is either difficult and/or undesirable. Respondents said they knew what they were supposed to do as citizens in terms of general pro-environmental behaviour, but were not aware of the impacts of tourism and so did not know what to do. This suggests the urgent need to begin describing what actions a responsible tourist must take, albeit recognising that gaps may emerge between recommendations and actions. Relatedly, respondents recognised that at home they paid directly for the energy and resources they consumed, so had an incentive to conserve resources. On holiday, there is no financial incentive to conserve, and indeed, the view was expressed that having paid for the holiday they felt entitled to consume all the resources available. Companies need to be able to pass on any financial savings made as a result of their customers' behaviour, lest the invocations to reduce consumption be ineffective, or suggest only a desire to enhance corporate profitability.

Tourism behaviour goals. The first of the four behaviour goals was the desire to encourage domestic tourism for UK citizens and so address the rapid expansion in flying (UK Energy Research Centre, 2006) with its attendant reduction in carbon emissions. Yet, for the majority of respondents domestic holidays could not replace the experience possible from taking an overseas holiday. Whether this be an experience of warmer weather, different cultures or of being somewhere new, holidays in the UK could be at best 'enjoyable', but not an 'experience'. Other barriers to domestic tourism cited were the negative memories many people had as children from such trips with their parents, the relative expense of taking a holiday in the UK versus travelling overseas, the ability for children to play more safely abroad and to feel more welcomed. Two of the more adamant respondents stated:

"For most people their holiday is the big one of the year. Trying to get people to change, trying to go for that, you're just going for the jugular and you don't stand any chance." (Man, 30-60, Wastage focused, Bournemouth)

"[It] might sound really selfish [but] I work the rest of the year so I have to go away and it's costing me money so then I'm going to have a good time. I'm not going to think I'm not going to go there because of pollution or because of this or because of that, or I'm going to use this transport or travel by this rather than that. I'm just going away and that's it." (Woman, under 30, basic contributor, Manchester)

By contrast, some people were happy to stay in the UK for pro-environmental reasons.

"I'm thinking more about the damage that we all do when we fly by plane, especially on a long haul flight. So I'm thinking twice about that, much as I'd love to go to New York." (Man, 30-60, wastage focused, Brighton)

However, while there were undoubtedly people driven by environmental concerns, even amongst those acting for pro-environmental reasons, this was rarely their sole reason. An interesting

group was those who recognised the impact of their holidays, but were not prepared to change to holidaying in the UK. For them, they would try to use alternate means of transport where possible, travel less often, offset or just "feel a bit bad".

"You should be more aware, you should be more conscious of it… We don't think enough about the environment, definitely not, but we all want to do what everyone else is doing, visiting all these places." (Woman, 30 to 60, wastage focused, Bournemouth)

Non-environmental reasons to stay in the UK were more often given, such as the ease of domestic travel compared to using airports, or a desire to avoid long periods travelling (particularly for families). People who did not like warm weather, were keen to see specific sites in the UK or who wanted to visit friends and family were all happy to stay in the UK. To encourage this behaviour goal it is important to recognise that while the majority of people said they would not want to stay in the UK for their main holiday, some would be prepared to take more domestic weekend breaks. As a rapid expansion in flying has been driven by low cost airlines to Europe (Shaw and Thomas, 2006), persuading tourists to switch weekend breaks from, say Barcelona to Bath would make a considerable gain on total emissions from flying. Reduced costs (both actual and perceived), enhanced facilities, a changed image, stressing the opportunities for adventure and more information were all suggestions for encouraging more domestic tourism, as well as evidence that other people in the UK and across the world were making similar changes to their behaviour.

The second behaviour goal was to test people's willingness to travel less, or to combine their holidays to take one longer holiday instead of two or three shorter holidays, and so reduce the travel impacts of travelling. Predictably, people are wedded to the idea of taking holidays, and nobody was willing to take fewer holidays. In 1977 UK residents took 6.8m holidays overseas, by 2005 this had increased to 44.1m holidays overseas by air for the year (UK Tourism Survey, 2007). nVision (2006) shows that the item that most people feel represents 'luxury' is going on a nice holiday, far beyond living in a nice area, or driving a nice car. Tourism has also been shown to be the number one item that people in the UK save for, and the first discretionary item that people are prepared to go into debt for, rating it above paying for weddings or their children's education (nVision, 2006). Urry (2008) describes the need to move to new futures rather than return to old futures, and travelling less would appear to be an example of the latter.

To combine travel there are significant barriers to overcome. People like the idea of taking lots of shorter breaks as this gives something to look forward to throughout the year and helps to break the monotony of work. The benefit on impacts of this combined travel was recognised by some, but there was little willingness to change the behaviour of travelling frequently:

"I don't want to say this out loud but we have about 8 to 12 holidays a year. Some of them I wouldn't really call holidays. They're short holidays round Europe - short term fixes to get you through to your longer holiday". (Woman, under 30, wastage focused, Watford)

Longer holidays are more difficult to arrange with work, and while people liked the idea of being on holiday for longer, some respondents suggested that a long holiday may put strains on family relationships. As with the behaviour goal of encouraging more domestic tourism, a possible target instead of encouraging people to travel less could be to convert overseas short breaks to domestic short breaks (as per the first behaviour goal). If people travelled less, the rebound effect could mean that people spend the money they save by not travelling, on other products instead. If these new products prove to be more impactful than travel, the effect of the behaviour goal will be a negative one for emissions and other impacts. WWF (2008, p. Foreword) describe the preference for a consumerist approach which decouples economic growth from environmental

impact as a 'happy coincidence' that could be revealed by a lack of attention to the underlying reasons why people consume. Hence, while Krippendorf (1987) believes it is 'rebellious tourists' who are needed to shake the industry, and Hjalager (1999) asserts the tourism industry has not yet been 'invaded' by radical expressions of green consumerism, such an approach may not deliver the anticipated pro-environmental benefits.

The third behaviour goal was to determine if respondents were willing to adopt more sustainable travel methods. First Choice's (2005) consumer trends report shows 40% of those British tourists surveyed now take two or more holidays per year by plane. Over three quarters of all visits abroad from the UK are by air, with 64% of all UK air passenger movements either domestic or to EU15 countries (nVision, 2006). Approximately 6% of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions are caused by aviation, but of greater cause for concern is that transportation is the only industrial sector in the UK where emissions have risen since 1990, this is primarily due to the expansion in short haul flying and an increase in delivery vehicles on the roads (Commission for Integrated Transport, 2007; Cairns & Newson, 2005). According to the UK Energy White Paper (2007) 'holiday air travel' is responsible for about 12% of an individual's carbon dioxide emissions per year, meaning for the UK to meet its emission targets under the Kyoto Protocol, persuading UK tourists to consider alternatives to the 'default' of flying will be crucial.

Respondents identified how cheap flying had become, to the point that it was often now the cheapest form of transport available, even for relatively short distances. The speed and convenience of flying was mentioned, as was the lure of flying itself:

 "I find [it] a bit annoying [that] in my childhood and growing up I couldn't afford to go abroad. In fact hardly anyone in my school did. If they did it was 'oh, they've been to Spain'. No-one went abroad, only if you had the money. It was a very elite thing. But now finally you can hop on a plane. And I'm thinking 'oh I can see the world'. Then suddenly it's 'hold on, what about the environment?'" (Woman, 30-60, green activist, Brighton)

To encourage people to reduce their flying, respondents suggested a number of initiatives. Illustrating the intuitive appeal of the deficit model, information was raised as a way to encourage people to change their behaviour. Beyond information, the behaviour of politicians and public figures was often mentioned, and it was felt that if it was desired for the public to travel less by plane, then these prominent members of society should lead by example. This need for positive social proof extended to decisions to limit the growth and expansion of airports, while increasing the price differential between flying and taking the train was also suggested. A more user-friendly booking and reservation system was suggested, and there was discussion about how to encourage people to book as early for train travel as people book flights, so attracting cheaper fares. There was also some support for the fairness of personal carbon allowances to discourage those who flew a lot without punishing those who flew less frequently, although the intrusion on the 'rights' of people to travel as much as they wanted was raised.

The final behaviour goal was to assess people's willingness to undertake more sustainable activities, which was loosely interpreted to mean an increase in outdoor activities, avoiding activities with an impact on biodiversity, and to contribute more to local economies. Yet, because respondents generally exhibited low awareness of the possible impacts of different tourism activities, few had thought to avoid certain activities for pro-environmental reasons. Where shopping centres, theme parks, chain restaurants, or new golf courses (as opposed to established courses) were avoided it was almost exclusively not for pro-environmental reasons.

Requests for industry and government. This section sought discussion from respondents on who should take responsibility for promoting more sustainable tourism, and the actions that

should accompany this. Despite mistrust of their motives, government was seen as being responsible for four reasons. First, participants expected government to address environmental problems in the way they had always previously done with issues such as recycling; second, measures such as additional taxes on flying or personal carbon allowances would require legislation to introduce; third, legislation would be necessary to reinforce any behaviour change; and finally, some participants felt the British government was responsible for causing the problems or allowing them to happen, and so should be responsible rather than the public:

"Oh dear, now we've caused it, right you lot can't go on holiday" (Woman, 30-60, Wastage Focused, Brighton)

Industry was not seen as being responsible for addressing global environmental problems, although this was in part because participants did not understand the dividing line between government and industry. As an example, government was held responsible for train tickets being too expensive, yet the rail network has been privatised for many years. Further, it was felt that industry would be doing all it possibly could in order to reduce their impacts as they wouldn't want to be paying for wasted resources. Although government was identified as being primarily responsible, respondents did recognise their own responsibility, albeit whilst stressing the difficulty of converting intentions to action. Yet, what came through clearly from this part of the research was the sense of disempowerment felt by respondents in the face of other individuals and countries that were not taking action:

"What I can do is just a drop in the ocean. If the Chinese are opening the equivalent of one coal-fired power station every week, what chance have I got?" (Man, 30-60, consumer with conscience, Manchester)

 "If everyone was singing from the same song sheet I think I'd be singing with them". (Woman, under 30, consumer with a conscience, Watford)

Fairness was frequently cited as being important. Respondents wanted to see that not just politicians and other high profile individuals were changing their behaviour, but also people like themselves were changing. This illustrates the importance of not just relying on celebrity endorsement to encourage change, but working with communities of people to create community champions who would inspire and encourage other 'normal' people.

The provision of more information was frequently raised, although (as with Hounsham, 2006) there was disquiet about whether this would really lead to behaviour change. However, one person commented that if global environmental issues are important, then he would expect there to be lots of information available. The effects of a previous belief that information leads to corrected behaviour may have created an expectation about the amount of information being related to the seriousness of the problem. Respondents cited the importance of situational factors that inhibit the ability to change, even if information leads to increased awareness and a motivation develops. Hence, strong messages could be sent by reducing rail fares which would also reduce a situational factor as a barrier to change. Expanding airports such as London's Heathrow sent the opposite message and justified intransigence.

Any information provided needs to be very practical in terms of what actions people can take to reduce the environmental impact of their holidays, although some respondents wanted to know why they should act, as well as just how. The use of expressing carbon dioxide emissions from travelling in terms of light bulb equivalents was popular as people understood the broader environmental need to turn off lights at home. For some, there was a risk of message fatigue resulting in turning away from the necessary actions. Such a situation may be indicative of cognitive dissonance where there is an attempt to change values, but situational factors prevent

this leaving the individual with no choice but to reject the message in order to maintain consistency between values and actions.

The amount of facilities, and the quality of the facilities for different groups of people did suggest that respondents felt there was a lack of alternatives to overseas travel. Investment in domestic tourism would send the kind of positive message respondents wanted to support their own changes in behaviour. The potential for technological advances was mentioned by some, with great faith being placed in alternative fuels. Other suggestions for industry included encouraging attractions to turn off their lights at night, eliminating non-reusable items, improving recycling facilities and a reduction in the number of golf course developments all as physical evidence of the change necessary and commitment to change.

CONCLUSION

This research has shown a low level of awareness about the impacts of the tourism industry and appropriate response options. Where there was greater awareness, this tended to be on the tangible impacts such as littering rather than the intangible impacts of global warming. Respondents were resistant to change their behaviour unless other people and developing countries changed, often expressing a sense of entitlement to enjoy their holidays as they chose, unencumbered by the need to think about the impacts it was having. The research identified drivers and inhibitors for each of the four behaviour goals, revealing potential to encourage more domestic holidays and more sustainable travel methods, while encouraging people to travel less, combine travel and to undertake different activities seems certain to face greater resistance. Respondents seem to place greater responsibility on government to address the problem than any other group, including themselves while politicians needed to set an example through their own behaviour and show leadership, instead of hypocrisy.

The authors reject the conclusions of the 'deficit' models of behaviour change, that pro-environmental behaviour can be achieved by simply improving awareness of the problem. Change will need to be orchestrated by going far beyond the provision of information (Collins et al., 2003). Similarly, the Theory of Planned Behaviour seems too simplistic to apply to tourism where behaviour is heavily influenced by a myriad of factors overlaid with an absence of reasoned thought. Instead, this paper suggests listening to the language of respondents in discussing 'entitlement' and their 'rights' to holidays, and then to think about the responsibilities this brings forth. If a right is always matched by a responsibility (for example, a right to life carries a responsibility not to take a life) then tourism needs to emphasise what is the responsibility carried alongside the right to holiday. The concept of reciprocity may encourage tourists to think about what they are responsible for, if they believe they are entitled to visit freely (Halpern et al., 2004).

The challenge then will become to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the impacts developed by taking a holiday. Such a development may sit comfortably with a desire for government to empower citizens to make decisions rather than to correct problems once they are manifest. One way in which personal responsibility can be enhanced and supported is through connecting people and overcoming the sense of disempowerment obvious from this research. This connection could be made by providing feedback at a local level about the effects of pro-environmental consumption decisions (Moisander, 2007). Appropriate mechanisms would need to be explored for this, but the feedback could illustrate the difference it is possible to make and provide social proof of change. A number of possible practical actions can be drawn from the research: such as the need for labelling of the sustainability of tourism products; the promotion of personal carbon allowances and a 'carbon calculator' to understand tourism's relationship with

these allowances; the creation of priority lanes for boarding planes (or similar) for those who have offset their emissions; and the introduction of 'metering' in hotels to allow guests to be charged for the resources they consume. These actions could begin to break cycles of action, create positive examples and champions and so lead to the creation of new social norms.

Further, pro-environmental behaviour could be encouraged through physical and virtual networks to develop and cement the connections between people, and the connections between people and their actions. Olli, Grendstad & Wollebaek (2001) describe how the most important predictor of environmental behaviour they found was participation in environmental networks as this creates group norms to guide new behaviour and overcome the social dilemma of what is best for society in the long term versus what is best for the individual more immediately. The 'weight-watchers' programme may provide an example of how difficult changes to behaviour are made possible with group support. Hence, initiatives like community based social marketing and utilising social networking tools such as 'facebook' may have currency for the tourism industry to overcome public disempowerment and lack of understanding to support pro-environmental behaviour change. Any behaviour changes will of course be contingent on there being a supply of pro-environmental holiday options available to absorb new-found motivations to act, lest they become frustrated at the constraining situational factors and adjust their values back, but now more resistant to any future messages of the need to change.

Finally, the study of 'tourism' needs to be reduced to its constituent elements for a more useful understanding of public perceptions of pro-environmental alternatives. Hence, thinking about the transport, accommodation and activities decisions people make may be more beneficial than trying to make the suite of decisions more sustainable. Further research will be needed on the segmentation model to see if there are groups of consumers who are more or less receptive to messages of change, for what reasons and how receptive they may be to ideas of responsibility. Any possible behaviour changes need to be modelled to understand what their effects might be. Indicators of the effects of tourism will be necessary to provide some evidence for this debate, but the answers will lie in the normative ethic we choose to pursue. Encouraging people to holiday in the UK may have considerable effects on congestion in tourism destinations already busy with tourists to the UK, but there would be a reduction of positive impacts in overseas countries caused by an increase in domestic tourism, and strategies to address this reduced earning potential would be essential in order that less sustainable alternatives to tourism are not taken up as income replacement activities. To encourage the reduction of overseas tourism as a way to reduce climate change makes enormous decisions about the importance of the environment over society, the future over the present, life 'here' over life 'there' and those who know, over those who do not. Less tourism may not lead to improved global sustainability, but if demand from tourists is not less, then it must be different.

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Table One.

Statement	Category
I don't really do anything for the environment and I don't see any reason to start	Disinterested
I do my bit for the environment but I don't think that people like me can make much difference	Basic contributor
I do my bit for the environment but I can't do more because there are too many other things to think about	Long term restricted
I do what I can for the environment and I will do more soon, when I have the time and money	Currently constrained
I do what I can for the environment but I draw the line at making large changes to my lifestyle	Consumer with conscience
I do what I can to use resources carefully because I don't like waste	Wastage focused
I do everything I can for the environment, even if this means putting myself out	Green activist

Table 2.

Characteristics	Number of Participants	Characteristics	Number of Participants
Area		Environmental segment	
Brighton (SE)	16	Disinterested	0
Bournemouth (SW)	15	Basic contributor	7
Manchester (NW)	16	Long term restricted	7
Watford (Outer London)	15	Currently constrained	10
Tenure		Consumer with conscience	10
Social housing tenants	24	Wastage focused	12
Owner occupiers	27	Green activist[1]	16
Not known[2]	11	Holiday frequency[3]	
Age		No holidays in last 2 years	0
Under 30[4]	19	1 or fewer holidays in last 12 months	25
30 – 60	31	2 holidays in last 12 months	14
Over 60	12	3 or more holidays in last 12 months	21
Sex		Not known	2
Male	28	Ethnicity	
Female	34	Ethnic groups including black Caribbean, Indian, other Asian, Chinese and mixed	6
		Total	62

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[1] One focus group in Brighton was composed entirely of green activists
[2] The group of 16-21 year olds were not asked about housing tenure.
[3] People who had not flown in the last 12 months for environmental reasons were excluded
[4] One focus group in Brighton was composed entirely of 16-21 year olds