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COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM: BRUNY AND MAGNETIC ISLANDS, AUSTRALIA

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"We certify that this is an original work, and that neither this manuscript nor a version of it has been published elsewhere nor is being considered for publication elsewhere."

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is increasingly perceived as important for island sustainability, though also has impacts. Impacts on host communities have negative consequences on desired interactions with visitors, an important visitor appeal of islands. This paper uses social exchange and social representations theories to investigate island community perceptions of tourism development and impacts. The investigations highlight a diversity of island community perspectives, the salient tourism consequences, and importantly the processes that lead to the perceived impacts. On Magnetic Island, the development of resorts, changes to the type of visitor and consequent changes to the social environment was uncovered as a reason not to interact with visitors. On Bruny Island, visitors overcrowding island infrastructure was highlighted as a key reason not to interact with visitors. On both islands, the reason not to interact was more due to the process of tourism development decision-making, rather than the consequent impacts of these developments. Overall, the research highlights the need for community inclusion and consultation in sustainable island tourism policy and planning, both to facilitate the process of sustainable development and to educate communities of the likely consequences.

KEYWORDS: Visitor Interaction, Salient Responses, Exchange Process, Community Consultation, Tourism Impacts

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM: BRUNY AND MAGNETIC ISLANDS, AUSTRALIA

INTRODUCTION

Islands make a significant contribution to global biodiversity, often containing species of plants and wildlife that cannot be found anywhere else on earth, and are therefore attractive to tourists (Gössling, Hansson, Hörstmeier, & Saggel, 2002). Tourism is also often regarded as the catalyst for the economic development of local communities that inhabit islands (Croes, 2006). However, Douglas (2006) notes that because of the ecological vulnerability and limited resource base of islands, tourism is often a leading cause of adverse environmental impacts to these inherently fragile destinations. Previous studies have also recognised that tourism creates a variety of socio-cultural impacts on island and periphery communities (Bastin, 1984; Hall, 1994; Müller & Jansson, 2007; Padilla & McElroy, 2005). The range of economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts has led to a diversity of opinions on how to sustainably develop and manage island tourism (Baldacchino, 2006; Douglas, 2006; Gössling, 2003; Tsaur & Wang, 2007). Clearly, tourism has the opportunity to both enhance and to destroy (Hall & Boyd, 2005). The effective integration of community perspectives is one indispensible element in order to optimise results for the local community, the island environment and the visitor (Lipscombe, Howard & Porter, 2001).

Previous studies on island tourism have focused on a range of key issues, including sustainable management and tourism development (Albuquerque & McElroy, 1992; Kokkranikal, McLellan & Baum, 2003; Lenzen, 2008; Milne, 1992), island economies and infrastructure investment (Archer, 1989; Giannoni & Maupertuis, 2007), destination image (Beerli & Martín, 2004), ecotourism (Fagence, 1997; Hall, 1993; Hsu, Chen, & Chuang, 2005), and community perceptions of impacts (Carlsen, 1999; Ko & Stewart, 2002; Sethna &

Richmond, 1978). Studies of tourism impacts on island communities have primarily focused on warm-water environments (Briassoulis, 2003; Gössling, 2003; Hall, 1994; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Ko & Stewart, 2002; LaFlamme, 1979; Marinos, 1983; Milne, 1992; Pantin, 1999; Peak, 2007). All the same, cold-water island studies have also been undertaken (Baldacchino, 2006).

With the exception of Carlsen (1999), there has been little published on community perceptions of the impacts of tourism on islands in an Australian context. The low number of studies is surprising given there are over 8,000 islands scattered along the Australian seaboard (Tourism Australia, 2008), and many possess distinctive cultural and environmental significance, with unique marine and terrestrial flora and fauna due to their isolation (Dutton, 1986). Like island destinations worldwide, tourists are attracted to Australia's islands for their natural and cultural significance, including a real desire to encounter island residents and their distinctive lifestyles (Moyle, Croy & Weiler, 2009). Within the context of Australia, this paper investigates island communities' perceptions of tourism. The paper especially contributes to the sustainable planning and management of island tourism by gaining an in-depth perspective on the processes that have contributed to locals' perceptions of tourism impacts and development on two Australian island communities.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS

The impacts of tourism on host communities in general have been researched from a range of perspectives and in a variety of contexts (Beeton, 2006). Dogan (1989) argues that historically, tourism impacts are the most studied phenomenon in tourism research. Early studies on impacts tended to focus on the positive effects of tourism on host communities, such as the economic benefits of tourism (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). However, as the

negative implications of tourism became increasingly evident, an alternative and more critical view of tourism impacts was taken in many studies (Cohen, 1979; Husbands, 1989). Avcikurt and Soybali (2001) state that it is due to the visibility of the impacts of tourism on host communities that this extensive exploration has occurred. Recently, studies have portrayed a much more inclusive perspective on the impacts of tourism on host communities (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005; Deichmann, 2002; Faulkner & Tideswell, 1997).

Previous studies on tourism impacts suggest that negative impacts often outweigh the positive (Bramwell, 2003; Lindberg, Andersson & Dellaert, 2001). All the same, large numbers of host community residents continue to support tourism to their regions (Long, Perdue & Allen, 1990; Sirakaya, Teye & Sönmez, 2002). Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) argue this support is because many residents are prepared to put up with some negative impacts for what they regard as desirable or positive impacts, especially when economic dependence on the tourism industry is high. Lindberg, Dellaert and Rassing (1999) agree, finding that residents were prepared to put up with negative impacts on the individual for the collective community benefits of tourism.

Studies on perceptions of tourism impacts also demonstrate that perceptions and attitudes change over time (Butler, 1980). These studies have found that communities are not fixed in their perceptions and attitudes towards impacts, nor are individuals within these communities likely to share identical attitudes towards tourism (Andriotis, 2004; Williams & Lawson, 2001). Residents' perceptions of tourism impacts have been shown to vary depending upon demographic characteristics, level of attachment to the community, utilisation of the tourism resource base, employment or involvement in the industry, and personal benefits derived from tourism (Butler, 1974; McGehee & Andereck, 2004). Additionally, a number of other factors have been identified as potential influences on residents' perceptions of tourism

impacts, including the scale of the tourism industry in the region, the types of tourists the region attracts, the types of activities offered to tourists, tourism infrastructure, characteristics of the host community and the nature of the interactions between tourists and residents (Butler, 1974; Mason, 2003).

Social exchange theory is recognised as the predominant theoretical framework in research examining tourism impacts (Kayat, 2002). Deeply embedded in sociology, social psychology and economics, social exchange theory conceptualises the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation (Blau, 1964; Brinberg & Castell, 1982; Emerson, 1962, 1976; Homans, 1961). Social exchange theory posits that all interactions between individuals and groups (actors) are based on the exchange of resources (Gaechter & Fehr, 1999). In sociology, social exchange theory has been described as a broad framework within which other theories can operate, and thus useful for examining large scale social issues by way of investigating small scale social situations (Stolte, Fine, & Cook, 2001; Zafirovski, 2005).

The process of interaction between actors conceptualised by social exchange theory involves a series of stages beginning with need identification and ending with the consequences of the exchange (Ap, 1992). In the context of tourism, each actor has the opportunity to assess the antecedents and potential benefits of interaction between hosts and visitors prior to any exchange of resources taking place (Gui, 2000). During the exchange itself, there can be a balanced or unbalanced transaction of material, social and psychological resources between actors, which is often determined by the power-dependence relationship between actors (Uriely & Reichel, 2000; Yamagishi & Cook, 1993). The actual interaction is then evaluated, taking into consideration the consequences of the exchange for the parties involved.

In the tourism literature, social exchange theory has been primarily used to assess community perceptions of tourism impacts, helping to explain why some residents perceive the impacts of tourism differently, and to determine the level of local support for further development (Andereck, *et al*., 2005; Sirakaya, *et al*., 2002). Most of these impact studies, to assess residents' perceptions, employ quantitative approaches, with structured, scaled surveys including predetermined lists of impact attributes (Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; Hernandez, Cohen & Garcia, 1996; Huttasin, 2008; Jurowski, Uysal & Williams, 1997). These studies have presented many tourism impacts, however have been criticised for two main reasons: first, because they tend to treat the community as a single entity with homogenous attitudes towards tourism impacts and development issues; and second, because the quantitative approaches can bias or lead respondents in a particular direction (Beeton, 2006). In the case of the second criticism, studies employing quantitative assessments give respondents a list of pre-determined attributes, rather than eliciting the particular impacts at the forefront of locals' minds. In contrast, in-depth interviews provide a mechanism for teasing out key issues and processes that can facilitate or inhibit support for tourism within communities.

In response to these criticisms, and in particular recognition of the nature of communities as complex entities comprising many different groups of stakeholders, the concept of social representations theory was introduced into tourism (Pearce, Moscardo & Ross, 1991). Social representations theory helps explain how the internal, multifaceted and in-depth relationships between various groups within the community contribute to how individuals perceive tourism (Beeton, 2006). The basic assumption behind social representations theory is that individuals with similar attitudes and values form groups or clusters within a community (Jovchelovitch, 1996). The views of these groups then drive the analysis, rather than the researcher dictating the focus. This is a fundamentally different approach to most studies, which take the issues found in other communities and attempt to mould them to new contexts.

The contribution of this paper is twofold. First, the paper uses both social exchange theory and social representation theory to inform an exploration of the perceptions of tourism development on two islands and, more importantly, to examine island residents' perspective of the decision-making process and its consequences for the tourist-host exchange. Second, in-depth interviews are used to elicit what is salient to residents, rather than pre-determining responses in a list of impacts, which may not reflect island residents' key issues.

BRUNY AND MAGNETIC ISLANDS

Bruny Island is located off the coast of Tasmania, in the southern-most and coolest part of Australia. At 362km², Bruny Island is deceptively large, but has only a permanent population of 620 residents (Davis, 2004). Bruny Island is made up of a north and a south island that are separated by a narrow isthmus known as 'the neck'. The two main townships of Adventure Bay and Lunawanna mark the entrances to exploring the Island. Magnetic Island is located on the north-east coast of Queensland in subtropical northern Australia and blends a World Heritage listed National Park with a permanent population of 2,500 (Magnetic Island Holidays, 2008). Magnetic Island (52km^2) is much smaller than Bruny Island, with four main settlements scattered across the Island, Nelly Bay (ferry terminal), Picnic Bay, Horseshoe Bay and Arcadia, all of which are surrounded by the National Park.

Although Bruny and Magnetic Islands are in different climatic and bio-geographic areas, tourism development on both islands has been driven by a demand for natural experiences. Both are also rich in Australian culture and heritage and, importantly for the present paper, each has an established local community that, based on interviews with visitors, is an important element of the tourist experience (Moyle, Croy & Weiler, 2009).

ELICITING RESIDENTS' SALIENT PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM

This paper reports on part of a multi-phase research project that uses social exchange and social representation theory to illuminate a variety of perspectives on the interaction between locals and visitors to islands. Social exchange theory posits that individual actors, from an entity or group, may be interpreted as 'ideal representatives of collectives' (Widegren, 1997). With this in mind, fifteen in-depth interviews with key representatives of collectives from each island were conducted to gauge locals' perceptions of tourism development. The representatives interviewed included members of community groups, associations and clubs; accommodation providers, tour operators, and local businesses owners; local and state government agencies; and long-term resident locals. As within any small community, many of the interviewees had a number of community and or island roles, and as such could draw on a range of experiences. The interviews guided participants through the holistic process of interaction conceptualised by social exchange theory and, as such, were able to capture a representation of community perceptions of tourism for each island community. Representatives' were asked to give their own perceptions of tourism on the island, and to give their opinion of how the wider island community views tourism.

Qualitative analysis enabled island residents' tourism experiences to be explored in detail, uncovering the underlying issues that contributed to these perceptions and the process that have led to them. This research and analysis extends the work of previous studies on tourism impacts, in which insight into what drives resident perceptions has been limited by the quantitative measures of impact attributes and by a focus on the consequences rather than the processes (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Johnson, Snepenger, & Akis, 1994; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1987). The interviews were analysed using Huberman and Miles' (2002) approach for emergent themes. The themes were independently checked by all authors and subsequently re-coded by two additional coders, who had no prior involvement in

the research. This process achieved an inter-coder reliability score above the 90 percent level recommended by Huberman and Miles (2002).

RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES' SALIENT PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM

The following findings and discussion use the responses of representatives to drive the analysis of the perceptions of tourism on each island community. On each island, the findings reveal issues that underpin locals' perceptions, and demonstrate the importance of consultation during tourism decision-making and development. Overall, the interviews with key representatives revealed many salient similarities, but also marked differences between the locals on Bruny and Magnetic Islands.

On Magnetic Island, locals' generally regarded the economic aspect of the tourist-host exchange as overwhelmingly positive. The positive perception is evidenced by the following quote from a local tour operator:

> "The people here recognise that tourism employs more and more of us every year, as more visitors are coming to the island, spending is increasing, and in turn our wallets get bigger and our standard of living increases."

The recognition of the direct economic importance of tourism for Magnetic Island was a consistent salient theme throughout the interviews community. Representatives' also had an understanding of the indirect economic benefits of tourism, such as improvements to infrastructure, facilities and services, reflecting the well-defined tourism industry on Magnetic Island. Nonetheless, tourism development has become a particularly contentious issue on the island, and at times was reported to have polarised an otherwise tight-knit community. In particular, representatives' main point of contention was the relocation of the ferry terminal from Picnic to Nelly Bay, as a member of a local community group explains:

> "Picnic Bay used to be the hub, people would come and go from Picnic Bay, it was a very busy community, now there is no ferry service, it is just about a ghost town. There is not even a general store there anymore, many businesses down

> that end have really suffered, visitors don't even venture down there anymore... the people down there feel really hard done by..."

In addition to the effect of the relocation of the ferry terminal, many representatives' considered the new developments surrounding Nelly Bay as inappropriate. The two main concerns voiced by locals were the impact of the development on the landscape and the change in the type of visitors attracted to the island, as exemplified by the words of this retired island local:

> "An inappropriate development of Nelly Bay harbour doesn't fit in with physical or social landscape. The new development is potentially alienating existing visitor markets on the island, which is forcing markets, which have previously sustained us all for years, are being pushed out."

In addition to community angst over the re-development of Nelly Bay, key representatives' focused on the level of general tourism development on the island. As displayed in this excerpt from a local tour operator, some questioned the sustainability of the current levels of development on a World Heritage listed island:

> "Not only do the developments remain largely unsold, the development itself has been poorly planned, and given overall ripples of climate change thing on world economy, brakes are coming on now and everything is going to get worse. ... This is all in a period where we haven't had a large fierce cyclone on this coast and we may move into a phase where one, two, three, four storms hit in a row... What makes it worse is that more of these developments seem to continue popping up all over the island."

Saliently, many interviewees considered the process of consultation during the re-development of Nelly Bay as arbitrary, with developers ignoring the concerns of the island community. As exemplified in the following response from a long-term local, disillusionment with the consultation process, rather than the development itself, resulted in Nelly Bay becoming a long-drawn out emotional saga:

> "It's just hideous, we've lost what made our island unique, and there are many like me out there who think what has happened to Nelly Bay is a tragedy, I've cried myself to sleep before..... it's not even what has happened... it's how it was all done... it really hurt the community."

For Magnetic Island representatives, perceptions of the development did not stop with feelings of angst over the perceived loss of control over the future of the island. The angst appears to have had a domino effect on the attitudes, and in many cases the behaviours of island locals towards tourists. The effect on attitudes have resulted in groups within the community opposing all future development, and has led to individuals, such as this retired islander, adopting coping mechanisms to avoid interaction with visitors.

> "Development can cause drama if it is not handled properly, like Nelly Bay, and I know I am not alone when I say that the community is still very upset. I know what has happened is not their fault, but personally, in the past, I used to get into the social life of the island and have met many a visitor in my time. Because of what's happened to Nelly now I avoid the events I know are going to attract heaps of tourists. To be honest on some days I find it difficult to even be nice to people here for a holiday anymore."

Furthermore, as implied in many of the quotes above, the manner that the development was handled also had an effect on the relationships between and within groups on the island. As illustrated by the following excerpt from a tour operator, opposition came from locals including those who had been involved with the industry for extended periods of time, and who were concerned about the economic viability of the new development for the Island:

> "Not only do over half of the eyesores surrounding Nelly Bay remain unsold now, when visitors come here they don't go out into the community and drop as many dollars. They spend 300 bucks a night for a bed, and money to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner in the restaurant attached to the development. ... The community doesn't get much benefit from having these places on the island. It's the big investors that trap the visitors and encourage them to stay in their resort, rather than head out and support the community."

Alternately, some locals, with an attachment to the tourism industry, particularly those who played a direct role in the decision-making process, cited a number of economic opportunities the development presented for the island, such as employment. All the same, overwhelmingly the salient responses of locals were focused on the development, portraying a negative slant on its process and consequences for the island and for the tourist-host exchange.

The social elements of the tourist-host exchange were also raised in representatives' responses towards tourism on the island, which were described as seasonal and changing over time. Apart from noise disturbance and increased friction between community groups because of the development of Nelly Bay, most representatives described Magnetic Island as particularly resilient to the social impacts of tourism. Nonetheless, whether positive or negative, in most cases the representatives' salient responses were particularly regarding the lack of resident involvement in the tourism development process. The development decision-making process affected community attitudes towards tourism, and the desire for interaction with tourists was, for many, expunged *by the process*.

On Bruny Island, representatives perceived the economic elements of tourism positively, recognising the major role tourism plays in employment. Nonetheless, on Bruny Island, the interviewees told a fundamentally different story to those from Magnetic Island. Representatives' salient responses displayed concern and a lack of understanding of why the increase in tourists had not resulted in improvements to the existing infrastructure, facilities and services on the island. As exemplified in the following quote from a member of a local community group, representatives felt concerned about the impact the massive growth in visitor numbers was having on the island:

> "The community is saying to council: 'for heaven's sake the tourists are coming here and they are swamping us, lets provide some infrastructure, we want money to build infrastructure and improve services like the ferry'. If council won't give it to us, and we can't get a grant from the government, for heaven's sake let's get proactive and get the money by charging tourists a levy on the ferry and take the money and do it all ourselves."

The quote above is indicative of the views of the community representatives on Bruny Island, with many expressing the desire to provide infrastructure, facilities and services that would benefit both locals and visitors. As demonstrated by words of this local business owner, the

main point of contention was concern over the ferry service that runs from Kettering (mainland Tasmania) to Robert's Point (North Bruny):

> "Over peak periods, and that is Christmas, New Year, Australia Day weekend, Easter, and September school holidays, when the ferry is really busy it is running a shuttle service and it still can't cope with demand. I don't know if any of the others told you about the situation at Easter where people were leaving the island at 2pm in the afternoon and getting back to Hobart at 10pm at night because there was something like 1,000 cars in the queue. Now there is no discrimination between visitors and residents, you line up like a main road no priority lanes or anything. It is a particular point of contention because a lot of residents think there should be a priority lane to go and do their business rather than wait amongst all these tourists who they would really rather not be on the island."

The ferry issue is seasonal, and many adopt coping mechanisms to avoid the ferry altogether. In addition to the ferry, the following quote displays concern from a local farmer about the level of traffic on the island:

> "There have never been as many motor-homes, caravans and 4WDs as there has been in the past three or four years. I have really noticed a huge increase in traffic congestion, and eventually they are going to have to do something about it. All of us farmers get really peeved if we miss a ferry and have to wait over an hour for another one."

Connected to the increase in traffic, many island locals expressed the desire to see the roads upgraded in certain areas of the island, particularly, the gravel roads on the isthmus, which connects North and South Bruny Island. Currently, the isthmus is a narrow stretch of dirt road, which also contains a car park for visitors to access a lookout to watch penguins return to their rookeries. As illustrated in the following comment from a business owner, locals regard the isthmus as particularly busy and dangerous:

> "It gets particularly bad at the neck, I have almost hit people jumping out of their cars parked on the side of the road there, the community wants the neck improved for everyone's safety."

Although recommendations for improvements to the roads focused on the neck, suggestions for improvements to the conditions of the roads over the entire island were offered. The issue of parking at the neck, Cloudy Bay and the Adventure Bay foreshore were also salient

responses of many island representatives. The concern over the lack of parking at Adventure Bay is further emphasised in the below quote, in which a local is commenting about a story told by a visitor to Adventure Bay:

> "...the bloke told me he was only outside the shop for ten minutes when he returned to his car and it had a note on it that read something like you have been parked here for too long and have overstayed your welcome in Adventure Bay."

Also related to pressure on infrastructure, facilities and services was community concern over waste management on the island. In particular, the lack of recycling on the island, places for campervans and caravans to dump dirty water, and the need for more public toilets, were issues raised by representatives. As demonstrated by this retired island local, the community was often more confused over why upgrades to infrastructure, facilities and services were not being addressed by the relevant authorities on the island, than the actual impacts themselves.

> "...we give them all this information and then they send someone down here in the middle of bloody winter when the place is empty and try to tell us we have nothing to worry about, their incompetence is a joke."

Interestingly, at the same time as expressing the desire to provide facilities, infrastructure and services for visitors and the community, many interviewees also voiced opposition to further tourism development on the island, and the desire to keep Bruny as natural and aesthetically appealing as possible. The following excerpt from a business owner reflects the wishes of a majority of key informants that raised the importance of conserving the natural attributes that make Bruny Island appealing for people to visit and to live on.

> "We don't want resorts popping up everywhere, or tour buses on the island, we all want Bruny to stay as beautiful and unspoilt as it is now, we would rather everything was owned by locals that cared about the place rather than investors coming here to make a buck."

The quote is indicative of the representatives' lack of understanding of how developing the infrastructure, facilities and services can potentially open the door for other 'less desirable' tourists and development to enter the island. As on Magnetic Island, the need for community

involvement in the planning and decision-making process is evident. Importantly, in this case, resident education about the trade-offs and consequences of various development options are especially needed.

The salient responses from representatives from Bruny Island also revealed a concern regarding changes to the recreation opportunities of island locals, including a feeling of being pushed out of favourite recreation sites, being unable to access boat ramps during peak periods, and being restricted from driving on the beach. These impacts were interconnected with the increased pressure on facilities, infrastructure and services on the islands. Other social impacts, such as perceived crowding on beaches and in national parks, noise disturbance, and the lack of places to fish, were also salient in the responses of a number of island representatives. The potential for such conflict to lead to antagonistic interaction with visitors, or a decreased desire to interact, as has happened on Magnetic Island, is evident.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ISLAND TOURISM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Whilst there is an increasingly explicit need for sustainable island development, implementing inclusive community participation in meaningful and effective manners is difficult (Kokkranikal, McLellan & Baum, 2003; Lenzen, 2008; Lipscombe, Howard & Porter, 2001). This critical examination of island locals' perceptions of tourism, and tourism's salient consequences for the host-tourist exchange, again highlights the complex challenges faced by tourism planners and policy makers (Beeton, 2006; Carlson, 1999; Gössling, 2003; Hall & Boyd, 2005; Pantin, 1999). The research has shown that in seeking to achieve sustainable development of islands, often faced with limited resources, some are perceived to resort to processes that take little account of the diverse and sometimes conflicting perceptions of local residents. In particular, the interviews revealed that lack of inclusion in decision-making, as opposed to the impacts themselves, was the key to negative

perceptions. The findings also revealed locals' limited understanding of the nature of tourism development, and importantly its consequences.

Together, these findings stress that locals' perceptions of tourism are their realities, and determine the desire for island tourism and interaction with tourists. Importantly, the implication for tourism planners and policy makers is that tourism development on such islands is inherently a long-term symbiotic partnership. A pertinent consequence of a poor tourism development process, specifically one that does not adequately consult local residents, evidently leads to residents becoming increasingly unwilling to interact and exchange with tourists. Local resistance to visitor interactions would prove particularly problematic in the context of island tourism, where much of the appeal of visiting is to engage with local residents and their way-of-life. As such, extensive community consultation is needed to facilitate relationships, education and development to help all stakeholders understand the tourism development perceptions, processes and consequences (Hall, 1999; Laing, *et al.*, 2009). Through consultation, locals, developers and governments, amongst other stakeholders, can prepare for, and make informed decisions about possible development paths, and the inevitable changes that accompany tourist promotion and development (Andriotis, 2004; Bastin, 1984; Douglas, 2006; Huttasin, 2008).

An implication for researchers of local perceptions of tourism was that the use of interviews allowed two things. First, interviews allowed the focus on residents' salient perceptions of tourism and development, and second, allowed in-depth explorations of processes, as opposed to consequences, to occur.

Overall, the findings reinforce the need for flexibility and adaptability in planning approaches, especially in the constrained physical, social, cultural and economic environments of island and periphery communities (Hall & Boyd, 2005; Inskeep, 1992;

Müller & Jansson, 2007). In the case of Bruny and Magnetic Islands, using an inclusive and co-operative planning approach, which engages the community with strong commitment, collaboration and knowledge transfer between stakeholders would help alleviate further discontent among the locals and help build a more sustainable tourism future.

In conclusion, islands are attractive destinations for tourist, and often need tourism for their social and economic sustainability. A variety of research has identified tourism has impacts, if not carefully planned and managed, though there has been a focus on consequent impacts, rather than investigating the locals' perceptions of processes that create the impacts. Social exchange and social representation theories provided a framework to enable this investigation. This research, in an attempt to fill this gap, uncovered a wide diversity of community perceptions regarding tourism development on two Australian island communities. Interviews conducted on Magnetic Island generally revealed concern about the decision-making process of recent tourism development, whereas interviewees on Bruny Island tended to focus more on the lack of facilities, services and infrastructure to cater for increased visitor numbers, and a demand for further development. The diversity of perceptions and the varying levels of understanding among island residents point strongly to a need for engaging locals in collaborative partnerships, throughout the process of policy-making, planning, and sustainable management of islands. Future planning and research on tourism development and its impacts need to consider using qualitative approaches that can serve as both an educational and consultative tool tailored to the temporal and spatial context and challenges of island tourism development.

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