

# THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

## A Case Study of Bath, UK

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SOCIAL IMPACTS  
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Article

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the attitudes of residents in Bath, United Kingdom, towards tourism development. This paper believes that research conducted on hosts' perceptions of the impacts of tourism is predominantly descriptive and lacking in a consistent approach to measurement. The primary aim is therefore to establish a benchmark study for Bath, enabling future longitudinal and comparative analyses of host attitudes. A sample was secured from the residents, factor analysis and regression analyses were conducted to ascertain whether there were any underlying dimensions regarding their attitudes of tourism development, and if socioeconomic and demographic characteristics were useful predictors of residents' attitudes. **Keywords:** social impacts, historic cities, Bath, host perceptions

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## INTRODUCTION

Within tourism literature it has been widely-documented that urban tourism has been continually neglected as an area of research (Ashworth 1989), and consequently remains devoid of a developed understanding or research base (Law 1993; Page 1995). One of the explanations for this is that the uniqueness of individual cities makes reliable comparisons difficult, with a sizeable portion of the literature centered on individual case studies. Thus, this study responds to the call for the development of valid and reliable studies supported by longitudinal and comparative data collection techniques. The authors feel that research into social impact assessment has jumped too quickly from description to modeling and there is need to conduct studies that will provide longitudinal and comparative data. It was felt that without an approach of this nature, any proposed understanding would merely add to the fragmented picture of urban tourism research. Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify and examine the attitudes of residents in Bath, UK towards tourism development and the paper aims to establish a benchmark study for Bath, enabling future longitudinal and comparative analyses of host attitudes. It is also anticipated that future comparative analysis with other historic cities could establish a basis for theory development and the development of flexible modeling tools regarding the social impacts of tourism on residents of historic and related cities in the United Kingdom.

## SOCIAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN BATH

Bath was the thriving center of the spa business as long ago as in Roman times. It became a popular tourist center during the 17th and 18th centuries, during which time it was routinely included in the social round. During these times Bath was still very much a medieval town, enclosed by its wall, and possessing narrow streets (Havins 1976). Bath became more of a 'classical' city during the late 18th Century when it was elevated to the position of the most fashionable city in England.

The architects of this development in the fortunes of Bath were heavily influenced in their designs by the Greeks and Romans. Indeed, John Wood's realization of Bath as a Roman city on English soil is his greatest claim to fame. Although much of his plan was never realized, Woods' work laid the foundation for Bath, the Georgian city that became England's off-duty capital and the model for other spa resort towns. Interestingly, Havins (1976) speculates that it was no more than a series of historical accidents that led to Bath becoming the chosen site. Although Bath was accepted as a London-in-the-West, it possessed little on the lines of monumental London other than its Abbey. Bath was in no better state than many other English towns of that time, and the conditions were aggravated by a growing annual inflow of tourists. The town was still fairly prosperous as a result of its connection with the wool-trade, although this too was in decline. Indeed, it was its developing recognition as a spa resort that fashioned its development which underpins its acceptance today as a notable tourist attraction. Bath's custodianship of several historic attractions, most notably its Roman Baths, and dominant Georgian architecture, have contributed to Bath becoming a UNESCO designated World Heritage Site.

Present-day Bath has a population of approximately 85,000, 52% of which is female. Its three largest employers are the Ministry of Defence, the Health Authority and the Bath and North East Somerset Council. The 2001 census indicated that 15-24 year olds represented 13% of the Bath and North East Somerset population; 25-34 year olds 13%; 35-44 year olds 14%; 45-pensionable age represented 24%; pensioners under 75 9%; and pensioners over 75 represented 9% (Census 2001; 2003). The 1991 census noted an increase in the number of people working in the service sector (+ 26%, 1981-1991 NOMIS/Census of employment) with approximately 40% of the working population working in 'Other services.' Relatedly, the Bath Tourism Bureau recognizes the value of tourism as an increasingly important element of local

economic activity. In 2001 the estimated value of tourism to the city was US\$357 million, with 2.7 million day tourists and 937,000 overnight tourists (Bath Tourism Bureau, 2003).

## **Social Impacts**

The literature has given tourism impact extensive treatment. The reason for this attention is the inevitability that the industry induces impacts, both beneficial and adverse. Tourism is seen as an economic tool of development (Gee, Choy and Makens 1989) and many of the economic benefits associated can be measured objectively and serve as support for further development (Cohen 1972). However, the social impacts appear to be somewhat more subjective and intangible.

Over the past 25 years North American research has examined many different aspects related to residents' perceptions of tourism development. Pizam (1978) suggested that heavy concentration has led to the emergence of negative host attitudes. Rothman (1978) highlighted negative resident perceptions towards increased noise, litter, traffic, crime, over-crowding, and tourism induced price increases, although research findings also noted the perception of positive aspects of tourism development. These included improvements in local infrastructure (Belisle and Hoy 1980), increased employment opportunities (Milman and Pizam 1988; Rothman 1978), and increased recreational opportunities (Davis, Allen and Cosenza 1988). Other significant findings include the personal and demographic factors known to influence attitudes and perceptions, such as distance of residence from the central tourist zone (Belisle and Hoy 1980), the influence of one's length of residence in the community (Liu and Var 1986) and age, as in the case of Bastias-Perez and Var's (1996) study in Darwin, Australia.

The majority of research into residents' perceptions of tourism development has addressed only small, rural, or resort-type communities. This has been the focus in the United

States (Davis et al 1988; Liu and Var 1986; Milman and Pizam 1988; Perdue et al 1990; Pizam 1978; Rothman 1978; Thomason, Crompton and Kamp 1979) in Europe (Var, Kendall and Tarakcioglu 1985), and in the United Kingdom (Brougham and Butler 1981; Sheldon and Var 1984). Research into perceptions in larger urban areas has been relatively ignored, but the research conducted is summarized in Table 1.

While the research conducted has made a significant step towards better understanding of the relationship between positive and negative perceptions of tourism and support for specific tourism-related policies, historically most of the research on the topic of residents' perceptions has been atheoretical in nature (Ap 1990). The dominant theory to emerge to shape understanding has been social exchange theory, which concentrates on the extent to which residents receive something for the imposition the industry places upon them. Recent research on this subject in Ghana (Sirakaya, Teye and Sonmez 2002) shows that it is not simply the existence of an exchange that is important, but the nature and value of the exchange that influences attitudes and perceptions. Hence, traditional social exchange theory would hold that if someone is employed within the tourism industry then that person would be expected to hold a positive attitude towards the industry. However, if the experience of employment within the industry was negative, then this would shape his/her attitude and result in a negative attitude towards the industry as a whole.

In addition to the lack of underpinning theory, the choice of different methodologies in examining perceptions has resulted in a fragmented rather than coherent view. Sampling methodology used in the studies varies and sample sizes vary considerably. Descriptions provided of the sampling plans have been generally limited, and the information provided does not allow readers to make judgments about the appropriateness and adequacy of the sampling plan. The apparent lack of attention to sampling methodology calls into question the validity of

the reported findings, and future studies should avoid this problem. The weakest aspect of the data characteristics of the early research is that few studies (Sethna and Richmond 1978) report any tests of the reliability and validity of the measures used in the survey instrument. Babbie (1986) highlighted the importance of reliable and valid measures to sound research, and more explicit consideration by researchers regarding this matter is needed in the future.

The use of statistical techniques to analyze residents' perceptions data also varies considerably from study to study, and thus makes comparisons between them difficult. As a positive exception, Teye, Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002) employ the same methodology in two destinations to enable comparison across towns with differing histories of tourism development. The multivariate techniques most commonly used have been regression analysis, analysis of variance and factor analysis (Perdue, Long and Allen 1990). The techniques used in the studies provide viable information about the array of techniques that have been employed and may possibly lead researchers to consider other alternative techniques in the future. Although not all studies provided justification for the techniques used, Belisle and Hoy (1980), Brougham and Butler (1981), Sheldon and Var (1984), Liu and Var (1986), Teye, Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002) provided clear and adequate explanations of the techniques used. The fragmentation of this body of research has been added to by researchers from a number of disciplines examining residents' perceptions. These disciplines include anthropology (Farrell 1977; Smith 1977), economics (Archer 1973; Liu 1979; Peters 1969), geography (Butler 1974; Keogh 1989; Murphy 1981), and sociology (Cohen 1978; de Kadt 1979; Turner and Ash 1975). Consequently, there has been scant progress in developing conceptual frameworks.

Studies also need to be considered within the context of the stage at which the discipline exists. Moncrief (1970) identified that the early stages of a discipline generally involve identification of the problems, establishment of priorities of need for research inquiry, description

of major variables involved, and development of methodologies for conducting research. Reported findings are predominantly descriptive, and it could be said that the studies are indicative of a field of study that is still in its early stages of development.

As a final critique of the social impacts research, most of the studies reviewed made no reference to the study's implications for practitioners. The fact that the studies were locally or regionally based would seem to provide the researchers with an opportunity to discuss the implications for practitioners, and demonstrate the relevance of research in addressing practical problems. Thus, it was disappointing to find only a few studies citing research implications for practitioners (Sirakaya, Teye and Sonmez 2002). In addition to the lack of specific reference to implications for practitioners comes the increasing complexity in language with which the findings of studies are presented. A challenge for academics the world over is to improve the dissemination of studies and to increase the relevance of research conducted, both of which are militated against by virtue of the complexity of the statistical analysis and its reportage. Clearly the concerns of Ap (1990) that studies provide details of reliability and validity measures in addition to the accurate reporting and description of methodology employed are crucial to the development of understanding. However, the drive for greater and more detailed understanding should not come at the cost of practitioners and those without statistical expertise being able to understand what are, after all, impacts on people. A balance is needed between these two competing forces.

Information about the consequences and impacts of tourism from host residents' perspectives is an important factor that needs to be considered in planning. Irrespective of how tourism is introduced and developed in a community, residents are important players who can influence the success or failure of the local industry. Residents may contribute to the well-being of the community through their participation (in varying degrees) in the planning,



development, and operation of attractions and by extending their hospitality in exchange for the benefits obtained from tourism. On the other hand, residents may be instrumental in discouraging the industry by opposing it or exhibiting hostile behavior toward tourism advocates and or tourists (Crompton and Ap 1994). In developing and attracting tourism to a community the goal is to achieve outcomes that obtain the best balance of benefits and costs for all key players involved, that is, residents, tourists and the tourism industry. This study's longitudinal and comparative type of research design may prove to be important in terms of expanding/deepening management strategies in historic cities, particularly if residents report a finer balance between what they will and will not live with in terms of tourism development. The totality of these attitudes deserves investigation and documentation along with associated resident profile characteristics in order to gain a fuller understanding of this essential component of the supply side of the tourism product. Further, balancing the reportage of the methodology with implications for practitioners will encourage further understanding and comparability of future studies.

### *Study Methodology*

The quantitative methodological approach chosen for this research was a mailed questionnaire to a random sample of the residents of Bath. It is widely-recognized within the research literature that the main advantage of using a quantitative approach is that it is possible to measure the reactions of a great number of people to a limited set of questions, which facilitates comparison and statistical aggregation of the data (Bell 1992; Preece 1994; Robson 1993; Veal 1993). The mail survey is recognized as being a relatively quick and low-cost way of collecting information, which was appropriate given the required sample sizes within Bath. The research also sought to enable comparison with the findings of studies already reported in the literature, and while not all of them used mail surveys, this was clearly the preferred method. There are, however, drawbacks with this method - including the fact that the interviewer is not

present and therefore the potential for misinterpretation or confusion exists. This was minimized through the use of a short and simplified questionnaire consisting of items which had been pretested by other researchers (Madrigal 1995; Perdue et al 1990).

Another potential problem is that of low response rates. In order to increase the response rates, Dillman's Total Design Method (1974) was adopted. Cover letters were designed, drafted and piloted following the recommendations of Babbie (1992).

### *Survey Instrument*

The survey instrument used in this study was comprised of a subset of items developed by Perdue et al (1990). The original instrument was developed for use in rural American communities in Colorado, and subsequently underwent slight adjustments before being applied to historic cities. These amendments were more contextual than conceptual as the original items were specifically designed to enable hypothesis testing and confirmation of the model. The instrument consisted of two sections that were retained in the historic cities' instrument. The first section included 24 closed-style items and required respondents to rate their level of agreement with each item, through indicating their response on a five point Likert scale which ranged from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5). Each of the items was related to general aspects of tourism development. Several of the aspects shared an interest in a particular issue, therefore enabling the creation of subscales. The additional questionnaire item was related to whether or not residents were positive about tourism when they spoke to each other about its presence in the city.

The second section sought socioeconomic and demographic information in order to verify, as far as possible, the similarity of the study samples to the actual populations of the respective cities. This information was also incorporated in order to investigate whether

socioeconomic and demographic characteristics were significant in their ability to indicate differing resident attitudes towards tourism development. Additional questions were added to section two of the survey in order to identify the number of times residents were entering the city to shop, recreate, work - and the average duration of those visits. In addition, respondents were asked to report whether or not they had an ancestral history of residence in the area.

### *The Sampling Frame*

Surrounded by remnants of fortified walls the historic city of Bath is physically demarcated from contiguous and related urbanized places and populations. In order to ensure that each household within the Bath area had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the respective studies, a circle, with a radius of four miles, was placed on the official ordnance survey maps of each city and its respective surrounding areas. A circle of this size captured the city center, the suburbs and out-lying villages (Snaith and Haley 1994). When selecting a sampling frame there are many alternatives regarding the parameterization of the chosen population each of which, it could be argued, contain methodological challenges when applied across different populations. Therefore, while the method may prove successful in one city, it may not necessarily be suited for other historic cities.

Each grid-referenced square on the map, which lay on the peripheral boundary of the circle, was included if at least 50% of its total area fell within the outer boundary. Each grid square that fulfilled this criterion was enumerated. With this completed, the total sample area was seen to consist of 131 grid squares. From this sample area, a random number was selected between 1 and 131 to be the number of grid squares to be included in the sampling frame, this number was 10. The sampling frame therefore consisted of all residential addresses within 10 randomly chosen grid squares. The completion of the sampling was facilitated by the use of the Royal Mails' Postal Address File on compact disc. The postal address file is a

computer enabled grid search, which produces a list of all streets and residential addresses, including their postal codes, contained within selected areas. A database was thus compiled from this information consisting of the 8,431 residential addresses contained within the 10 selected grids. Each address was subsequently numbered. According to Di Grino (1986), the required number of responses to achieve a representative sample from a population of 25,000 or more individuals is 348. This figure allows for 95% confidence within +/- 2.5% margin of error. The sample size in Bath was 800 to allow for nonresponse experiences.

The questionnaires were sent to households selected at random from the residential address file. In order to personalize the survey, the letters were completed with household names. This information was obtained from the electoral registers held by the Office of National Statistics in Titchfield, Hampshire, England. The final response rate from Bath was 46.4%, with a total of 368 usable questionnaires. This exceeds the recommended 348 returns required from a population the size of Bath's (Di Grino 1986).

### *Study Results*

The breakdown of the sample by age groups closely reflected the actual sociodemographics of the sample area (OPCS 1993). The mean age of the sample was 41 years of age, with the majority (79.6%) under the age of sixty. A larger proportion of respondents fell into the 16-29 age category, indicating a slight over-sampling when compared to the census data. Only 25% of the sample reported having been born in Bath, 67% owned their own home, and the gender breakdown was 56.2% female, and 43.8% males. The mean for the length of residence was 24.6 years, with 30.4% of respondents indicating that their family had a history of habitation in the Bath area. The length of ancestral residence was reported as 112.8 years (n=107). In terms of household income, 44.8% of the sample earned less than US\$27,480, with the largest category being 27% who earned less than US\$18,315. The

proportion of people who declared that they were employed in the tourism industry was 7.6%, while 8.7% of respondents felt that tourism was either "important" or "very important" to their employment. Having examined the descriptive statistics, the research sought to test the 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis.

*The 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):* No underlying dimensions will emerge from the analysis of resident responses to tourism development issues within the Bath sample.

Principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on the sample in order to test this hypothesis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic of 0.9 and inspection of correlation among the items indicated that the data was suitable for a factor analysis. The conventional criterion for factor analysis is that there should be a minimum of 5 cases per item (Tinsley and Tinsley 1987). In this case, with a 24-item questionnaire, that would mean 120 respondents. This was achieved in the sample.

Following the initial factor extraction process, a varimax rotation was conducted in order to make the results more easily interpretable. This approach was accepted in line with the recommendations of Green et al (1997:352) who state that "Eigenvalues are helpful in deciding how many factors should be used in the analysis." They recommend two accepted practices, first, retain all factors that have eigenvalues greater than 1, or secondly, retain all factors with eigenvalues in the sharp descent part of the scree plot. The second, it is suggested, yields more accurate results, although the factors were in accordance with both tests. A cut-off point of 0.4 was also used to include items in the interpretation of a factor (Teye, Sonmez and Sirakaya 2002). This resulted in a two-factor solution being specified (see Table 2) where the first factor had an eigenvalue of 6.2, while the second factor had an eigenvalue of 1.9.

Having specified the two-factor solution, results indicate that the two domains within the sample data signified residents' positive and negative attitudes of tourism development. The two factors together accounted for 40% of variance in the Bath data set, with all items loading on the two domains. The amount of variance explained in the sample is fairly low and, therefore, it must be recognized that the factors are not particularly strong. In addition, it is worth noting that three of the items did not load on the two domains in the sample. These were: "I feel that I can personally influence the decision making process associated with tourism development in Bath," "I would support local tax levies for tourism development" and an additional question, "When I talk to fellow residents of Bath concerning tourism in the city, I am generally very positive." These items are reported in the coefficient's alpha tables with the indication that they are not included in the scales.

Having established the existence of these two domains, it remained to test for internal consistency among each of the items within each of the domains. This was accomplished by computing Cronbach's coefficient alpha's which indicate the degree of item-total correlation. This is an important stage as the results will establish whether or not it is acceptable to use the two domains as variables in later stages of the analysis (see Table 2). The items in each domain possessed item-total correlations ranging from .41 to .73 (Positive), and .40 to .68 (Negative). The data confirmed that the items did belong to the domains to which they were assigned, and that the scales were internally consistent. In answering hypothesis 1, the null hypothesis was rejected establishing that two underlying dimensions emerge from the analysis.

While it is intuitive to build the presentation of the results, it is important to ascertain the reliability of the items within their associated domains before reporting the mean scores for each scale item. Further, as the purpose of this paper is to promote understanding about the social impacts in Bath, the mean scores represent a key statistic whose value and importance should

not be overlooked simply because they are a descriptive statistic. Table 3 presents these mean scores for the impact statements faced by respondents.

The next stage of analysis investigates whether or not residents' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, economic reliance and positive and negative perceptions are useful predictors of their attitudes regarding tourism development issues. In order to achieve this, the socioeconomic and demographic profiles of the respondents were entered as independent variables in a series of hierarchical regression equations. Hierarchical regression was used following the example of Madrigal (1993) in order to test the relative contribution of variable sets. This approach enables each variable set to have a voice before consolidation within the overall model. This procedure was conducted in order to test the 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis.

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):* It is not possible to predict residents' attitudes of tourism development according to their socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, economic reliance and negative and positive perceptions of tourism.

A series of seven hierarchical regression equations were computed for Bath and are shown in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7. The dependent variables were specifically selected to assess firstly, whether residents' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, economic reliance and positive and negative attitudes are good predictors of community support for the industry "...should become more of a tourist destination" "... should try to attract more tourists" "tourism should play a vital part in the future of the city" (Regression #1, 2, 3); secondly if residents' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, economic reliance and positive and negative attitudes are good predictors of community opposition to the industry "local government should restrict tourism development" (Regression #4); thirdly if residents' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, economic reliance and positive and negative attitudes are good

predictors of the degree to which people feel that they are involved in the decisions made regarding tourism development in their city "I feel that I can personally influence the decision-making process associated with tourism development in..." (Regression #5); fourthly, whether residents' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, economic reliance and positive and negative attitudes are good predictors of either their positive, or negative attitudes of tourism (Regression #6, 7).

#### **Insert Table 4 Here**

The Gauss-Markov assumptions of regression check was conducted to check for normality, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, multicollinearity and linearity. No assumptions of regression were contravened. The results of the first hierarchical regression analysis (Regression #1) indicated that the equation contained a valid set of explanatory variables. The explanation of total variance in the model (adjusted  $R^2$ ) reached 60%.

Results of the significance of resident characteristics, economic reliance and positive and negative attitudes on predicting attitudes regarding specific tourism related issues indicated that resident characteristics are not predictive of attitudes on this issue, although economic reliance is ( $R^2$ -.07;  $p < .001$ ). Again, the positive scale offers the greatest contribution to the explanation of variance ( $R^2$ -.57;  $p < .001$ ), whilst the negative scale also offers a significant degree of explanation ( $R^2$  change=.03;  $p < .001$ ). These results suggest that as positive attitudes increase and the negative ones decrease, they are increasingly supportive of Bath developing further as a tourist destination.

The second hierarchical regression (Regression #2) again sought to investigate an aspect of support for tourism. This time, it was the question of whether or not Bath should try to



attract more tourists. As with regression #1, the regression equations achieved reasonable levels of explanation, these being 47% of adjusted  $R^2$ . Resident characteristics are seen to be insignificant as a group, but economic reliance is significant ( $R^2=.04$ ;  $p<.01$ ), while the positive scale makes the largest contribution ( $R^2=.41$ ;  $p<.001$ ) and the negative attitudes scale account for additional explanation of variance ( $R^2$  change=.06;  $p<.001$ ).

The third series of hierarchical regressions (Regression #3) were designed to investigate whether or not resident characteristics, economic reliance and positive and negative attitudes could indicate support for tourism playing a vital part in the future of Bath. These independent variables accounted for 65% of variance within the equations. Again, support was evident from within the communities. Resident characteristics were once more found to be insignificant, economic reliance was significant ( $R^2=.09$ ;  $p<.001$ ), the positive attitudes scale was significant ( $R^2=.65$ ;  $p<.001$ ), and the negative attitudes scale was insignificant in its contribution to the explanation of variance.

The fourth set of hierarchical regressions (Regression #4) sought to investigate support for local government restrictions on tourism development. The equations accounted for 44% of variance. Resident characteristics were again insignificant, while economic reliance was significant ( $R^2=.06$ ;  $p<.01$ ). The results for the positive attitudes scale were significant in the sample, indicating that as positive attitudes decreased, the support for local government restrictions on tourism development increased. In support of this the opposite was true of the negative attitudes when they increased, so too did the support for local government restrictions.

The fifth hierarchical regressions (Regression #5) related to the extent that residents felt they could personally influence decisions associated with tourism development in their city. The independent variables performed poorly, accounting for only 8% of the total variance. With this

in mind, results indicated that resident characteristics were significant in Bath ( $R^2=.04$ ;  $p<.05$ ), with those living a great distance away from the centre reporting a greater sense of influence over the decision-making process. Economic reliance was not a significant contributor to the explanation of variance. The positive scale was seen to be significant ( $R^2$  change=.03;  $p<.01$ ), while the negative scale was insignificant in its ability to predict attitudes to the degree to which they felt that they could influence the decision-making process.

The underlying positive and negative attitude dimensions appeared to be effective in predicting support, or otherwise, for tourism development. Thus, two additional hierarchical regression equations (Regressions #6 and 7) were conducted to investigate whether positive or negative attitudes were stronger within distinct sections of the populations. The regression equation (#6) explained 40% of the variance. Resident characteristics proved to be significant in their ability to explain the variance in positive attitudes within the city samples. In Bath ( $R^2=.04$ ;  $p<.05$ ) the length of residence was again the greatest contributor to the overall explanation of variance.

Finally, (Regression #7) residents' characteristics were significant in Bath ( $R^2=.03$ ;  $p<.05$ ) as was economic reliance significant in its predictive contribution within the sample ( $R^2=.08$ ;  $p<.001$ ). Hence, it was the importance which people perceived tourism had relative to their occupation that was the greatest contributor.

The inclusion of the negative attitude's scale was intended to act as a check on the data responses of residents. It would make sense that their positive responses would be diametrically opposed to their negative responses. This is apparent in Table 7, where negative attitudes are significant ( $p<.001$ ) in their ability to predict positive attitudes. The direction of the

regression coefficients shows that as negative attitudes decrease, positive attitudes increase. The regression equation explained 36% of the variance in the sample.

In answering the second hypothesis, the results of the seven hierarchical regressions enable rejection of the null hypothesis since socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, economic reliance and negative and positive attitudes of tourism were found to indicate differing levels of support and opposition to tourism development. Residents' characteristics were significant in predicting negative attitudes in Bath, with those born in the city indicating the greatest contribution. Economic reliance made a contribution to understanding negative attitudes of tourism in Bath. Residents' positive attitudes are significant in their ability to predict negative attitudes. The direction of the regression coefficients shows that as positive attitudes decrease, negative attitudes increase. These results indicate the potential for predicting attitudes of tourism development in historic cities according to certain resident characteristics.

#### *Findings and Discussion: Impacts in Historic Cities*

As was initially stated, the purpose of this research is to examine residents' attitudes of tourism development in the historic city of Bath, England. As a consequence, the research aims to establish a benchmark study for Bath, enabling future longitudinal and comparative analyses of host attitudes. The subsequent analysis of the results enabled the answering of the two hypotheses and provides a sound foundation for recommendations regarding a practical way forward for Bath as well as making theoretical contributions for future social impact assessment studies more widely.

The first contribution this paper is able to make is to the discussion raised by previous research studies suggesting that a two-factor structure existed, which indicated positive and negative dimensions (Kim 1992; Madrigal 1993; Perdue et al 1990; Snaith and Haley 1994).

Results from this research confirm these observations with a two-factor structure apparent from the sample. This enables the rejection of the first null hypothesis and establishes consistency in the use of this research approach with previous studies. There has, however, been criticism of this approach (Ap and Crompton 1998) supported by the discovery of another four potential dimensions; crowding and congestion, services, taxes and community attitude. While this new approach is welcomed, the continual development of new instrumentation carries with it an important implication. Increasing the understanding of the underlying dimensions is an important step forward, but it must be remembered that consistent longitudinal data enables the development of potentially greater insight. In order to trace the changing nature of residents' attitudes, and compare them alongside developments in tourism and its planning within a destination, some degree of continuity must exist which acts as a baseline for reference. It is suggested that there is a place for several different approaches that either possess the potential for comparative analysis or seek to drive more specific understanding.

Second, the group of variables associated with economic reliance proved consistently predictive of support for tourism development. These variables support the consistent research finding that those who perceive that they may, or actually do, benefit economically are more supportive of further tourism development (Perdue et al., 1990). Interestingly, it was found that as income level fell, the residents were more likely to support increased tourism, and those with the lower incomes were more likely to accept their city becoming more of a tourist destination. This is further reinforced by the finding that those employed in the industry were more supportive of their city becoming more of a tourist destination. Hence, tourism may be seen as a source of low income employment, which has important implications for developing the image of the industry. It would appear from the data that at present those who receive economic support from the industry are grateful for that support, in adherence with conventional social exchange theory. However, should wages in tourism begin to fall relative to those enjoyed by

the rest of the city, then it might be reasonable to expect even those economically reliant on tourism to become resentful of the industry. To the concept of social exchange theory might usefully be added the work of Adams' equity theory, (Adams 1963) which argues that the satisfaction displayed depends on the extent to which a person feels they are treated fairly. Hence, social exchange theory relies not just on the existence of an exchange, but the relative perceived fairness of that exchange.

Much of the early literature debated the potential for using socioeconomic and demographic variables as indicators of differing attitudes and perceptions of tourism (Pizam 1978; Rothman 1978) and this debate has continued, with a great deal of disagreement, throughout the past twenty years. The reason for this may well lie in the limited attempts by research groups to define the type of destination, utilize the same methodology, and develop models which are broad enough to contain all of the potentially contributory variables. Thus, researchers can rarely state with confidence whether or not socioeconomic and demographic variables are significant indicators of distinct attitudes.

Results of this survey of Bath enable the rejection of the 2<sup>nd</sup> null hypothesis, suggesting that some of the variables may indeed provide the basis for a general understanding of which people are more susceptible to perceiving certain impacts of tourism. Further studies in Bath in the future, or more widely in other historic cities must ask whether socioeconomic and demographic characteristics act as useful predictors of residents' attitudes. For practitioners such as town planners, understanding the effects of socioeconomic and demographic variables would be most useful, since they could then hypothesize regarding likely reactions of the resident population to future planning actions. However, currently there is an insufficient body of longitudinal and comparative research concerning specific destinations to enable those general predictions.

As a fourth contribution, it was found in Bath that those people living closer to the central tourism zone were more supportive of restrictions. Belisle and Hoy (1980) in their study of Santa Marta, Colombia first observed the distance of residence from the central zone as a significant variable. However, in their research the opposite was found – that those living closer were less positive and supportive than those living further away. This was seen as being due to the incipient stage of development present at that time. It may well be, therefore, that later on in the life cycle of the destination those living closer to the main tourism zones become increasingly impacted by the pressure of increasing numbers on the local infrastructure. Historic cities in the UK often face unique pressures in that the design of the city means narrow streets with residential areas inter mixed with what have subsequently become tourist attractions. Further research is needed to identify whether the attitude displayed by residents of Bath is due to the stage of tourism development, or to being resident in historic cities. Similarly, this research has found that those people who were born in the city appeared more likely to notice the negative impacts of tourism.

Oppositely, the shorter the lengths of residence, the more positively residents see the impacts of tourism. Thus, those who have recently moved to the city may be at an earlier stage in their exposure to the significant tourist numbers Bath receives and thus maintain a more positive view of tourism than those who have been exposed for longer. Alternatively, Bath is a relatively affluent part of the country and it is reasonable to expect those who have been born in the city have greater resources available than those who have more recently moved to the city. Such a theory would fit with the finding that those on lower incomes were more supportive of the tourism industry. Further research is necessary to determine whether this is typical of other historic cities or unique to Bath.

Finally, residents' perceived level of influence on the decision-making process did not load on any of the dimensions in the earlier stages of the research and, again, the adjusted  $R^2$

was weak in the sample. This indicates that it was either a poorly-worded question, the respondents misunderstood it, or that there was no association between their perceptions of tourism and their ability to be involved in the decision-making process. This would be a potentially damning explanation and, if it were the case, would support the notion that the consultation process must become more transparent and accessible before sustainable community tourism can ever become a reality. Interestingly, given the weak overall strength of the equations, it was found that those with lower incomes were more likely to feel that they could influence the decision-making process. Perhaps this indicates the influence of older people who have the time in retirement to involve themselves in local issues, or a degree of unemployment amongst younger age groups and a similar ability to become involved. Either way, this was a concern of Keogh (1990), and remains an interesting area for research development since it may offer an insight into the motivations and ability of individuals to involve themselves in local issues and the planning of their communities.

## CONCLUSION

It was suggested in the introduction to this article that the field of social impact studies was somewhat fragmented and in need of a degree of consolidation. Ap (1990) made several recommendations as to how this could be done, including the utilization and reporting of more reliable measurement techniques. To this end, this research adds the suggestion that previous research may have jumped too quickly from description, to modeling, and then explanation of social impacts; with, relatedly, not enough comparative work being produced. The concern here is that tourism professionals might all too often be basing their planning decisions on generalizations and explanations grounded in underdeveloped areas of understanding. This purpose of this paper has been to identify and examine the attitudes of residents in Bath towards tourism development. Based on this research it will be possible for longitudinal and comparative research to be conducted in Bath and other historic cities that will help to provide

stronger understanding for planning decisions. However, this research has also identified a paradox between the needs to disseminate research findings in a manner that promotes reliable and valid measurement techniques and the need for practitioners to be able to learn the lessons of social impact studies. Understanding can better be promoted if a balance is struck between these two competing pressures.

In addition this research has identified a concern with the level of local involvement in the tourism planning decision making process. When developing the questionnaire and conducting the research for the study in Bath it became apparent that the research instruments under consideration (Ap 1992; Madrigal 1995; Perdue et al 1990; Snaith and Haley 1994) concentrated on issues which were predominantly general in nature. By this is meant that they sought responses with regard to general concepts such as whether tourism had affected the respondents' quality of life, whether there should be more or less local government control of the industry, and whether it had affected the environment. None was directly concerned with the management and planning of tourism, especially at the community level. Such questions as "How are we doing?" and "What do you think of our policies and actions on your behalf?" were not asked of the residents.

If true evaluations of residents' attitudes towards tourism development, and the conduct of future planning and management are sought, then the requisite/constituent questions should be more specific and reflective of their destinations' experiences. In response to this, the focus of the next social impact research phase should feature integrating the strategic objectives and actions of tourism officers with the attitudes of the local community toward these officially-stated objectives and actions. Thus, future research should aim to link the attitudes of the residents with the strategies of policy makers in a way which can provide a basis for policies more



securely rooted in the needs of the residents. Through such means, the capture of resident attitudes can be fully utilized in engaging the population in true and open consultation. ■

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Table 1. Studies of Social Impacts in Relevant Urban Environments

Author(s) of study	Date	Destination studied	Main findings
Murphy	1991	York, UK	Residents concerned by poor level of economic returns from hosting tourists. Need to improve community relations
Ross	1992	Cairns, Australia	Impacts felt more at community than individual level.
Glasson	1992, 1994	Oxford, England	Advantages of tourism recognized more keenly by those with tourism-related jobs. Those living in the city centre felt costs of tourism outweighed benefits
Bastias-Perez and Var	1996	Darwin, Australia	Middle-aged residents more inclined to appreciate positive economic benefits from tourism
Gilbert and Clark	1997	Canterbury, England	Nearly three quarters of respondents felt tourism had created employment opportunities within the city. Yet, these opportunities were not valued and so respondents did not feel tourism had increased their overall standard of living.
Madrigal	1995	York, England	Identified three clusters of residents, "realists", "haters" and "lovers".
Snaith and Haley	1994	York, England	Age and related employment shown to be relevant factors in determining support for tourism in the city.
Canterbury City Centre Initiative	1996	Canterbury, England	Almost perfectly equal split between those supporting tourism and those opposed to further development
Fordham Research Service	1998	Cambridge, England	Strong support for the development of tourism thus far. Younger age groups and those recently moved to the city amongst the strongest supporters of tourism.

Table 2: Results of factor analysis

Domain Bath Sample (n=368)	Item Descriptor	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
<b>Positive</b>	Benefits outweigh negative consequences	.71	.89
	Tourism improves appearance of the city	.49	
	Increasing tourist no's improves economy	.70	
	Tourism increases recreational opportunities	.61	
	Should become more of a tourist destination	.66	
	Improves the quality of life	.61	
	The city should try to attract more tourists	.63	
	Long term planning controls negative impacts	.40	
	Tourism provides good jobs for residents	.62	
	Tourism should play vital role in the future	.75	
	Support local tax for tourism	.29a	
	I can personally influence tourism decisions	.24a	
	When I talk to fellow residents I am positive	.38a	
<b>Negative</b>	Tourism businesses too influential politically	.49	.81
	Local government should restrict tourism	.62	
	Local government should control tourism	.40	
	Tourism has a negative effect on environment	.41	
	Tourism increases the council tax	.45	
	Tourism leads to more litter on the streets	.43	
	Tourists should pay more for attractions	.47	
	Tourism unfairly increases property prices	.40	
	Reduces quality of my outdoor recreation	.55	
	Tourism increases the amount of crime	.64	
	Tourism increases the traffic in the city	.40	

<sup>a</sup> Items not included in computing the scale scores as they did not load saliently (.40>) on the domain

Table 3: Mean Scores For The Tourism Impact Statements

Tourism impact statements		Mean Scores <sup>a</sup>
<b>Positive</b>	More tourism improves the economy	3.94
	The benefits of tourism outweigh its negative impacts	3.48
	Tourism should play vital role in the future	3.56
	Tourism provides good jobs for residents	3.46
	The city should <u>not</u> try to attract more tourists <sup>b</sup>	2.92
	Tourism improves the appearance of the city	3.01
	Tourism increases recreational opportunities	2.92
	The city should become more of a tourist destination	2.84
	Tourism development increases the quality of life	2.63
	When I talk to fellow residents I am positive	3.34 <sup>c</sup>
	I would support a local tax levy for tourism	2.24 <sup>c</sup>
	I can personally influence tourism decisions	2.05 <sup>c</sup>
	<b>Mean for the scale</b>	<b>3.19</b>
<b>Negative</b>	Tourism increases traffic	4.27
	Tourism leads to more litter	3.79
	Tourism development increases council tax	3.17
	Tourism unfairly increases property prices	3.10
	Tourism businesses are too influential politically	3.28
	Tourism increases the amount of crime	3.11
	Tourism negatively affects the environment	3.23
	Tourism reduces quality of outdoor recreation	2.84
	Local government should control tourism	3.71
	Local government should restrict tourism	3.01 <sup>c</sup>
	Tourists should pay more for attractions	3.51
	<b>Mean for the scale</b>	<b>3.35</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Mean for all items</b>	<b>3.35</b>

<sup>a</sup> 1=Strongly disagree 5=Strongly agree

<sup>b</sup> Reverse coded item

<sup>c</sup> Not included in scale

Table 4: Hierarchical Regression Of Two Items On Resident Characteristics, Economic Reliance And Positive And Negative Opinions Of Tourism

Blocks of Independent Variables	Regression 1				Regression 2			
	Beta	R <sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup>	T value	P value	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	T value	P value
<b>1, Resident Characteristics</b>								
Income	-.02		-.35		-.00		-.03	
Length of Residence	.02		.36		.05		.81	
Distance of residence from CTZ	.05		1.1		.07		1.5	
Born in City	.03		.62		-.01		-.08	
Home ownership	-.06		-1.2		-.09		-1.7	
Age	-.06		-1.3		.08		1.4	
Gender	.03		.62		.02		.34	
Year round residence	.07	-.01	1.7		.06	.01	1.1	
<b>2, Economic Reliance</b>								
Importance of tourism to occupation	.05	.07	1.1	.000	-.01		-.24	
Employed in the tourism industry	.03	.57	.77	.000	.03	.04	.52	.003
<b>3, Positive</b>	.64	.6	12.9	.000	.47	.41	8.3	.000
<b>4, Negative</b>	-.19		-3.9		-.31	.47	-5.4	.000

<sup>1</sup> Adjusted R square

Table 5: Hierarchical Regression Of Two Items On Resident Characteristics, Economic Reliance And  
Positive And Negative Opinions Of Tourism

Blocks of Independent Variables	Regression 3				Regression 4			
	Beta	R2	T value	P value	Beta	R2	T value	P value
<b>1, Resident Characteristics</b>								
Income	.01		.19		.02		.35	
Length of Residence	.09		1.6		.03		.51	
Distance of residence from Central Tourist Zone	.00		.02		-.12		-2.6	
Born in City	-.07		-1.5		.04		.69	
Home ownership	.01		.155		.09		1.6	
Age	.08		1.9		.05		.94	
Gender	.07		1.6		.01		.14	
Year round residence	.01	.02	.25	.076	-.07	.02	-1.2	
<b>2, Economic Reliance</b>								
Importance of tourism to occupation	.05		1.2		-.03		-.63	
Employed in the tourism industry	-.01	.09	-.36	.000	-.02	.06	-.37	.002
<b>3, Positive</b>	.78	.65	16.8	.000	-.33	.33	.5.5	.000
<b>4, Negative</b>	-.03	.65	-.69	.489	.4	.44	6.9	.000

Table 6: Hierarchical Regression Of One Item On Resident Characteristics, Economic Reliance And  
Positive And Negative Opinions Of Tourism

Blocks of Independent Variables	Regression 5			
	Beta	R2	T value	P value
<b>1, Resident Characteristics</b>				
Income	-.1		-1.4	
Length of Residence	-.1		-1.1	
Distance of residence from Central Tourist Zone	.19		3.1	
Born in City	.1		1.5	
Home ownership	.05		.64	
Age	-.13		-1.7	
Gender	-.02		.37	
Year round residence	.02	.04	.25	.018
<b>2, Economic Reliance</b>				
Importance of tourism to occupation	.09		1.2	
Employed in the tourism industry	-.06	.05	-.88	.123
<b>3, Positive</b>	.21	.08	2.8	.002
<b>4, Negative</b>	.01	.08	.16	.873

Table 7: Hierarchical Regression Of Two Items On Resident Characteristics, Economic Reliance And  
Positive And Negative Opinions Of Tourism

Blocks of Independent Variables	Regression 6				Regression 7			
	Beta	R2	T value	P value	Beta	R2	T value	P value
<b>1, Resident Characteristics</b>								
Income	.02		.382		-.07		-1.1	
Length of Residence	-.14		-2.0		-.05		.747	
Distance of residence from Central Tourist Zone	.03		.70		.02		.386	
Born in City	.06		1.0		.12		2.0	
Home ownership	.03		.56		-.02		-.37	
Age	.06		1.0		.04		.61	
Gender	-.03		-.57		-.05		-.98	
Year round residence	.05	.04	.99	.020	.05	.03	1.0	.042
<b>2, Economic Reliance</b>								
Importance of tourism to occupation	.12		2.1		-.1		-1.8	
Employed in the tourism industry	.06	.11	1.0	.000	.03	.08	.54	.000
<b>3, Positive</b>					-.56	.36	-10.6	.000
<b>4, Negative</b>	-.54	.4	-10.6	.000				