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Paddison, Brendan and Biggins, Rebecca (2017) Advocating community integrated destination marketing planning in heritage destinations: the case of York. Journal of Marketing Management, 33 (9-10). pp. 835-857.

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Advocating Community Integrated Destination Marketing Planning in Heritage Destinations: The Case of York

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Abstract

Tourist destinations are complex, with a mix of political and commercial activity that, to varying extents, involves or employs different methods of participation in the tourism decision-making process. More specifically, within the context of heritage tourism, planning and development should respond to the values that host communities place upon their heritage. The building of partnerships between destination management organisations and host communities could enable authentic collaboration in the design and development of heritage tourism. The purpose of this paper is to highlight and explore the challenges and opportunities of facilitating community engagement in heritage destination management. Through examining an approach adopted in York, this paper explores the extent to which participation in tourism planning and development allows community members to take ownership of their heritage and result in more positive community attitudes towards tourism. The study concludes by suggesting that the approach adopted in York facilitated positive community engagement with stakeholder involvement in destination decision-making achieved through a focused and well-considered programme of activity.

Key Words: *heritage, destination branding, community engagement, strategy.*

Introduction

Within the context of destination marketing and strategic planning, collaborative destination management has become a key feature of urban governance (Le Feuvre et al., 2015). As a result of the broader political transition from *government* to *governance* (Stevenson, Airey and Miller, 2008), local authorities were encouraged to become more strategic, developing and implementing public policy in collaboration with key stakeholder and interest groups (Connelly, 2007; d'Angella, De Carlo and Sainaghi, 2010; Gansler, 2003; Ruhanen et al., 2010; Stoker, 1998). Tourism was

considered an important stimulus for urban regeneration (Thomas and Thomas, 1998), and local government agencies sought to increase the economic potential of tourism through partnerships.

Collaboration and partnerships have been widely discussed across a number of disciplines, including geography, politics and urban studies (Le Feuvre et al., 2015). In the field of tourism, for example, various perspectives have been explored (Zapata and Hall, 2012), including community-based tourism (Haywood, 1988; Murphy, 1988; Ritchie, 1993); power and power relationships (Bramwell and Meyer, 2007; Dredge, 2001; Hall, 2010; Hall and Jenkins, 1995; Jamal and Getz, 2000; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012; Reed, 1997); the role of collaborative networks (Beaumont and Dredge, 2010; Bramwell and Lane, 2011; Dredge, 2006); and local economic development (Long, 2000; Thomas and Thomas, 1998; Wilson and Boyle, 2004). What becomes apparent is an acknowledgement of the range of actors involved in urban governance and decision-making (Le Feuvre et al., 2015). Although partnerships in a broad sense are recognised as an effective collaborative method of involving a range of stakeholders in destination management (Carley, 2000; Greer, 2001), there can be difficulties in accommodating a wide variety of interests, potentially leading to or further cultivating conflict and power imbalances between stakeholder groups (Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010; Greasley, Watson and Patel, 2008; Mordue, 2007; Provan and Kenis, 2007; Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005). These challenges are further exacerbated within the context of heritage destinations due to the multifaceted and complex nature of heritage places and spaces (Smith, 2006; Waterton, 2005; Watson and Waterton, 2011).

Within the context of heritage tourism, there has been an increasing focus on the involvement of local resident communities for the sustainable and responsible development of heritage destinations (Darcy and Wearing, 2009; Hopley and Mahoney, 2011; Hung, Sirakaya-Turk and Ingram, 2011; Stronza and Gordillo, 2008; Tosun, 2000). A lack of community consultation in the rebranding of Nottingham, for example, resulted in dissatisfaction amongst the local community as the city negated to identify and understand local representations (Litteljohn, 2006). For Waterton (2005), therefore, planning and development within heritage management should respond to the values that host communities place upon their heritage. Consequently, the building of partnerships between destination management organisations (DMOs) and host communities could facilitate more effective forms of collaboration.

It would appear then that the structures and approaches to the engagement of stakeholders in destination planning appear to be crucial in enabling a balanced representative perspective of the destination community (Dredge, 2001; Watson & Waterton, 2011). Therefore, in order to improve the nature of community participation in heritage tourism an examination of the mechanisms used to engage stakeholders in strategy development is required (Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013). Strategy development in tourism is often considered a messy, emergent and essentially political process, critically concerned with communication and collaboration between multiple stakeholders (Stevenson, Airey and Miller, 2008). Although numerous studies of sustainable destination development (Mihalić, Šegota, Cvelbar and Kuščer, 2016) and residents' attitudes towards tourism development are evident (Nunkoo, Smith and Ramkissoon. 2013), there is a lack of research concerned with the application of theory and its development in relation to strategic planning (Dredge, 2006). This paper, therefore, undertakes a case study analysis of an approach to the development of strategic marketing planning, addressing the need to understand the implications for stakeholder representation and participation in heritage tourism (Scott et al., 2011). Consequently, this paper is concerned with evaluating the methodology adopted in the creation of a new tourism strategy in the historic City of York, a major tourist destination in the United Kingdom, and the extent to which participation can facilitate positive community attitudes towards heritage tourism.

The development and management of tourism in York has been widely documented (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1994; 2000; Augustyn and Knowles, 2000; Croft, 2016; Mordue, 2005; 2007; 2010; Snaith and Haley, 1999), in particular by Meethan (1996; 1997) whose analysis identified a number of significant external and internal factors in the development of tourism in the city. York is a major heritage visitor destination with an estimated seven million visitors in 2014 (Visit York, 2015). Following the decline of the railway and chocolate industries, tourism is now York's biggest economic sector, supporting approximately 20,200 jobs and contributing £608 million to the local economy (Visit York, 2015). In July 2012, the City of York Council sought to develop a new vision for tourism which resulted in a yearlong strategy-making process. This study seeks to evaluate the approach to stakeholder engagement in the development of a new tourism strategy. It thereby offers insights for tourist destinations more generally that choose to seek an approach to tourism planning and brand development.

Theoretical Background

The neoliberal facilitation of public services resulted in public sector organisations working in collaboration, developing and implementing public policy with a wider range of stakeholders (Beritelli, Bieger, & Laesser, 2007; Connelly, 2007; Gansler, 2003; Ruhanen et al., 2010; Stoker, 1998). Described by Astleithner and Hamedinger (2003) as the political restructuring of cities, this transition towards a governance approach is attributed to an increase in urban partnership arrangements as a means by which to manage urban space (Dicken, 2015; Peck and Tickell, 1994; Peck, 1995). Collaborative partnership arrangements became a mechanism for local governance organisations to actively engage stakeholders in social and economic decision-making in their locality (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Whitehead, 2007). As such, various partnership arrangements emerged including multi-stakeholder arrangements, public–private sector partnerships and urban forums (Baud and Dhanalakshmi, 2007). In the context of tourism, partnerships became a key feature in the delivery of tourism policy and for promoting joint decision-making, with a view that such arrangements are a good form of governance, facilitating democratic empowerment and contributing to regional innovation and competitiveness (Dredge, 2006; Fyall and Garrod, 2004; Reid, Smith and McCloskey, 2008).

Whilst the potential of partnership arrangements to facilitate participatory democracy is apparent, opinion is divided on whether the partnership modus operandi represents advancement in urban governance or the fragmentation of local policy and disorganisation of local politics (Bassett, 1996; Greer, 2001). One criticism of the partnership approach is the complexities involved in managing the arrangement with the presence of a partnership not always a guarantee that it will be successful (Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005). Strategies may lose coherence with partners pursuing their own interests resulting in conflict as the arrangement struggles to combine a variety of perspectives and thus disenfranchising rather than empowering stakeholders (Greer, 2001; La Feuvre, et al., 2015; Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005).

With further reference to the potential difficulties in establishing collaborative partnership initiatives, Hall and Jenkins (1995) explicitly focus on the creation of partnerships between the public and private sector. They argue that, rather than being

inclusive, often these partnerships, i.e. specifically between local government and industry groups, might result in a 'closing up' of the policy process to other stakeholders. Therefore, Bramwell and Lane (2000) are concerned with ensuring relevant stakeholders from government, business and voluntary sectors are engaged in decision-making which is based on mutual respect and knowledge sharing. This is supported by Hall (2000), who suggests that there is a need for partnerships to be based within the context of the public interest, as opposed to corporate priorities, with the selection of key stakeholders who represent various community interests (Garrod, 2003; Getz and Timur, 2005; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Kimbu and Ngoasong, 2013; Timothy, 2007). Partnerships need to be challenged by focusing on who is involved and who is excluded from the decision-making process (Hall, 2000). Consequently, collaborative approaches to destination development need to be examined within broader notions of governance, with an evaluation of the mechanisms in which stakeholders are engaged. There is limited critical and theoretical research which evaluates structures of collaborative arrangements within an urban context (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Scott et al., 2011; Zapata and Hall, 2012), with a particular focus on resident engagement in strategic development (Dredge and Whitford, 2011; Moscardo, 2011).

Resident Engagement in Strategic Destination Development

Research on resident attitudes towards tourism, and particularly tourism development, suggests that opinion can vary and subsequently, attitudes towards tourism development have been identified as a critical issue for government, policy makers and industry (Harrill, 2004; Meethan, 1997; Ward and Berno, 2011). Resident perceptions of tourism have been shown to be influenced by a number of factors, including the importance of the industry to the locality, the type and extent of resident–visitor interaction, and the level of tourism development in the destination (Ballesteros and Ramirez, 2006; Harrill, 2004). However, of particular interest to this study is the suggestion that there is a direct relationship between residents' perception of tourism and their level of engagement in strategic planning. It is widely acknowledged that successful tourism development involves public participation (Marzuki and Hay, 2013; Simpson, 2001) and it would seem that those residents who are more familiar with development proposals tended to view tourism development

more favourably than those who were less informed (Cheong and Miller, 2000; Keogh, 1990). The suggestion here is that tourism development should involve the local community from the early stages of development discussion.

It is apparent that there is a need for wider community involvement in tourism, with community engagement in the planning and development process crucial for sustainable tourism development (Dredge, 2006; Garrod, 2003). Rather than local authorities claiming they represent the wider community, opportunities for engagement with those communities should be introduced in order to fully understand their needs, desires and interests (Dredge, 2006; Garrod, 2003). Local government can only represent what it perceives to be the interests of the wider community (Hampton, 2005) and, if tourism is to develop within a locality, the host community must become willing partners of this development (Murphy, 1981). Therefore, understanding the mechanisms used in resident engagement becomes significant (Reid, Mair and George, 2004). For Bahaire and Elliott-White (1999), attempts made to involve the general public as stakeholders in tourism decision-making are part of a broader political change in urban governance as already discussed in this paper. The methods in which communities are involved in political decision-making, in particular, are increasingly sophisticated and are seen as essential to democracy. Yet, despite the advocacy for community involvement in tourism decision-making (Gunn, 1972; Murphy, 1985), within urban areas tourism planning is typically associated within a promotional, boosterism model, often in the form of a public-private sector partnership (Bahaire and Elliott-White, 1999).

Inclusive planning, which includes public participation at a local level, is acknowledged as essential if the social and environmental effects of tourism development are to be avoided (Garrod, 2003; Garrod et al., 2012). Although recognised as an ambiguous concept, Bahaire and Elliott-White (1999 p.246) suggest that community involvement ‘is fundamentally about degrees of citizen power and influence within the policy-making process’. For Garrod (2003), a bottom-up planning approach is needed which can facilitate the necessary changes in the attitudes and actions of local stakeholders and in their engagement in the decision-making process. Top-down approaches often fail at achieving sustainable results as local community members are not given sufficient opportunity or incentive to make these changes successful. Garrod (2003) identified a number of good practice elements with regard to incorporating the fundamental principles of local community

participation in ecotourism projects. This included leadership and the empowerment of community stakeholders.

Community participation, however, should not be mistaken for community empowerment which 'implies that an empowered community would have real influence' and be accountable in decision-making (Bahaire and Elliott-White, 1999 p.246). Conversely, community participation can be measured according to the extent to which the community defines its needs and determines whether they have been achieved. In the context of tourism, rather than the benefits being sold to the community, citizens would take an active role in the development of policy and in the distribution of its benefits. Such an approach is concerned with establishing and maintaining a suitable balance between tourism developments and ensuring community stakeholders become beneficiaries and are fully integrated in the relevant planning and management processes (Garrod, 2003).

Although resident participation may result in increased support for tourism development (Garrod, 2003; Simpson, 2001), local community participation in the decision-making process is often scarce. Frequently, community members are only able to comment on planning designs, rather than participate in their development and implementation (Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher, 2005). Often, this method occurs at the end of the process in the form of educational events or information sharing. For Arnstein (1970), this results in tokenistic stakeholder participation which is of little value (Cole, 2006) and has no measurable impact or effect (Byrd, 2007). Instead, the public is largely removed from the equation by a process that enables archaeological, planning and historical experts to apply hegemonic understandings of the past by allocating exclusive priority (Waterton, 2005). Consequently, for Simpson (2001), the concept of community participation is an idealistic proposition with little chance of successful implementation. Furthermore, when genuine community participation has occurred, the outcome of the planning process did not make the quality of decision-making any better than public or private sector domination (Simpson, 2001). It is suggested that community groups are unable to make effective decisions within tourism planning due to bias levels of interest, a lack of business skills and industry knowledge (Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher, 2005; Simpson, 2001).

Consequently, given the complex environment of destination management and stakeholder engagement it is not surprising that tourism planning initiatives tend to be top down with a lack of community engagement (Bahaire and Elliott-White, 1999).

For Hampton (2005), therefore, community participation cannot become a reality unless specific and purposeful strategies at local, national and international levels are developed. For example, the development of the European Union structural funding process has, according to Curry (2000), provided an important impetus for the growth of community participation in the context of tourism. Community participation could then transform the attitudes of local people from passivity to responsibility, creating a renewed sense of local relevance to democracy. This would promote a new relationship between the individual and the state based on the sharing of power and decision-making (Dinham, 2005).

Heritage Destination Marketing and Place Branding

Considerable academic interest in place marketing (Gertner, 2011; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008; Niedomysl and Jonasson, 2012) and heritage tourism has recently developed (Hall & Coles, 2008; Howard, 2003; Hung, Sirakaya-Turk and Ingram, 2011; McCamley and Gilmore, 2016; Smith, 2006; Waterton & Watson, 2011), with heritage described as a 'contemporary epidemic' (Urry, 2002, p.5). Heritage has become unprecedentedly popular with an increasing number of tourists seeking a meaningful experience and a relationship with the past (Watson and Waterton, 2011). Consequently, for competing destinations, heritage is often adopted as a place marketing strategy (Hanna & Rowley, 2008; Pike, 2008; Skinner, 2008), with destination marketers seeking to assert a destination's individuality and attractiveness by focusing its branding and marketing strategy around its heritage assets. However, focusing on the past as a means of differentiation is no longer sufficient, with many destinations able to state that they possess a unique culture, heritage and landscape (Morgan et al, 2008). Furthermore, as a socially constructed and negotiated term (Smith, 2006), heritage tourism branding is complicated to manage and develop.

Although place branding has been described as ineffectual (Medway et al., 2015) based upon the notion that places themselves cannot be branded (Amujo and Otubanjo, 2012), the brand portrayed by a tourist destination is considered of great importance, with branding recognised as 'perhaps the most powerful marketing weapon available to contemporary destination marketers' (Morgan and Pritchard 2004 p.60). The development of a place branding strategy, 'a plan for defining the most realistic, most competitive, and most compelling strategic vision for a country, region,

or a city', with this vision then fulfilled and communicated (Anholt, 2003 p.214), is often attributed to increased economic growth, brand value and destination success (Davis, 2002; Matear et al., 2004). However, in order to maintain and grow the heritage tourism industry in a responsible way, strategic development should be approached in an 'intelligent, planned and thoughtful manner by developers and the public alike' (Goeldner, Ritchie and MacIntosh, 2000 p.30). Consequently, a participatory approach is advocated facilitating a stakeholder-focused process which takes into account the needs of developers, the local community and residents (Easterling, 2005). Therefore, there is a distinct need to analyse the stakeholder groups involved when developing place marketing and branding strategy, as the analysis and identification of stakeholders is a way of connecting environmental issues, internal system dynamics and the marketing strategy itself (Easterling, 2005).

This presents unique challenges as heritage values and understanding vary within destination communities. Heritage is diverse and disparate in nature, being a 'concept of complexity' (Ashworth and Howard, 1999, p.5) subject to 'inherent, argument and contestation' and, as such, heritage means different things to different people. The contested nature of heritage is well documented (Graham 2002; Howard, 2003), with heritage cited as being multifaceted (Waterton, 2005), socially constructed (Smith, 2006) and experienced in the present (Graham 2002; Howard, 2003). Despite its advances from its origins as a pastime of the elite, heritage is still 'always inflected by the power and the authority of those who have colonized the past, whose versions of history matter' (Hall, 2005 p.26). Subsequently, Aas et al. (2005) necessitate clear lines of communication between all stakeholder groups in the development of heritage branding strategy.

Although the influence of residents on brand identity and the success of heritage destinations is often under-acknowledged, for Ritchie and Ritchie (2002), residents are so intrinsic to a place that they become a part of the visitation experience. Consequently, with tourism marketing heavily focused upon conveying a positive image to prospective consumers (Zafar, 1991), it is important that destination residents, considered to be 'the most influential place marketers' (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008 p.161), concede with the development and management of tourism activity. Therefore, by facilitating involvement, engagement and awareness within the community and enabling ownership of the destination and its brand, residents will become increasingly understanding of tourism and subsequently, form part of a

positive heritage tourism experience. In this context, it is important to consider the possible role that the local community can play in developing the heritage tourism destination brand. The most successful method for constructing a destination brand is to adopt a bottom-up, as opposed to a top-down, approach whereby the decision-making process is influenced through the involvement and consultation with the local community (Dias and Marques, 2011; Howie, 2003).

In summary, approaches and frameworks for community participation are evident, ranging from tourism forums to resident consultation and survey instruments (Bahaire and Elliott-White, 1999). In addition, Haywood (1988 p.109) suggests that the community participation process requires a range of tools such as 'conciliation, mediation, articulation, and identification of superordinate goals'. Successful community involvement depends upon the partnership between the local community and the public and private sectors. For Bahaire and Elliott-White (1999), local residents should not be excluded from the decision-making process but rather innovative mechanisms for community engagement should be explored.

Despite this, there is a corpus of research devoted to achieving a consistent theoretical and conceptual understanding of destination communities and the marketing process (Dinnie, 2008; Fyall and Garrod, 2004; Marzano and Scott, 2009; Morgan & Pritchard, 2004; Wang et al., 2009). Although there exists a substantive body of research on community participation, as highlighted by Khazaei, Elliot and Joppe (2015), residents are amongst the least engaged in tourism. There is, then, the need for a deeper understanding of effective community engagement in governance structures. Research on community participation tends to focus on short-term perspectives and it is only recently that studies have started to consider a long-term and dynamic process of community participation. For example, there has been a specific focus on community participation in sustainable tourism, notable within a developing country context with a focus on rural communities (Garrod, 2003). However, what becomes apparent here is a lack of research which explores community participation within an urban context and more specifically in heritage destinations (Scott et al., 2011). The purpose of this investigation, therefore, is to evaluate the methodology adopted in the creation of a new tourism strategy and explore the challenges and opportunities of facilitating community engagement in the development process. Through examining the approach adopted in the heritage city of

York, this investigation will explore the extent to which participation in tourism strategy-making can facilitate positive community attitudes towards heritage tourism.

Methodology

The methodological philosophy that underpins this study is a qualitative, interpretive approach. The basis of the interpretive approach is grounded on the notion of people studied providing their own explanation of their situation or behaviour (Veal, 1997). This research is concerned with understanding community engagement in the development of heritage tourism and it is therefore acknowledged that multiple interpretations and perspectives exist. The researchers' role is to reveal and understand socially constructed perceptions through accessing the meanings participants assign to them. As Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) suggest, interpretive studies assume that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. The subject of this research does not lend itself to capture hypothetical deductions or the positivism approach. Understanding a social process involves understanding the world of those generating it (Rosen, 1991). Therefore, an interpretive approach was chosen as the authors acknowledge the subjective views that the participants are likely to express.

A case study approach was specifically chosen as the core strategy for this study, providing an opportunity to explore, analyse and interpret a single instance of destination strategy development (Gillham, 2000; Stake, 1995; 2008; Yin, 2009). Yin (2003 p.13) defines a case study as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'. By using a variety of resources and techniques, which can include interviewing, observations and documentary analysis, case study research allows for a comprehensive and critical understanding of the circumstances and characteristics of a particular instance (Gomm, Hammersley and Foster, 2000; Yin, 2009).

Following a review of the literature and secondary data, including documentary resources such as policy documents, annual reports and strategic plans, in-depth, interpretive interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of key informants. Due to the exploratory, respondent-centred orientation of this research, semi-structured interviews were employed. Interviews are a common method of

investigation in social research projects (Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Seale, 1998) and were deemed appropriate because of their open-ended nature which allowed the researchers the freedom to adapt the course of the interview in line with the information presented by the respondent. This gave the researchers the best chance of extracting the required information. Furthermore, interviews allow for a depth of conversation and reflexive dialogue that is not possible through other available methods (Silverman, 2011). In total 16 stakeholder representatives across the destination were interviewed. Two interviews were conducted with the same participations, the first prior to the consultation process and the second following the consultation process. A range of stakeholders responsible for, or involved in, the development of the new tourism strategy in York were interviewed to the extent that it was felt the study provides a robust insight regarding stakeholder representation and participation in heritage tourism planning. Although it is not always possible to guarantee that additional interviews may not provide novel insights, as is frequently the case in interpretive research, the analysis of the interview data and a comparison of views expressed therein suggests major themes have been identified as outlined in the discussion.

An interview schedule was employed based around themes that emerged from the literature, including attitudes towards tourism, representation and participation of local stakeholders, and strategic marketing planning. A key consideration underpinning the interviews was to allow for as natural a conversational flow as possible, thereby permitting the emergence of novel themes and the open and honest expression of views. The interview schedule also permitted the subsequent inclusion of themes that had arisen in earlier interviews. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. A thematic approach was adopted in the analysis of the data which seeks to identify and describe patterns and themes within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). All interview data were transcribed in Microsoft Word and later transferred to the Nvivo8 software package for subsequent analysis. This allowed the researchers to organise, store and retrieve data collected in a systematic and coherent way.

Ethical concerns are an important consideration within this research (Bryman, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Before the fieldwork commenced ethical approval was sought from the relevant University Ethics Committee. All informants were asked to provide written consent before the research was conducted. This provided the opportunity for participants to understand the purpose, benefits, risks and expectations

of the research (Bryman, 2012). Agreement to participate was obtained from the interviewees, often after initial contact regarding the project had been established. At the start of each interview it was explained to participants that they had the right to withdraw at any point during the study. This helped to create an atmosphere in which participants felt relaxed and not under any obligation which may have led to a biased data set. At the end of the interview the researcher explained that the interview would be transcribed and a copy would be sent to the respondent for them to validate. The respondent was then given the opportunity to edit the transcript.

Findings and Discussion

As identified in the introduction section, the development of tourism in York has been widely documented (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1994; 2000; Augustyn and Knowles, 2000; Croft, 2016; Meethan, 1996; 1997; Mordue, 2005; 2007; 2010). This body of research, in particular, highlighted the extent to which negativity and hostility towards tourism was prevalent amongst local residents. This is a significant issue with Meethan (1996 p.329) finding that in York 'anti-tourist sentiments within the city ran high, and there were calls for the numbers to be limited or least better managed'. There is, however, a lack of contemporary research focusing on tourism management and strategy formation in York.

In addition, in an attempt to maximise the economic potential of tourism, in July 2012 the City of York Council established an 18-month strategy-making process to create a new tourism strategy (City of York Council, 2011). The Council initiated the strategy-making, establishing a steering group including representation from Visit York (the city's DMO) and the City Council. In the development of the new tourism strategy, a yearlong programme of consultation events took place with the intention of engaging with a range of stakeholders (Table 1). In particular, this included two conferences, resident forums, interviews with various stakeholders, market research and analysis, and two Open Space Technology workshops. The agenda for these workshops was developed by those who attended and thus were able to influence and shape the nature of the discussion according to their own collective interests and concerns. The final stage of this process was a review of the consultation, which included presenting feedback to stakeholders through one-to-one and group discussions, culminating in a draft strategy document published in June 2013.

Table 1 – York's Tourism Strategy Consultation Process

Consultation Event	**Key Themes**
Visit York Conference – November 2012	• Tourism Stakeholders from York and region • Delegates were asked to comment on discomforting data (table cloth event) • Examples include age profile and attracting younger visitors, overseas visitors, staying visitors
York Residents Festival – January – February 2013	• The aim was to use the resident festival as a tool to collect resident views on tourism, i.e. their likes and dislikes • Residents were asked to comment on 3 questions, benefits of tourism, how they would describe tourism to their friends and relatives and the disadvantages of tourism • The event also served as an opportunity to promote the development of the new strategy • Residents had an opportunity to participate during a month long period, through a stand on Parliament Street, their library, online and in the Mansion House
Open Space Technology Workshop 1– February 2013	• 200 named individuals selected to participate. This included a range of tourism related businesses, members of Visit York and those deemed to provide an appropriate mix of delegates • Delegates set the agenda and subjects for discussion being asked "What are the issues you want to talk about regarding tourism?" They were then asked to vote on the key issues and discuss these in further detail in small groups • The event was led by an external facilitator
Open Space Technology Workshop 2– March 2013	• Delegates involved in the first open space technology event were invited back, along with new delegates, to participate in a second event • Based on the findings from the first workshop, delegates were presented with key themes and asked to comment on these. These themes included a business conference package, new iconic attraction, how to make money out of the history and heritage of the city, underutilisation of the river areas, package of events and festivals and transport • Delegates also had the opportunity to add to this. As a result the 'visitor welcome' was added to this list of themes • They were then asked to discuss these in further detail in small groups • The event was again led by an external facilitator
Tourism Futures Conference – March 2013	• University conference with both academics and practitioners • Key findings thus far were presented and delegates were asked to provide feedback • It was also an opportunity to gain an external perspective on the issues and themes raised

A number of themes emerged from the analysis of the findings from respondents prior to the consultation process and following the consultation process providing a structure to the discussion which follows. First, an assessment of collaborative destination management in York is explored concerning destination governance, providing context to the consultation process adopted. Second, consideration is given to the implications of this approach for stakeholder engagement and perceptions of tourism. Finally, barriers to engagement are explored, particularly within the context of broader stakeholder engagement in tourism strategy development.

Destination Governance and Tourism Strategy Development

It would seem that the approach adopted to strategy-making by the City Council was characteristic of the broader political transition from government to governance (Stevenson, Airey and Miller, 2008), whereby local authorities were encouraged to become more strategic, developing and implementing policy in partnership with key stakeholders (Connelly, 2007; d'Angella, De Carlo and Sainaghi, 2010; Gansler, 2003; Ruhanen et al., 2010; Stoker, 1998). The City Council "completely changed its focus in the way [they] engaged with the local community in strategy development" (Chief Executive, City of York Council) and it is apparent that the strategy-making process adopted by the City Council was "recognition of the need to engage a range of stakeholders, including both residents and businesses" (Project Officer, City of York Council).

The City Council's decision to lead the development of the tourism strategy appears to reflect concerns that the DMO, Visit York, insufficiently engaged with a wider range of relevant stakeholders due to the adoption of a membership model. When Visit York was established the new organisation maintained private sector membership in order to engage businesses (City of York Council, 2007). The membership model was also an important source of funding and, as the Marketing Executive (Research) at Visit York explained, "in order to be involved in our work you need to be a member". However, this implies that the membership structure adopted limits the engagement of a full range of stakeholders in decision-making that should involve a wider range of interests. Rather than being exclusive, the City Council were keen that the strategy-making process was "inclusive to enable all relevant stakeholders to have the ability to influence" and therefore sought to develop

a “consultation process in collaboration with a number of organisations in York to facilitate wider stakeholder engagement” (Chief Executive, City of York Council). The DMO was an “important partner” (Project Officer, City of York Council) in the strategy-making process and led on a number of consultation activities. However, it was evident that there was a strong desire to work with a wider range of organisations, including “cultural and heritage organisations” (Director, City of York Council) in order to engage various perspectives.

One feature acknowledged for successful destination planning is a high level of stakeholder engagement (Pjerotić, Rađenović and Tripković-Marković, 2016). Attempts made to facilitate stakeholder engagement in tourism decision-making are part of a broader political change in urban governance (Bahaire and Elliott-White, 1999; Reid, Mair and George, 2004), which was typically associated within a promotional, boosterism model, often in the form of a public-private sector partnership (Bahaire and Elliott-White, 1999), as apparent in the case of York’s DMO. The methods in which stakeholders are engaged in the political process are increasingly sophisticated, with a number of authors (Bahaire and Elliott-White, 1999; Garrod, 2003; Garrod et al., 2012) advocating an inclusive, bottom-up planning approach involving leadership and the empowerment of community stakeholders. Rather than local authorities claiming they represent the wider community, opportunities for engagement with those communities should be introduced in order to fully understand their needs, desires and interests (Dredge, 2006; Garrod, 2003). In the case of York, a year-long consultation process involving a variety of events, including two Open Space Technology workshops directed by those who attended, created a mechanism which appears to have facilitated wider stakeholder engagement.

Engaging Destination Stakeholders

Prior to the consultation process it was apparent that stakeholders in York felt disengaged and had limited engagement in tourism decision-making. A number of respondents highlighted a “lack of cooperation” and “minimal communication to residents”, resulting in stakeholders feeling “de-prioritized” and “unable to have the ability to influence”. These concerns are evident in the literature, with Howard (2003) asserting that the majority of power in heritage destinations tends to be in the

possession of elites, exacerbated by DMOs often favouring those higher value interest groups (Mordue, 2010).

Following the consultation process, findings from a number of respondents suggested that “for the first time I feel like I've had a real influence on tourism”. A number of stakeholders felt the new strategy was “owned by the community” with “all of the strategic aims driven by those consulted”. Respondents highlighted that in general “the nature of the whole process was strategic” and “consultative”. The approach allowed for a respondent-driven agenda which facilitated respondent empowerment. This correlates with Bahaire and Elliott-White’s (1999) notion of community empowerment, whereby residents have an active influence in development decisions. The adoption of a range of tools appears to have enabled a variety of different perspectives to be considered. This bottom-up approach allowed those involved to influence the policy-making process within a forum of dialogue and information sharing. This type of approach to community engagement is advocated by a number of authors (Bahaire and Elliott-White, 1999; Dias and Marques, 2011; Garrod, 2003; Howie, 2003) who argue that strategic development should be approached in an innovative and thoughtful manner (Goeldner, Ritchie and MacIntosh, 2000). In the case of York, it appears that this led to a recognition of the value of working with all tourism stakeholders, including residents, in strategy development.

Effective community participation can be measured according to the extent to which the community actively defines strategic aims and objectives, with citizens taking a lead role in the development of policy and in the distribution of its benefits (Bahaire and Elliott-White, 1999; Haywood, 1988). Of particular interest in this study was recognition amongst stakeholders of working towards a shared goal devised by all those involved in the consultation process. This created an incentive to collaborate, creating an environment where stakeholders felt that “for the first time” they “were having an influence in shaping tourism” (Local resident). Working towards a shared goal that stakeholders not only understood but also had the ability to influence appeared to create an atmosphere of authentic collaboration. There was a sense that previous power structures no longer held a dominant role in decision-making and the strategy-making process was “a new way of doing things” (Local Resident, working in the tourism industry). Access to opportunities to enable influence, with interaction

between different stakeholders groups in decision-making, appears to be fundamental for tourism strategy success (Haywood, 1988; Le Feuvre et al., 2015).

Stakeholder Engagement and Attitudes towards Tourism

It was evident that a sense of separation existed between the resident community and tourism, with increasing levels of tourism activity cited as the main justification. In particular, one respondent stated that they "avoid town on the weekend, you can't move, it's ridiculous!" (Tourism business owner, local resident), with another informant adding, "big groups of people from coach tours make it difficult to walk around the city" (Tour guide, local resident). This is consistent with the findings of both Voase (1999) and Mordue (2010) who found that residents in York felt alienated from the city centre. Snaith and Haley (1999) argue that residents who work in the tourism industry are more likely to have positive attitudes towards tourism development. However, a number of respondents cited here, although some of whom work in tourism, held negative views towards the sector. It would appear that a lack of ability to influence the scale and pace of development strongly influenced perceptions of tourism, with one respondent noting "development appears to be ad hoc, with no joined up thinking, consideration or consultation of those who actually work in the industry" (Restaurant proprietor).

Notions of a lack of ownership are a reoccurring consequence of heritage marketing often due to a wide range of stakeholders involved. As identified by Adams (2005, p.434), 'heritage sites are destined to be sites of controversy, as different groups embracing different narratives seek to assert symbolic (or economic) ownership of these sites'. However, Howie (2003) and Rehmet and Dinnie (2013) argue that the internal stakeholders of a destination should not be ignored and provide a valuable asset for the overall tourism product (Saraniemi, 2010). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the DMO to include and engage internal stakeholders through collaboration and community engagement. Indeed, collaboration and community influence are essential when marketing destinations as without co-operation from these stakeholders the branding strategy will fail (Pike, 2005). Such failure could arise due to a lack of vision assimilation between residents and the brand leading to a failure in the delivery of brand promises as residents act as an intangible asset to the destination and are responsible for delivering a positive visitor experience (Eastgate,

2000; Low, 2000). Although one official from Visit York noted the importance of resident engagement in strategy development, claiming "residents have an important role to play", their active engagement is imperceptible, with another official from Visit York "unsure how residents are engaged". As identified in this paper, the adoption of a membership model appears to limit the wider engagement of destination stakeholders.

It became apparent that as a consequence of their engagement in the consultation process, respondents appeared more positive regarding tourism activity and the marketing of the destination, stating that "perhaps they will consider our views when marketing York" (Bed and Breakfast proprietor). This is supported by another respondent who felt that the process was genuine, stating "I do think they have taken this all on board, they seemed interested when I was talking about my own concerns" (Tourism business owner). These responses illustrate that the local community felt involved and engaged with the decision-making process. Furthermore, they reflect a sense that this was an authentic process, with authenticity in community participation being a significant factor to destination success (Waterton, 2010). The responses indicate a sense of co-operation between the local community and the local authority. A sense of co-operation is vital in destination marketing, with Beritelli (2011 p.209) arguing that 'cooperation among stakeholders in tourism destination communities is necessary but per se neither obviously occurs nor is formally established'.

Barriers to Engagement

Effective communication between all stakeholder groups is considered crucial in strategy development (Aas et al., 2005). However, in the case of York, prior to the consultation process a lack of communication appeared to be reciprocal with many respondents highlighting "a lack of engagement", "limited communication" and "I don't feel my voice is heard". This is in accordance with previous studies which have found that public agencies deprioritise the needs of local communities (Ashworth & Graham, 2005; Aas et al., 2005). Furthermore, a lack of communication can often result in negativity disposed towards tourism activity as individuals become disengaged in the heritage story of their own destination. This collaborates with the extant literature which suggests that there is often a lack of awareness of tourism

activity amongst local communities (Timothy, 2000; Sharpley and Tefler, 2002; Theobald, 2005). It is apparent that this lack of communication leads to communities feeling inadequate and less important than the tourists in their own destination (Theobald, 2005; Timothy and Wall, 1997). This is consistent with the findings of this study, with respondents highlighting a lack of communication in tourism decision-making. As such, many residents do not participate in the activities deemed for tourists, with one respondent, a York tour guide stating that "when I speak to residents about the tours of the city they just dismiss that they could involve themselves". This is a particular issue of contention as local people involving themselves in tourism activities can be very beneficial for destinations (Watson and Waterton, 2011). Accordingly, Nyaupane and Timothy (2010) identified that increased visitation to heritage sites by the local community can help them to improve local heritage awareness and increase positive attitudes towards heritage tourism. This is supported by Komoo (2004), who found that when communities have a higher awareness of the unique resources at their destination they experience an increase in community pride.

Although officials involved in the management of the strategy-making process felt that the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders resulted in "quality and depth of responses", the event was "time consuming" and "resulted in a large volume of data". It was apparent that feedback gained from residents, in particular, was "fragmented, often irrelevant and uninspiring" (Project Officer, City of York Council). These concerns are echoed by a number of authors (Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher, 2005; Simpson, 2001) who found that often community groups are unable to make effective decisions in tourism planning and development due to bias levels of interest, a lack of business skills and industry knowledge. In addition, an official from the DMO noted that "the responses received were not surprising", adding "there is nothing new here that either myself or my team were already aware of". This correlates with Simpson (2001), who suggests that when genuine community participation has occurred, the outcome of the planning process did not make the quality of decision-making any better than public or private sector engagement. In addition, a number of respondents were also less enthused, questioning the extent to which their engagement was tokenistic, with one respondent stating "we've had an opportunity to get involved, but I doubt whether my ideas will actually be taken into consideration" (Bed and Breakfast proprietor).

Conclusion

This paper has been concerned with examining the approach adopted in the engagement of relevant stakeholders, specifically the local community, in the development of tourism strategy in the tourist-historic city of York. The purpose of the study was to understand the impact and significance of such an approach as a framework for consultation that might be adopted in other similar destinations. The research sought to highlight issues concerning community engagement in heritage destination marketing and planning and, as such, identify the extent to which participation in strategy-making can facilitate more positive community attitudes towards tourism. The findings suggest that the approach taken in York was successful in facilitating community engagement and their involvement in the integrated destination marketing process. Although authentic community engagement in destination marketing is still a relatively new concept, as demonstrated in York, authentic engagement is possible through a focused and well-considered programme of activity. This supports Easterling (2005), who advocates for a stakeholder-focused process when developing place marketing and branding strategy.

Collaborative destination management has become a key feature of urban governance (Le Feuvre et al., 2015) and a mechanism for local governance organisations to actively engage stakeholders in social and economic decision-making in their locality (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Whitehead, 2007) and subsequently, various partnerships arrangements emerged (Baud and Dhanalakshmi, 2007). Although collaboration and partnerships in a broad sense are recognised as an effective collaborative method of involving all, or at least the majority of relevant stakeholders in destination management (Carley, 2000; Greer, 2001), there can be difficulties in accommodating a wide variety of interests (Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010; Greasley, Watson and Patel, 2008). These concerns were evident in the case of York's DMO, with the City Council keen to collaborate with a number of organisations, rather than the DMO leading strategy development. In addition, the engagement of stakeholders working towards a shared goal that those involved not only understood but also had the ability to influence appeared to create an atmosphere of authentic collaboration. The suggestion here is that strategy development in tourism should be holistic, facilitating Murphy's (1981) notion of democratic

citizenship through 'participatory democracy' in which local people engage in government through a variety of well-designed engagement mechanisms.

Despite numerous studies concerned with sustainable destination development and stakeholder engagement (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Mihalić, Šegota, Cvelbar and Kuščer, 2016; Nunkoo, Smith and Ramkissoon. 2013), there is limited critical research concerned with the application of theory and its development regarding strategic planning (Dredge, 2006; Scott et al., 2011; Zapata and Hall, 2012), with a particular focus on resident engagement in collaborative governance arrangements within an urban context (Dredge and Whitford, 2011; Moscardo, 2011). Through a case study analysis of an approach to the development of strategic planning in York, this paper has addressed the need to understand the implications for stakeholder representation and participation in heritage tourism (Scott et al., 2011). In exploring these issues in an established heritage destination, this study has drawn attention to the political nature of tourism and the implications for democratic involvement. In doing so, it provides insights for tourist destinations more generally that choose to seek an approach to tourism planning and brand development.

Further research is needed, however, to fully explore the implications of this approach and the extent to which all relevant stakeholders felt able to influence decision-making and strategy development. Indeed, the responses obtained from the interview process post-consultation were attained shortly after the consultation process was completed and, as such, it would be useful to revisit this line of enquiry at a later stage to explore if the local community are now actively seeing changes in destination activity as a direct result of this process.

A single case study was chosen in order to evaluate the tourism strategy development process and the extent to which community participation was achieved. Whilst this study has drawn attention to the implications of stakeholder engagement in destination development, the adoption of a single case study is not without its limitations, with the transference of these findings to other scenarios undertaken with caution. Furthermore, McFarlane (2010) challenges whether universal comparisons can be made when conceptions and understandings of the city are based on experiences and theoretical work involving those cities in the Global North as this potentially limits the applicability and transferability of the conclusions drawn. Further studies adopting a comparative case study approach that not only focus on similar cities but also on radically different cities may potentially broaden the scope

of transferability and allow for global comparisons to be made on the issues raised and addressed in this study.

Certainly, given its importance to discussions of sustainable tourism development, how to engage local stakeholders in tourism planning and strategy-making is an issue that will continue to challenge tourism scholars and practitioners alike. This study has significant implications for tourism strategy development as an important area of public policy-making. It has contributed to our understanding of strategy development in tourism and, as such, by exploring the approach evident in York, has drawn attention to the need to achieve a more cohesive and consistent methodology that facilitates community engagement in destination planning and brand development. The paper highlights how community engagement in strategy development can facilitate a more holistic and sustainable approach to heritage destination management. Consequently, it contributes both a method and a perspective that is available to evaluate community participation in strategy-making in other tourist destinations.

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