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## **Ethics and Influences in Tourist Perceptions of Climate Change**

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## **Ethics and Influences in Tourist Perceptions of Climate Change**

### **Abstract**

Ethical decisions to visit disappearing destinations are self-serving and influences feed into self-interest. Data was collected from a sample of pre, during and post visit tourists to Venice and Svalbard, using expressive techniques and scenarios using the Hunt-Vitell Model to understand ethical decisions, and the constructive technique and collage to understand influences. The results show that travel decisions are driven by individual selfishness, and any threat to freedom (i.e. the right to travel) is underplayed. The preferred scenario for long term benefit for planet and people is via short-term economic and social negative impacts on the destination's locals, rather than the tourists' own experience. Respondents believe that they are blameless for their purchasing habits as they lack perceived behavioural control, and instead corporations ought to be providing sustainable products as the norm and not sell products that harm. In the scenarios where respondents express concern for the locals in a disappearing destination (i.e. if we don't visit, they will not benefit from our expenditure) could be driven by individual selfishness to visit, rather than an altruistic act to provide support. Theoretical and policy implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** climate change, disappearing destinations, ethical tourism, ethics, influences

### **Introduction**

Tourists are selecting or are being encouraged to select (through marketing and the media) endangered destinations by climate change (Lemelin, Dawson, Stewart, Maher, & Lueck, 2010; Lemelin, Stewart, & Dawson, 2011; Schultz, 2012). Tourism which

results in consumers “rushing to see glaciers and coral reefs before they’re gone for good” (Forum for the Future, 2009: online) termed by the press variously: ‘doomsday tourism’ (Shipman, 2007), ‘tourism of doom’ (Shapiro, 2007), ‘doom tourism’ (Salkin, 2007), ‘extinction tourism’ (Leahy, 2008), ‘see it before it disappears’ (Bluestone, 2009) and ‘climate-change sightseeing’ (Kallenbach, 2009).

Although surveys suggest tourists care about sustainability and climate change, an attitude-behaviour gap is seen in socially responsible attitudes not reflected in purchases (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Devinney, Auger, & Eckhardt, 2010). The socially desirable nature of being an ‘ambassador’ for disappearing destinations can lead consumers to overstate their intentions to buy ethically (Nilsson, 2008). Eijgelaar et al. (2010) appear to argue that the ambassador role intended to raise awareness of climate change is only a mask for consumers who significantly contribute to it, through their travel activities. In a survey of tourists 73% believe tourism contributes to environmental problems, but only 52% were able to give an example and only 3% mentioned air travel (Gössling et al., 2006). In an Antarctic cruise survey 78% of respondents believed climate change will have societal impacts, but 59% did not believe travel impacts on climate change (Eijgelaar et al., 2010). Further, in a survey of polar bear viewing tourists 88% agreed that humans contribute to climate change, but only 69% agreed that air travel is a contributor (Dawson, Stewart, Lemelin, & Scott, 2010). This weak link between awareness of climate change and modified travel behaviour is unlikely to result in significant reductions of travel emissions (Eijgelaar et al., 2010).

Although Dawson, Stewart, Lemelin, et al. (2010) attribute this weak link to a lack of understanding of the processes which cause climate change, or the failure to carbon-offset as an absence of knowledge, the satisfaction of self-interest and social values cannot be ignored as a behavioural factor (Dawson et al., 2011). The motivation

to satisfy personal desires outweighs commitments to the environment and destination economies (Dawson et al., 2011). The primary motives for an Antarctic cruise included the 'natural experience' (90%) and to 'see the Antarctic before it is gone' (36%) (Eijgelaar et al., 2010). However, the paradox of travelling long distances to see that which is disappearing, makes these tourists disproportionately responsible for increasing greenhouse gas emissions (Dawson, Stewart, Lemelin, et al., 2010).

This paper aims to critically understand the ethical behaviour choices made by tourists, and specifically considering the external influences behind it. It is structured as follows. First, we briefly contextualise climate change and review the literature on ethics in terms of personal and social influences. The methodology section then outlines the choices made behind projective techniques and their application for the study, the sampling choices, and the data collection methods. Results show how ethical decisions to visit disappearing destinations are self-serving and influences feed into self-interest. The conclusion brings together the evidence from both ethics and influences to explain how the complex interrelationship between these variables serves self-interest.

## **Literature Review**

We contextualise climate change in terms of its relationship with tourism and perceptions, whilst determining how respondents make decisions that involve ethical issues. Individual concern for the environment tends to be unrelated to holiday behaviour (Becken, 2007; Gössling & Peeters, 2007; Harrison, Newholm, & Shaw, 2005; Miller, Rathouse, Scarles, Holmes, & Tribe, 2010). This suggests that tourists do not seem to believe in a relationship between tourism impacts on climate change and climate change impacts on tourism (Becken, 2007; Dawson, Stewart, Lemelin, et al., 2010; Dawson, Stewart, & Scott, 2010). Despite tourism being widely discussed as part

of the problem which causes climate change, tourists perhaps lack awareness or knowledge of climate change impacts, from rising temperatures and increased precipitation to melting ice and rising sea-levels (Dubois & Ceron, 2006; Gössling, 2002; Scott, Dawson, & Jones, 2008).

Despite the concerns of environmentalists, some disappearing destinations have witnessed significant increases in tourism. These increases in visitor numbers are partially due to the attention destinations receive as a hotspot of climate change, but potentially tourists are “loving an already dying destination to an early death” (Dawson et al., 2011:255). By example, the archipelago of Svalbard (halfway between Norway and the North Pole) recorded a 32% increase in foreign tourist guest nights for the year to February 2013 (Statistics Norway, 2012, 2013). Diminishing availability increases desire and motivation to visit (Dawson et al., 2011). It is unclear whether the significance of this lies in the selfish desire to see the destinations before they disappear or an altruistic need to stand in solidarity with destination communities (Connell, 2003; Simms, 2001; UNWTO, 2007).

By the early noughties and despite increased levels of research, the study of tourism ethics research was criticised as weak and in an early stage of discourse (Holden, 2003). According to Dawson et al. (2011), by the late 1990s the ethical considerations of tourism managers and stakeholders were said to be untapped, remaining the case for last chance tourism, today. Hence, a call for the ethical analysis and debate of last chance tourism to take a more dynamic and pragmatic approach in determining what is ‘good’ or ‘bad’, in terms of marketing and managing the growth of this market (Dawson et al., 2011). However, as marketing is a social process, it is also suggested that there is a need to determine how respondents make decisions that involve

ethical issues and the extent to which they rely on ethical norms versus the perceived consequences.

Deontological, or duty bound theories of ethics privilege the right and suggest the principles that we should honour and what one ought to do, whereas teleological theories of ethics privilege the good and suggest the outcomes we should promote or endeavour to bring about (Barnett, Cafaro, & Newholm, 2005). In brief deontological = good intent, and teleological = good result. An ethical dilemma concerns the moral conflict produced in a situation where right and wrong are hard to evaluate (Fennell, 2006). Although the ethical dilemmas which impact on individual decision-making can be explained by deontological and teleological ethics, they are a poor predictor of behaviour (Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, & Malpass, 2010; Devinney et al., 2010; Hunt & Vitell, 2006).

Individual ethical dilemmas include what to buy (or not), where to invest, whether to drive or to walk, and whether to help or engage with issues such as reducing carbon footprints and helping the global poor (Barnett et al., 2010). Social ethical dilemmas are situations where individual interests are at odds with collective interests and the consequences of group members acting in their own best interest impacts negatively on others (VanLange, Liebrand, Messick, & Wilke, 1992). Reference Group Theory suggests that any trade-offs between the individual and the group will concern the pressure to comply to group norms with short-term individual sacrifice being required for the long-term benefit of the group (Sen, Gürhan-Canli, & Morwitz, 2001).

The co-operative system is vulnerable to cheats (be they consumers, business or government) who enjoy collective benefits without paying their dues and these ideas are often explored through metaphors (May, 2010). Therefore, although it may be better

to co-operate for the benefit of planet and people, the 'rational' choice is self-interest despite this having a worse outcome (Collin & Collin, 2009). However, those taking responsible decisions (the climate change conscious and self-constrained) are becoming disillusioned with their sacrifices, in the face of the free riders not acting responsibly (Dauvergne, 2006; Hardin, 1968), identified by Pang et al. (2013) as the tourists not willing to change behaviour- and those who fly most are even less willing to change.

Subconsciously, all our daily decisions are subject to ethical judgements, influenced by culture, reference groups and opinion leaders (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2012). Ethical norms and values are learned from the cultural environment, with differing cultures having different ethical values and perceptions of ethical dilemmas (Reisinger, 2009). Norms of behaviour are laid down by reference groups and individuals compare themselves to these, in order to develop their own knowledge and behaviours (Hoyer et al., 2012). Opinion leaders influence others' choices by interpreting and evaluating impersonal information (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2007).

We begin to see the complexity in studying what influences ethical behaviour when asking consumers how they feel about an ethical dilemma. This is not a good predictor of behaviour (Devinney et al., 2010) as other considerations may prevent actions taking place (Boose & Dean, 2000). Although negative news stories can result in product avoidance, this does not necessarily result in a drive towards more ethical products (Bray, Johns, & Kilburn, 2010). Individuals' perceptions of their own priorities are often dictated by time, convenience and cost, which place limits on their ethical behaviour (Szmigin, Carrigan, & McEachern, 2009). Information, quality and finance are typically more cared about than ethical values (Bray et al., 2010).



Nevertheless, rather than reflect these true thoughts or feelings (Grimm, 2010), attitudes, preferences or beliefs (Heerwig & McCabe, 2009), the need for approval (Leite & Beretvas, 2005) results in socially desirable responses (Pauls & Stemmler, 2003). The difference between the expression of socially responsible attitudes and actions is often referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap (Devinney et al., 2010). Although coping strategies for confusion reduction (due to the myriad of products and information) (Mitchell, Walsh, & Mo Yamin, 2005) could account for this, some of the main reasons are cynicism, mistrust or disbelief of ethical claims from organisations (Bray et al., 2010). These are often the result of irrelevant ethical claims or ‘green-washing’ which mislead by stressing the supposed environmental credentials, where these are unsubstantiated (Gillespie, 2008; Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009).

Source credibility (the perceived expertise, trustworthiness or objectivity of the source) is therefore enhanced if the source is perceived to be qualified (Solomon et al., 2007). This could account for trust migrating away from authority sources to trust formed around word-of-mouth (Collins, Thomas, Willis, & Wilsdon, 2003). However, trusting information from people that individuals know and online consumers they do not know (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) could result in change barriers. These include a reduced preference towards flying less (Synovate, 2010); judgemental discounting which undervalues future or distant risks of climate change (Swim et al., 2009); and an expectation that businesses will remove unsustainable products (WBCSD, 2008).

## **Methodology**

The objective was to investigate tourists’ ethics and the influences upon their climate change perceptions or beliefs. As the research intended to elicit rich data, a qualitative

research strategy was selected. Projective techniques were employed on a small sample of pre-visit, during-visit, and post-visit tourists to the two contrasting destinations of Svalbard and Venice. This aimed to determine if customer journey or destination factors influenced differences in the results.

A sample size of 31 was achieved. The sample was split between Venice (16 respondents) and Svalbard (15 respondents). The customer journey split for both destinations was determined to be five pre-visit, three during-visit and eight post-visit respondents. For Svalbard, only four pre-visit respondents were achieved and the eight post-visit respondents included a traveller to Antarctica. For the purposes of this study, the Antarctic respondent was considered valid due to Polar Region destination similarities with Svalbard in terms of climate, climate change impacts, and comparatively low levels of tourists. The pre-visit and post-visit interviews were conducted across the UK and the during-visit interviews were conducted in the destination. Due to limited industry co-operation, the sample was predominantly achieved through requests for research volunteers using message boards; holiday exhibitions; local press; phone, email and face-to-face communications; and holidays taken by the researcher.

The Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard is a natural environment located in the Arctic. It offers adventure-based holidays ranging from polar cruises to dog-sledding safaris and the 2000 inhabitants local population swells by around 60,000 tourists annually (Guess, 2011). The temperature in Svalbard has been increasing, resulting in glaciers melting and an ever-increasing public profile. Svalbard featured in the popular BBC One 'Frozen Planet' television documentary series (BBC One, 2009) and the 'Adopt a Svalbard polar bear' campaign by WWF (2012). By contrast, the Italian city of Venice is a built environment, consisting of 116 islands and a system of canals (World

Travel Guide, 2012). It offers city and cultural short-breaks and the local population (of circa 60,000 inhabitants) swells by over 20-million visitors annually (UNESCO, 2011). Despite the already sinking city of Venice being prone to regular flooding, the numbers of floods are expected to increase due to climate change and rising sea-levels (Berg, 2012).

We selected two projective techniques, expressive techniques using scenarios as part of the Hunt-Vitell Model and a constructive technique employing collage, as the data collection methods because of social desirability issues and the ability to uncover or elicit deep thoughts and the sub-conscious (Boddy, 2005). In an effort to meet approval needs sensitive subjects often result in socially desirable answers (Belk et al., 2003; Eckhardt et al., 2010). Greater validity is achieved through the use of indirect questioning than is possible through direct methods (Boddy, 2005; Mulvey & Kavalam, 2010).

#### *Data Collection - Expressive Technique and Scenarios (the Hunt-Vitell Model)*

As a general theory of ethical decision making the Hunt-Vitell model draws on teleological and deontological ethics. Vitell, Singhapakdi, & Thomas (2001) suggest that limitations of previous studies are a lack of scenarios involving higher social costs. The use of a 'measure' to determine judgement and intention suggests a quantitative method, but the importance for this study is on the narrative outcome. To reach this narrative outcome the usual design of the Hunt-Vitell model is followed. The model inputs background (such as cultural and personal characteristics) and this feeds through to perceptions, analysis, judgement, and intention, before reaching a result. Perceptions depend on ethical sensitivity, foresight, and imagination. Analysis is affected by personal or professional duties and consequences. Judgement evaluates the perceived

problem and the alternative acts related to duty, as well as the desirability or consequences of actions. Intention is the intention to act on the judgement (Boose & Dean, 2000).

A two-factor design is applied to a scenario: unethical behaviour with positive consequences; unethical behaviour with negative consequences; ethical behaviour with positive consequences; and ethical behaviour with negative consequences. Ethical judgements are directly measured using a 7-point Likert scale and agreement or disagreement with the scenario based on statements designed to measure personal ethical judgement and the prevailing social norm. The personal ethical judgement statement is 'I consider (the consumer's) actions to be very ethical'. The social norm statement is 'most people would consider (the consumer's) action to be very ethical'.

Ethical intentions are similarly measured to determine if respondents (or most people) would act in the same way as the consumers in the given scenarios (Vitell et al., 2001). The personal ethical intentions statement is 'I would be likely to act in the same way as (the consumer) did in this situation'. The social norm statement is 'most people would be likely to act in the same way as (the consumer) did in this situation'. Open-ended questions are then used after the scenario to elicit information on the ethical judgement 'why do you consider the actions of [the consumer] to be either right or wrong?' and ethical intention 'why do you consider most people would be likely to act in the same way as [the consumer]?'.

Figure 1. Hunt-Vitell model scenario and two factor design.

Scenario: Kai is organising a holiday. Eventually Kai decides .....		
	Positive consequences (teleological)	Negative consequences (teleological)
Unethical (deontological)	<b>Scenario 2</b> .....to take a fly-drive, as his visit will benefit the economy of the destination (which also benefits the local community).	<b>Scenario 1</b> .....to take a fly-drive, even though the flight and car produce carbon emissions (which impact on climate change and the planet).
Ethical (deontological)	<b>Scenario 4</b> .....not to take the fly-drive, as this will reduce the carbon emissions created and in some small way, help to save the planet.	<b>Scenario 3</b> .....not to take the fly-drive, even though the locals in the destination will receive less income, which will impact on their quality of life.

Figure 2. Hunt-Vitell Model Screen 3

Eventually Kai decides....to take a fly-drive, even though the flight and car produce carbon emissions (which impact on climate change and the planet).

on a scale of 1-7 with 1 being strongly agree and 7 being strongly disagree indicate how much you agree/disagree with this statement

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
I consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	1 ✓	2	3	4	5	6	7
Most people would consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	1 ✓	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be likely to act in the same way as Kai did in this situation	1 ✓	2	3	4	5	6	7
Most people would be likely to act in the same way as Kai did in this situation	1 ✓	2	3	4	5	6	7

NEXT

### *Data Collection- Collage - Constructive Technique*

The collage technique produces different aspects of knowledge, being verbal vs. non-verbal and conscious vs. sub-conscious (Koll, von Wallpach, & Kreuzer, 2010). Visual stimuli and right-brain activation bypass the more rational procedures in order to elicit more sub-conscious aspects (Boddy, 2007). Having initially stimulated non-verbal activity, the technique then stimulates verbal responses when probed for meaning (Boddy, 2007). This allows for more in-depth information to be elicited, with personal experience often being added by the creators (Koll et al., 2010). No artistic skills are required in the collage construction as the respondents are able to pull together images at random from the materials or collections provided (Boddy, 2007; Gonzalez Fernandez et al., 2005).

Time and space are two key concerns (Hamrouni & Touzi, 2011) impacting on respondents willingness to participate (Koll et al., 2010). Dispensing with the more traditional magazines and scissors, this study employed computer-assisted technology with a drag and drop technique, in a 20-minute activity. The researcher pre-selected images to form an image bank, from which respondents could make choices for their collage. As the narrative is more important than the images selected and given the novelty of this activity, images were pre-selected on external influences identified across the study.

This produced five themed categories and twelve sub-categories, each of which contained twelve words or phrases to reflect the themes: Consumer Priority (time, price, convenience, availability, ethical issues); Corporate Sources (ethical corporation and non-ethical corporation); Knowledge Sources (personal sources); Information Sources (labelling, literature, impersonal sources); and Culture (culture). The image selection was determined by the judgement of the researcher and availability of 'free' images.

Respondents were directed to drag and drop images onto a blank canvas in answer to ‘what and who influences your ideas on climate change?’ A digital copy of the collage was saved, with all selected images displayed in a grid format (to ensure no one image outperforms another purely on size). Respondents were asked ‘why have you selected these images?’, ‘what do these images means to you?’ and ‘how do these influence your ideas on climate change?’ The narrative was recorded and a transcript of the narrative was made and analysed along with the collage (Costa, Schoolmeester, Dekker, & Jongen, 2003; Davidson & Skinner, 2010; Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

### *Data Analysis and Interpretation*

Emerging themes are identified and triangulated in the interpretations of the findings per sample group (pre, mid and post-visit) and destination. For the ethics expressive technique, an analysis of the levels of agreement with both constructs and a transcription of the narrative is made for each respondent. Patterns and themes are then manually identified with a summary of ideas or key insights formulated and verbatim quotes highlighted. For the influence construction technique, each collage is visually examined and consistencies highlighted (Boddy, 2005). Synergies between the researcher notes and respondent transcripts are noted, with ideas and key insights similarly formulated and verbatim quotes highlighted.

## **Results**

### *Ethics*

The results demonstrate how complexity and interrelatedness of the influences affecting tourists’ decisions to visit destination are rationalised for the benefit of serving self-interest, as seen in figure 3 and in the sample of qualitative results provided in figure 4.

Using the Hunt-Vitell model, in response to the **Venice ethical judgement** and the personal ethics statement “I consider Kai’s actions to be very ethical”, there is no general tendency towards either agreement or disagreement in any of the four scenarios. This differs in the response to the social norms statement “most people would consider Kai’s actions to be very ethical”, somewhat agreeing with Scenario 4 “...not to take the fly-drive as this will reduce the carbon emissions created and in some small way, help to save the planet”. This is contrasted with a tendency towards disagreeing for Scenario 1 “...to take a fly-drive, even though the flight and car produce carbon emissions (which impact on climate change and the planet)”. The indicated preference is towards ethical behaviour with positive consequences and suggests that the planet is the overall priority. For example one participant, in response to the ethical judgement question “why do you consider the actions of Kai to be either right or wrong?” comments that by “not going ... the planet is clearly better off”.

The **Svalbard ethical judgement** and personal ethics statement “I consider Kai’s actions to be very ethical” results in a tendency towards agree, skewed towards strongly agreeing with Scenario 4 “...not to take the fly-drive as this will reduce the carbon emissions created and in some small way, help to save the planet”. In response to the social norms statement “most people would consider Kai’s actions to be very ethical” there is a tendency towards somewhat agreeing with Scenario 4, but also towards Scenario 2 “...to take a fly-drive, as his visit will benefit the economy of the destination (which also benefits the local community)”. The indicated preference is towards both unethical behaviour with positive consequences and ethical behaviour with positive consequences. In response to the ethical judgement question “why do you consider the actions of Kai to be either right or wrong?” this contrast is also reflected:



“better decision to help the planet...” and “to help the locals most travel from UK would be to developing countries”.

Figure 3. Ethics Scaling Grouped by Scenario, averages (1=strongly agree, 7= strongly disagree)

<b>Scenario 1 - even though flight and car produce carbon emissions</b>	
I consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	4
Most people would consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	4
I would be likely to act in the same way as Kai	3
Most people would be likely to act in the same way as Kai	3
<b>Scenario 2 - as his visit will benefit the local economy (and community)</b>	
I consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	3
Most people would consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	3
I would be likely to act in the same way as Kai	3
Most people would be likely to act in the same way as Kai	3
<b>Scenario 3 - not take and the locals will receive less income</b>	
I consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	3
Most people would consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	4
I would be likely to act in the same way as Kai	4
Most people would be likely to act in the same way as Kai	4
<b>Scenario 4 - not take and save the planet</b>	
I consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	2
Most people would consider Kai's actions to be very ethical	3
I would be likely to act in the same way as Kai	4
Most people would be likely to act in the same way as Kai	4

Figure 4. Venice Ethics Narrative (sample)

Based on your responses, why do you consider the actions of Kai to be either right or wrong?	action	by not going the difference would be very small
		not going is very ethical
		tourists should start factoring in the planet to their holiday decisions
		I can see the reason behind each of his actions
		goes and impacts is not ethical as looking after own people, assuming they're his people
		not certain if he will have made a difference by going
		choices according to individual values and beliefs
		immediate people vs long-term planet
	altruism	looking after community that needs immediate help
		goes to help locals is quite ethical
		but he is also helping the locals
		going to help the locals is right because the locals benefit from the tourist industry
	lack of thought	I wouldn't say his action are right or wrong
		obviously if you are going abroad, you can't drive
		the actions are not right or wrong, these are individual choices
		fly-drive says Florida, or somewhere
		Florida fly-drive everybody does
		if you really want to go to a destination and there is no fly-drive, then you don't go.
		environment comes second to where they want to go on holiday
		worrying about the planet is second to seeing where they want to go on holiday
		don't know
		so I'm very middle of the road here
		but I think in general most people want to go somewhere
	people	not going he would not help many people
		the impact on the locals could be to their detriment if he doesn't go
		may cause mayhem for the locals if he doesn't go
		locals may be made to depend too much on the tourist industry
	planet	if he doesn't go he will help the planet
		maybe because it impacts on the planet
		not going the planet is clearly better off
	selfishness	they are just going to go whether it impacts the planet or locals, stuff like that
		he goes and impacts on the planet and that's what we would probably do, anyway
		I think whatever you do, he's going to fly anyway
		well you can [drive abroad] but hey ho
		I don't think there is a right or wrong, you just do what is best for you
		a tourist destination will be geared up for tourism and less concerned about the planet
		locals in tourism destination will care more about their quality of living and less about the planet
		most people more concerned about where they want to go on holiday
		I am more concerned about where I want to go on holiday
		quite simply, most people do not judge their holidays on ethical reasons
		would anyone think about the impact on destination when going on holiday?

In response to the **Venice ethical intention** and personal ethics “I would be likely to act in the same way as Kai”, there is no general tendency towards agreement or disagreement for the four scenarios. For the social norm statement “most people would be likely to act in the same way as Kai”, there is a general tendency towards agreement across the four scenarios. Lack of thought, selfishness, altruism, and action arise in response to the ethical intention question “why do you consider that most people would be likely to act in the same way as Kai”. The narrative suggests “people don’t think about the planet when they are flying or driving” and “I think people are probably very selfish...because you think ‘*well it’s not going to affect me*’, you just do it”.

For the **Svalbard ethical intention** personal ethics statement “I would be likely to act in the same way as Kai” the tendency is towards agreement except in the case of Scenario 3 “...not to take the fly-drive, even though the locals in the destination will receive less income, which will impact on their quality of life”, which tends towards disagreement. The social norm statement “most people would be likely to act in the same way as Kai”, results in a tendency is towards agreement in Scenarios 1/2, and disagreement in Scenarios 3/4. In response to the ethical intention question “why do you consider that most people would be likely to act in the same way as Kai” arising themes are economic, action and planet. The narrative suggests “[those] strapped for cash because of the economy...think less of the environment” and “...many don’t think that their own actions will have influence either way”.

### *Influences*

Using the collage technique and the 144 images available, the Venice respondents altogether selected 67 images, the Svalbard respondents 45 images, and 29 images were common to both, spread across five categories. A clear links exist between these and the

narrative produced by the respondents. In Consumer Priority (sub-divided by time, price, convenience, availability, ethical issues), the price themes in the Venice narrative tend towards energy, cost, and value, whereas for Svalbard they are towards expenditure and sacrifice, worth and economy. For time, the Venice themes tend towards lifetime and future, whereas for Svalbard they are towards present or past. For both destinations ethical issues themes tend towards climate change and environment. Only one respondent acknowledged that “the disappearing destinations are the ones we want to visit...because they are disappearing...[and we]...want to go and visit before they disappear”.

In Corporate Sources (sub-divided by ethical corporations and non-ethical corporations), the ethical corporation themes for Venice concern fairness and trying, but responsibility is highlighted for both Venice and Svalbard. However, the Venice respondents predominantly highlight social considerations “fairer society better for everyone”, while the Svalbard respondents predominantly highlight environmental ones “these cruise ships take all their waste with them”. For both destinations the non-ethical corporation themes raise pollution issues, with one respondent musing “will the ‘instant gratification’ trend lead to unsustainable levels of pollution?”

In relation to Knowledge Sources (or personal sources) and Information Sources (or impersonal sources), the Venice personal sources themes tend towards celebrity and family, with both destinations drawing knowledge from the natural environment. For impersonal sources, the themes for both destinations highlight the media, but in positive and negative terms: “papers influence me as they tell me what is going on in the world” and “newspapers don’t influence me - many are by people who don’t know what they are talking about”. Other impersonal source themes for the Venice respondents are books, charities and TV documentaries, whilst for Svalbard respondents social networks

and certification are included. Within Culture (cultural value dimensions), the Venice theme tends towards collectivism “what are we doing about [climate change] if we still want holidays or breaks?” but for Svalbard the themes are split individualist “I do a flight every year, but I don’t have pets” and collectivist “[we] have to find a balance between responsibility for nature and responsibility for people on holiday”.

## **Discussion**

The paradox of travelling to enjoy the planet’s resources and benefit host communities can affect the tourism resource and cause consumer confusion. Deontological theory and duty-based norms continue to suggest what we ought to do (Barnett et al., 2005) and our right to enjoy the planet’s resources is enshrined in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (UNWTO, 2014). It could be argued that this code reflects the personal freedoms and human rights of the individualist, rather than collectivist needs and values (Comer & Gould, 2010; Landis, Bennett, & Bennett, 2004).

Although collectivism emphasises the role of the individual in family and social relationships, the narrative provided by respondents “what are we doing [about climate change] if we still want holidays or breaks?” fails to accept the role of individual in the global village. For example, Doran & Larsen (2014) found that tourists have overly positive views of their environmental attitudes in comparison with their peers. They question “what are we doing to the planet?” and implore society “to find a balance between responsibility for nature and responsibility of people...” However, despite expressing collectivist tendencies, these perhaps mask individualist ones which cause gaps between what people say they will do and what they actually do (Devinney et al., 2010). This perhaps results in the perception that “by not going the difference would be very small” as those taking responsible decisions (the self-constrained) are becoming

disillusioned with their sacrifices, in the face of those not acting responsibly (Dauvergne, 2006; Hardin, 1968).

Contradiction and indecision are apparent across the results, possibly due to the ethical dilemmas expressed in the four scenarios and the moral conflict experienced in trying to decide what is right or wrong (Fennell, 2006). The Venice respondents' personal ethical judgement and ethical intentions tend towards neither agree nor disagree. Their ethical judgement of societal norms suggests the planet is more important, although this is contradicted by the narrative, as "...the environment comes second..." Their ethical intention social norm tends towards agreement with all scenarios, which could account for a status quo on travel behaviour, because (as one respondent suggests) whether you travel or not "either way [the traveller] will affect the locals or affect the planet".

External influences are therefore important factors in informing the individual and influencing their ethical behaviour. There is limited evidence that personalities or family and friends are useful personal sources of climate change information, perhaps because of a perceived lack of source credibility (Solomon et al., 2007). This is perhaps why the Svalbard respondents place greater trust in tweets or "social networks [that] link to solid and reliable information", which reflects the growing migration to word-of-mouth and consumer generated media (Collins et al., 2003; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). However, respondents suggest "we learn a lot from migrating birds and the changes in weather patterns" and that there has been a "noticeable change in geese migration", which points to personal experience and a concern for immediate surroundings as likely factors in ethical behaviour. Further these have credibility as sources of climate change information, probably due to perceptions of trustworthiness, expert knowledge and objectivity of the source (Solomon et al., 2007).

Impersonal sources of information appear to have less credibility. Svalbard respondents have a greater distrust of the press “newspapers don’t influence – many are by people who don’t know what they are talking about”, although Venice respondents consider that tabloids and TV documentaries do raise awareness. Perhaps it is the quantity of conflicting information available which leads to coping strategies to reduce confusion (Mitchell et al., 2005), but which result in “a lot think[ing] about Fairtrade but...not necessarily act[ing]” or perceptions that “by not [travelling] the difference would be very small”.

If individuals support the social norms that benefit them (Bell, 2008) and pursuance of self-interest is the ‘rational choice’ (Schiffman, 2011), this suggests that selfishness is a societal norm. From a teleological perspective (Barnett et al., 2005) this points to personal satisfaction as the end game. This could account for the notion that some (in the post-travel stage) would “...justify their holiday decisions through helping the locals” rather than (in a pre-travel stage) have “...a set reason to help the locals [that] would dictate the destination they go to”. However, the social norms ethical judgement and social norms ethical intention preferences are towards planet and people. Selecting both could be a calculated attempt to be portrayed in a more favourable light, through the provision of a more socially desirable response (Pauls & Stemmler, 2003).

The personal ethical judgement preference towards the planet is an issue for one respondent who considers that “strong ‘global warming’ feelings means less importance to people”. Others consider that “[for] each thing we use there is a carbon output” and that “in the grand scheme of things planes have a smaller impact...” This perhaps suggests that corporations should be responsible for providing sustainable products as the norm and sustainable innovation is probably the key to change (WBCSD, 2008). It recognises that many consumers do not (or do not wish to) appreciate that some habits

have negative outcomes “is there a problem with the amount of flying we do here?” but it also understands the sentiment “...[can] any of us be satisfied with [the] simplicity of life which conserves and supports our own natural resources?”

The Venice ethical judgement narrative suggests that respondents and society are not planet oriented because “worrying about the planet is second to seeing where they want to go on holiday”, and “quite simply, most people do not judge their holidays on ethical reasons”. Although, this appears to suggest a tendency towards people-orientation this is equally not the case, because many “would not really factor in the impact on the locals by not going”. It is more likely that consumer priorities such as cost and time place limits on ethical behaviour (Szmigin et al., 2009), reflected in “I don't think [about] right or wrong, you just do what is best for you” and “if they go it's because they think of their finances first, rather than environment”.

However, as “I really don't think much about what's happening or what I am doing in that country...” and “most people wouldn't put the environment first as it's their holiday of the year”, this judgmental discounting undervalues future or distant risks concerning climate change (Swim et al., 2009). This therefore is a social ethical dilemma, because the consequences of members acting in their own best interest impacts negatively on others (VanLange et al., 1992). As the ethical intention narratives suggest, most people are not planet-oriented and “the reality is people will not stop flying”. This reflects survey results on changes to travel activities (such as driving or flying) which have much less support from consumers (Synovate, 2010). Further, as “many wouldn't be that ethical to plan their holiday around climate change”, this reflects the notion that co-operative systems are vulnerable to cheats who enjoy the collective benefits without paying their dues (May, 2010).



## Conclusion

Ethical decisions are self-serving and influences feed into self-interest. If long-term benefits for planet and people can be achieved through short-term economic and social impacts on the destination's locals, this should be acceptable although "most wouldn't bare that responsibility". However, decisions to travel appear to be driven by individual selfishness, rather than by acts of altruism: "people would justify their holiday decisions through helping the locals" and "they are just going to go whether it impacts the planet or locals..." This suggests that the 'good result' expected overall is one of self-interest, which is supported by the 'good intent' to enjoy the planet's resources, enshrined in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. Thus, collective benefits of the co-operative system can be enjoyed in the pursuance of self-interest (Fennell, 2006).

Future risks concerning climate change appear to be undervalued (Swim et al., 2009). The Svalbard respondents' longer-term focus on global climate change and environmental influences suggests that "[we] have to find a balance between responsibility for nature and responsibility of people on holiday". However, for some "worrying about the planet is second to seeing where they want to go on holiday" and "...you think 'well, it's not going to affect me', you just do it".

Any perceived threat to freedoms (such as a holiday) from scientists and government would likely result in reactance to advice (see such as Swim et al., 2009), particularly as habitual behaviours are resistant to permanent change. This is reflected in the Venice respondent's priority to "cost of living" and the "*instant gratification* trend". Similarly, if the Svalbard respondents lack perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991) they too "might be more willing to sacrifice environmental impact of a product or decision due to economic reasons".

As an influence on climate change ideas, source credibility remains important (Solomon et al., 2007). Friends, family, and personalities are not being used as sources of knowledge or information and there is more limited press usage. This perhaps accounts for the continued migration towards consumer-generated media: “don’t get much from newspapers” and “if social networks link to solid and reliable information, then I look at that”. Personal experience is valued: “we learn a lot from migrating birds and the changes in weather patterns” and there has been a “noticeable change in geese migration”. The Venice respondents also consider that charities, books, and documentaries “influence me”. Further, as corporations ought to be providing sustainable products as the norm (see such as Ellis (2010)), this could account for a perception that respondents are blameless for their purchasing habits. Certainly, the thought that “...any of us [can] be satisfied with a simplicity of life which conserves and supports our own natural resources?” suggests the status quo on travel is maintained, particularly as “for many destinations, flying is a necessity”.

It is evident that the ethical judgement of individuals is unclear, because ideas on what is right and wrong (or good and bad) fluctuate, impacting on the intention to behave. Perhaps ethical judgement is unclear because selfishness is at the root of most decisions. Thus, the expressed concern for the locals in a disappearing destination could be driven by individual selfishness to visit, rather than an altruistic act to provide support. Nonetheless, on this basis the rational choice should be to take responsibility for inappropriate travelling behaviour as it supports self-interest - by helping the planet for the benefit of current and future generations.

This has implications for disappearing destinations as the same as usual travel behaviour by tourists can be justified through economic support of the locals. For the locals in the disappearing destination, this might seem to be a more than adequate

response to their plight. The travel industry can continue to meet tourism demand, safe in the knowledge they have good intent. However, there are also implications for climate change, the planet, and humanity in general. Until a solution for the carbon emissions created through tourism can be found, introduced, or enforced, the disappearing destination is likely to disappear at an ever more rapid rate.

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