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Germans' tourist behaviour in Sweden

Abstract

Tourism research has identified a number of factors that influence tourist behaviour, among them socio-demographic characteristics and the number of previous visits. This article argues that also tourists' spatial mobility, the time period within the holiday, the characteristics of the places visited, and the access to information act as important determinants for the level and choice of tourist activities. Focus in this analysis is lying on German car tourists in Sweden. For this study, a combination of methodologies is employed. This includes travel diaries on access to information as well as on type, place and length of activities, which were written by the respondents during their holiday in Sweden, and personal interviews, which were carried out after the respondents had returned home. Tourist behaviour was found to be similar to the respondents' behaviour at home, and place in combination with a limited time period and the absence of externally imposed routines was a major factor for this. In general, tourists took part in an activity for a relatively short period time before moving on. The level of spatial mobility was found to positively influence the level of tourist activity, and was to a great part responsible for the succession of activities. The time period within the holiday did not specifically influence activities, but so did access to tourist information, which affected the choice and duration of activities. Guidebooks were found to constitute the most important tourist information for the analysed tourist group.

Keywords:

information; place; space; time; tourist behaviour; German tourists; Sweden

Introduction

Tourism literature tends to convey the impression that tourists are exceedingly active during their holidays (Thornton, Williams & Shaw, 1997; Shaw & Williams, 2002; Walmsley, 2004). This is the case especially when non-academic studies are considered (see for example *F.U.R.*, 2007; *Nuték*, 2007). However, this assumption might be influenced by the methodologies employed and the cases chosen. Furthermore, it is often tourists travelling in larger parties that are studied, while individual tourists tend to be left aside. Also, many investigations have commercial goals, which increases the number of studies addressing issues of primary concern to commercial stakeholders. The results of this approach have led to tourism partly being described as the opposite of everyday life in social science literature (Quan & Wang, 2003).

While Carr (1999) first questioned whether tourist and leisure behaviour could be compared at all, he later concluded (2002a) that both were in fact closely related. He

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thereby supports Currie (1997), who declares that the home behaviour that is brought to the destination is required to appreciate the change from the home environment, while the tourist behaviour brings about exceptionality. It could thus be argued that the activity pattern consists of a mixture of new and everyday activities for many tourists. Tourist behaviour has only been vaguely defined in tourism literature. Rather, "tourist" and "behaviour" have been defined individually (see for example Pearce, 2005). In some cases, tourist behaviour is associated with the way of behaving, for example, when being a tourist is taken as a justification for social behaviours that would attract sanctions at home (Hughes, 1998). In general, however, the term tourist behaviour has been equated with tourist activities, thereby leaving aside the time spent on non-tourist activities. Consequently, the level of activity is assumed to be overestimated. How is it, then, that tourists spend their time? What is 'tourist' in tourist behaviour, and which factors influence the visitors' varying behaviour at the destination?

Due to different behaviour, tourists have been classified by several researchers. The following classifications are still extensively cited: Cohen (1972) classified international tourists into organised and individual mass tourists (both going on packaged holidays and preferring large groups of other tourists, with the latter preferring somewhat more freedom), explorers (making their own travel arrangements, avoiding contacts with other tourists), and drifters (having no planned itineraries and trying to become accepted as part of the local community). Plog (1974) divided tourists into psychocentrics, allocentrics, and a group in between. While psychocentrics are non-adventuresome and rather inhibited, allocentrics are more adventurous and variety-seeking. Plog later (1995) modified this model by grouping tourists into dependables (follow routines and patterns), venturers (seek new/exotic places), and centrics (hold attribute of both). Smith (1989) identified seven types of tourists, ranging from charter tourists to explorers. While charter tourists are presented as having very little interest in the destination itself, explorers travel in small groups almost as anthropologists.

The cited classifications have often constituted a base for studies on tourist behaviour. Walmsley (2004) and Pearce (2005) give an overview of tourist behaviour and state that behavioural research is an integral part of tourism research. The activities of tourists at the destination have been studied by Debbage (1991), Dietvorst (1995), Johns and Gyimóthy (2002), Shaw and Williams (2002), Jacobsen (2002), and Prebensen, Larsen and Abelsen (2003). With the exception of Jacobsen (2002) and Prebensen *et al.* (2003), these studies report a high activity level. Cooper (1981) and Ryan (1994) include tourists' time budgets, and establish that only little time is spent on actual *tourist* activities. Frew and Shaw (1999) conclude that socio-demographic factors influence tourist behaviour, and Hall (2005) points at the influence of spatial travel patterns on tourist behaviour. While Morrison, Hsieh and O'Leary (1994) and Pizam and Sussmann (1995) state an influencing effect of the tourists' nationalities, Flognfeldt (1999) counters that this is predominantly the case for less varied travel patterns. In addition to this, Kleiven (2005) argues that motive factors should not be forgotten. Lehto, O'Leary and Morrison (2004) and McKercher and Wong (2004) come to the conclusion that prior experience at the destination influences the activity involvement. Thus, several factors that are supposed to influence tourist behaviour have been studied so far. The influence of space, place, time, and information on tourist behaviour has largely been neglected, but, as will be argued, these factors constitute important features both for the level of activity and for the tourist behaviour at the destination.

Following this line of argumentation, this article empirically analyses the influence of tourists' spatial mobility, time period within the holiday, the characteristics of place,

and access to information on tourist behaviour in the case of German visitors in Sweden. Both tourists going on a round tour (hereinafter travellers) and staying in one place only (hereinafter base tourists) are included. The question is raised if and in what way these four factors influence the level of activity at the destination. In addition, it can be assumed that travellers and base tourists exhibit different kinds of tourist behaviour. It must also be questioned, if tourist behaviour is related to place and its activity supply. Moreover, the time tourists have spent at and around the destination and the information they have access to can be supposed to influence the level and choice of activity.

Tourist behaviour

HIGH LEVELS OF TOURIST ACTIVITY – FACT OR WISHFUL THINKING?

In tourism literature, tourists have been presented as being exceedingly active during their holidays. The most favourite activities have been pointed out to be "dining in restaurants", going on a "cruise tour", "visit[ing] art gallery/museum" (Lehto *et al.*, 2004, p. 809), and "shopping" (McKercher & Wong, 2004, p. 177). However, this article questions results reporting high levels of activity due to four reasons. Firstly, methodology matters. Many studies are based on questionnaires, providing respondents with structured activities and/or places to choose from. Altogether, a relation between quantitative methodologies and results indicating high levels of activity can be affirmed (see for example Carr, 2002b; McKercher & Wong, 2004).

Secondly, active tourists who visit numerous attractions and who makes intensive use of tourist supplies constitute an attractive target group for entrepreneurs and organisations. Travellers who are busy doing tourist activities are part of the current discourse that contributes to making tourism an attractive economy. Tourism, if presented like this, is shown to constitute an important part of a region's capacity for economic growth. Such results can be used to request more public spending in order to further expanding the industry.

Thirdly, motivation and actual travel behaviour are not always differentiated in tourism literature. Instead, many models portray tourist behaviour as the self-evident consequence of motivation (March & Woodside, 2005). Tourists intend to be more active than most of them turn out to be when actually travelling (Stewart & Vogt, 1999). Attractive features on the tourist site may well be necessary to motivate tourists to travel in the first place, but there is no self-evident relationship between planned and accomplished activities. Although it is important for tourists to have the possibility to get engaged in tourist activities, this opportunity is not always seized (Stilling Blichfeldt, 2004). This seems even more important, as tourists frequently decide on a day-to-day basis what to do. The use of tourist amenities might turn out to be smaller than intended. This could be due to constraints at the tourist site and leads to the assumption that constraints do not only exist in people's everyday lives, but also during their holidays.

Fourthly, participation time is an important factor in tourist behaviour. Tourists might visit numerous attractions and take part in several activities, but many visits are performed quickly. Many tourist activities are in fact just five minute experiences, thus leaving a lot of time for other activities which are not normally classified as touristic. Most studies lack a time-dimension, an exception being Fennell (1996), whose study includes the duration of tourist activities.

FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURIST BEHAVIOUR

Which factors influence the tourist behaviour at the destination? Apart from culture and environment, the travellers' socio-demographic characteristics and the number of their previous visits are presented as the most important factors for tourist behaviour (Carr, 2002a; Fodness, 1994; Lehto *et al.*, 2004; Mansfeld, 1992). This article argues that time, spatial mobility, characteristics of the places that are visited, and access to information are also important criteria that influence tourist behaviour, as they compose inherent factors in tourism. Tourist activity is here defined as an activity that takes place outside the accommodation. In addition, the tourist has to be actively involved, and must also experience the undertaking as a tourist activity. Focus is lying on discretionary activities. These are optional for the tourist and do not include in prosaic activities like hygiene, sleeping or eating at home.

As for *socio-demographics*, the life-cycle plays an important role. For example, age and presence of children influence where tourists decide to go and how they spend their time. Leisure time is usually consumed jointly, which is still reinforced by the presence of children (March & Woodside, 2005). Cooper (1981) found that middle-class tourists spend more time being active and with friends and/or family in a private travel group, whereas working-class tourists more often look for a collective and highly organised experience. The higher the social class, the less time is spent at well known tourist sites. This is explained by fewer constraints of mobility and finance. Tourists who visit a place for the *first time* usually try to get an overview. This is indicated by the fact that they show wide-ranging activity interests. Tourists who know the place from before usually participate in more specific activities, because they are more certain about what they are looking for. While first time visitors explore the destination and are usually more interested in well known attractions, repeat visitors are spatially concentrated at the destination, and take part in more social activities like visiting friends and relatives, or dining out (Jansson, 1993; Lehto *et al.*, 2004; McKercher & Wong, 2004).

When *spatial mobility* is concerned, it is assumed that the choice of tourist activities is influenced by whether tourists spend their holiday in one place only or whether they travel along an itinerary. This statement is supported by Hall (2005), and McKercher and Wong (2004), who found that tourists on a round tour visit more well-known tourist sites, while base tourists show a wider range of activities. Other researchers who have focussed on spatial mobility are Flognfeldt (1992), Oppermann (1995) and Lue, Crompton and Stewart (1993). It is assumed that those on a round tour have a higher level of activity because they will move on to the next site soon. Limited spatial mobility thus indicates a lower activity level (the total amount of time spent on tourist activities). While mobility in space constitutes an important part of the tourist behaviour for travellers, its importance with respect to base tourists lies merely in the fact that they have to get away from home. Thus, it could be argued that travellers mainly experience a combination of distance and space in relation to their homes, while base tourists first and foremost experience a combination of distance and place.

The characteristics of *place* influence tourist behaviour by offering possibilities to participate in tourist activities. The amount and type of tourist supply at the different sites has a strong impact on the choice of destination and also influences the amount of time that the visitor spends on tourist activities. The place with its milieu and supply is of importance in that it constitutes an environment that cannot be found at home. In social science literature, it is argued that tourists travel to different places in order to get away from home and to experience something new or essentially different. In this respect, tourism has been considered a "peak experience" (Quan & Wang, 2003, p.

297). Carr (2002a) analysed arguments for and against similarities between tourist and everyday behaviour and concluded that tourist and leisure behaviour are closely related. Prentice (2004) calls for a conceptual rethink, as tourism is no longer considered to be an exceptional part of many peoples' lives. Leisure, work and tourism have become interwoven more than ever before. These findings are supported by Krippendorf (1987) and Currie (1997), who state that tourists only change their behaviour a little at a time as the effort of changing prosaic behaviour is too strenuous in relation to the benefits.

The tourist site provides variation when compared to the tourists' homes, and one could argue that tourists participate in activities they would and/or could not take part in at home. It has to be questioned, though, if this feeling of novelty lasts for the entire holiday, or if it in- or decreases, thereby also affecting the tourist behaviour. Will staying in one place evoke the desire for varied tourist behaviour? In contrast to base tourists, travellers continually travel to new places along their itinerary. One could argue that the round tour itself offers a high level of variety, and that the wish to vary tourist activities is therefore smaller. The difference between home- and tourist behaviour should therefore be found in the place, where the activity is carried out. However, the question remains if tourists are eager to take part in tourist activities the whole day long, or if they are satisfied with few such activities a day.

The behaviour is expected to vary in *time* due to the tourists getting used to the new environment and feeling removed from their home environments. The activity level is supposed to vary due to the different strategies of tourists. This assumption is supported by P.L. Pearce (1982) and D.P. Pearce (1988), who found that after four days at the holiday destination, tourists showed greater variation in their activities. From that time onwards, some of them were engaged in more self-initiated activities. Cooper (1981) reports a similar tourist behaviour between different socio-demographic groups, but according to him, this occurred only on the first day spent at the destination. Excursions from the holiday base have been found to occur at different time periods within the holiday.

Tourist *information* is closely related to space, place, and time. Information is a prerequisite for travelling, as a great part of tourism would hardly take place if tourists did not know about different destinations. As soon as tourists have to make a decision, a search for information can be expected. Among others, Fodness and Murray (1997) and Vogt and Fesenmaier (1998) have studied tourists' information search in general. Guidebooks, friends, and travel brochures usually constitute the most important sources of information (Dilley, 1986; Gursoy & Umbreit, 2004). The access to information on tourist supply is supposed to increase the number of tourist activities due to an increased level of knowledge. However, although an influence of information on the choice of travel region and tourist site has been stated (McGregor, 2000), the impact of the different sources of information on different types of activities has hitherto been ignored. It could be assumed, though, that different sources of information have a varying influence on different types of activities.

Methodology

The empirical research combined travel diaries and interviews. In a first step, the travel diaries were used to gather tourists' activities during their stay in Sweden. German tourists were chosen because they constitute one of the largest incoming groups in Sweden (Visit Sweden, 2007). Contact with the respondents was established via a monthly newsletter, sent by the Swedish Travel and Tourism Council to 23.200 self-enrolled German-speaking readers. The group consists of people who are interested in

Sweden. In the newsletter of April 2004, readers were asked to take part in the study. The prerequisites for participation were that they were going to Sweden between June 1st and August 31st, and that they travelled by car. Car tourists were chosen because they constitute the biggest group within the individual tourists: 84% of the Germans travel to Sweden by car (Visit Sweden, 2004). This group is comparatively difficult to reach, and establishing the contact via the newsletter was seen as a sensible way of presenting the research questions to the respondents. 114 readers registered for the study, which was done by email. The locations of the respondents' homes are spread over the whole country. Diaries were sent to the respondents two weeks before their departure to Sweden. 73 of them were finally returned, which gives a response rate of 64%. In consideration of the high effort to participate, this result is satisfactory. The diary comprised four parts: i) an introduction, in which there were questions on the respondents' backgrounds, ii) a questionnaire on planned vs. accomplished activities, to be answered after the journey, iii) a map on Sweden where the itinerary was charted, and iv) the key diary. In this, the respondents were asked to daily answer questions on activities, their locations, time spent, and use of tourist information.

Most respondents travelled with their partner. The second largest group consisted of parents with one or two children. Family dependants travelling together constituted the third largest group. In order not to influence the respondents' answers, no activities were pre-chosen in the diaries. In the later analysis, the activities were arranged in twelve groups. These were dining out, shopping, sightseeing (joining a guided tour, or attending tourist sites by oneself), visiting attractions (activities with entrance fees), walking in urban areas, activities in nature (including activities like hiking, sunbathing, and berry picking), cycling, visiting friends and relatives, enjoying the view, stopping by along the road, searching for tourist information, and others. The respondents were asked to record their activities as differentiated as possible. If a respondent registered a tour with the bicycle, followed by a walk in the woods and a stop at the supermarket, these activities would be coded consecutively as "cycling", "activity in nature", and "shopping". Scenic drives could also be defined as a tourist activity, but are excluded here due to methodological difficulties in distinguishing them from necessary journeys between tourist sites. The number of daily activities would have been somewhat higher if scenic drives had been included. There would also have been more daily activities if all doings, not only those outside the accommodation, had been incorporated. The registration was as detailed as possible. Altogether, the 73 respondents recorded 2680 individual activities during their holiday. SPSS was employed for the data analysis. In this program, statistical calculations were carried out and regression analyses accomplished. Due to different spatial behaviour, the respondents were divided into travellers and base tourists. While the former travelled through Sweden on a round tour, the latter accommodated in one place only. Other terms exist on different groups of tourists. Cohen (1974) for example divides tourist into sightseers, who primarily seek novelty, and vacationers, who merely seek a change during their holiday. However, as these terms do not include a spatial aspect, they are not used in this study.

In a second step, 25 respondents of the first study (17 travellers and 8 base tourists) were asked to take part in a semi-structured interview. They were selected randomly out of the group who had written the diaries. The interviews served to gain a deeper understanding of the results that were collected through the diaries. All of the interviews were held in German. When possible, the interviews were carried out in a personal meeting, otherwise they were conducted via telephone. The questions dealt with the following themes: i) the places where activities took place, ii) the respondents' spatial mobility and the influence of the experience of space on their activities, iii) the time

period in which the activities were carried out, iv) the way the respondents made use of tourist information, how different sources of information were used and how they affected the choice of activities, and v) the respondents' home behaviour contrasted to tourist behaviour. The interviews lasted for 25-40 minutes, with personal interviews usually lasting somewhat longer. However, no differences regarding the content were observed. Thus, while the travel diaries gave an answer to what was done where and in relation to which information source, the in-depth interviews supplied information on why this was so, and on factors that influenced the level of activity. The interviews were recapitulated at length, with important passages being transcribed. The information given on the themes was then concentrated, thus enabling comparisons between the individual respondents. During the evaluation process of the content, preliminary results were consistently presented and discussed with tourism researchers.

The drawback of the adopted methodology is that the effort is high, while at the same time the number of respondents is low, thus not allowing representative results. Yet, travel diaries are an accepted method in cultural geography (Tillberg Mattsson, 2001). Also, the quality of the travel diaries cannot be controlled. Another shortcoming is a possible bias, originating in the limited pool of some 23.000 people. However, the approach gives access to detailed information on tourist behaviour without directing the respondents in any way. This is an important difference from questionnaires on tourist behaviour, in which respondents are often presented lists of predefined actions and/or places.

The behaviour of German tourists in Sweden

In this chapter, the empirical results from both travel diaries and interviews are discussed. After a general overview of the results, the specific influence of the characteristics of place, spatial mobility, time, and access to information on tourist behaviour is presented.

Table 1
SHARE OF THE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES FOR THOSE GOING ON A ROUND TOUR, AND FOR BASE TOURISTS (%)

Type of activity	All	Round tour	Base
Visit attractions	23,0	28,4	18,2
Shopping	15,4	14,4	18,2
Sightseeing	14,3	14,6	10,4
Nature	13,1	9,2	19,7

The most popular activities during the respondents' holidays in Sweden (Table 1) were visiting attractions (23.0% of all activities), shopping (15.4%), to go sightseeing (14.3%), and spending time in nature (13.1%) . These types of activities mirror the assumptions of many tourist organisations which plan and implement a great range of the tourist supply. The average number of daily tourist activities undertaken outside the tourists' accommodations is 1,6. Given the average duration of 98 minutes per activity, this means that, on average, tourists are engaged in tourist activities for less than three hours per day. To this the time spent on journeys to and between the tourist sites and in the accommodation must be added. However, compared with statements claiming

that tourists spend most of their time on tourist activities, the results from this study are contradictory. Rather than different kinds, it is the amount of activities, and the place in which they are carried out, that are major differences to the tourists' home behaviour. The above results imply that being away from home has its own importance, irrespective of the tourist supply available.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PLACE

Naturally, the supply on the location largely determines the choice of tourist activities. However, many activities are detached from place, as they can be performed everywhere (e.g. going for a walk). The results from this study show that visiting attractions and dining out were carried out independently of the location and the available supply. Sightseeing and walks were connected to the south of the country, and here predominantly to the more densely populated areas. The further the respondents travelled northwards, the less popular shopping activities became. This was compensated by activities in nature, which was the most common activity in the north. In general, however, the location of a tourist site in the north or the south of the country had only a negligible effect on the activity level.

Tourist behaviour in municipalities with more and with less than 25.000 inhabitants (called city/rural areas) was analysed. The activity level was higher in cities than in rural areas (196 compared to 147 minutes per day). This result warrants the conclusion that a stay in big cities with a high population density and a high level of economic activities and tourist supply leads to a more active tourist behaviour. However, 80 % of all activities were carried out in rural areas, which is an indicator of the popularity of the countryside with German visitors in Sweden and which shows that a high level of activity is not necessarily prioritised.

In addition to the above discussion, place in relation to the tourists' homes is of importance, when it comes to home and tourist behaviour. Some respondents stated that they were more passive than at home, enjoying the time they could spend together and benefiting from taking part in activities more slowly and peacefully. The absence of externally imposed time schedules and routines was of importance, leading to most of the respondents *"letting ourselves drift and enjoying the things as they came"*. However, self-imposed routines were very common. The daily routine was similar for most respondents. For example, trips were usually carried out between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. The mental distance to everyday behaviour was reinforced by the distance between home and tourist destination, in addition to the sequence of activities. *"[In everyday life] everything is routine, whereas during the holidays, you can experience everything in a new way. . ."*. Other respondents affirmed that they were more active during their holidays, as time was limited and perceived as more precious: *"During the holidays, I always have the feeling I need to seize this opportunity, it will not come back."* Apart from the activities that varied more or less obviously from those at home, in particular the absence of externally imposed routines and the limited time period, spending time at another place than home was found to be the most important factor for perceiving home and tourist behaviour as distinct. This was also the case for base tourists, who had a similar daily routine as at home. The clearest difference between home and tourist behaviour was that *"the surroundings are different"*, and that, consequently, *"the activity is valued in a more positive way"*.

SPATIAL MOBILITY

While travellers take part in a higher number of daily activities than do base tourists (1,7 compared to 1,4), the time they spend on each activity is shorter (91 compared to 116 minutes). Thus, spatial mobility does influence the number and duration of activities, but hardly the activity level of tourists. Visiting attractions, sightseeing, and shopping were common activities both for travellers and base tourists (Table 1). Activities carried out above average by travellers were sightseeing (14,5% of all activities vs. 10,5% for base tourists), and visiting attractions (28,4% of all activities vs. 18,2% for base tourists). Also stopping by along the road were carried out more often (12,5 vs. 6,3% of all activities), which is no surprise in view of their tour. Base tourists enjoyed shopping (18,2% vs. 14,4% of all activities) and activities in nature (19,7% vs. 9,2 % of all activities) more than travellers did. Concerning the rest of the listed activities, the differences were rather small. The results indicate that many activities are considered equally attractive irrespective of the spatial form of the holiday.

However the similarity, the spatial factor has an influence on the association between culture and nature. Base tourists tended to have a preference for nature and mainly stayed in a rural area during their holidays. They usually avoided more densely populated areas and limited the number of trips to urban areas during their stay. Travellers preferred a cultural supply, although they, too, avoided bigger cities on their tour.

Differences between the two groups were found in the variation and succession of activities. Base tourists to a great degree wanted their activities to vary, for which two strategies could be observed. Either, the level of tourist activity was alternated on successive days, as the following quote demonstrates: "*We always took turns, one day we engaged in some kind of activity, the next day would be . . . a day off, where we'd stay at the cottage and do something there*". Alternatively, the types of activities often varied throughout the day. This strategy implies that respondents combined different activities. For example, activities that are associated with nature surroundings were preferably combined with visiting attractions, which has a stronger cultural focus. Among the travellers, such variations were not considered necessary, because the journey itself involved a lot of variety, with the landscape changing and the respondents continuously arriving at new places. This resulted in less day-to-day variety. One respondent stated that the activities in principle "*were repeated*" from day to day and another respondent declared: "*I do not always need this extreme variety*", as there was a lot of variety by mobility alone.

TIME

In this section, the questions are raised if and in what way the length of stay and the point of time within the holiday have an influence on the activity level and the tourist behaviour. It is also questioned if the time of the day is of importance. No relation was found between the total number of days spent in Sweden and the choice of activity (Sig. 0,018, $r^2=0.002$), their durations (Sig. 0,103, $r^2=0.001$), or their daily number (Sig. 0,007, $r^2=0.006$). However, the distance between the different activities grew larger, the shorter the respondents stayed in Sweden.

The level of activity increased during the first four days, and then stayed stable until the last two days, when it decreased again (Table 2). The duration of the individual activities is rather short, but the result indicates that it is attractive for tourists to be engaged in daily tourist activities to a certain degree. When one relates this result to the individuals, it emerges that the level of activity varies between those who are more active in the beginning of the journey, and those who prefer a rather calm start of the holiday.

Respondents with a relatively high activity level during the first days state that they use activities to suppress thoughts about home and work. Another reason was that the most interesting and important activities are planned at the start of the holiday, "... to make sure that we definitely won't miss that". Others dislike too much activity in the beginning and state that "in the beginning, I am a little bit beat ... as I work right until the holiday begins ... during the first week, one is a bit lazy". However, being indolent for a longer period of time can become tiresome, as the following respondent describes: "Eventually, I get bored, though ... in the second half we then went on our longer excursions". This is more often the case with base tourists than with travellers. As the following quote demonstrates, there is a wish to make the most of the time before returning back home: "In my mind, we are soon going home again, and then one sure want to make more of one's time than just hanging around".

Table 2
THE AVERAGE DAILY LEVEL OF ACTIVITY (minutes, all respondents)

Time period within the holiday	Level of activity
1st day	85.6
2nd day	123.9
3rd day	161.6
4th day	201.7
5th day	177.4
Middle -2 days	180.1
Middle -1 day	188.6
Middle	166.1
Middle +1 day	170.2
Middle +2 days	213.7
5th last day	179.4
4th last day	206.3
3rd last day	217.0
2nd last day	172.7
Last day	142.5

The popularity of activities partly depended on the point of time within the holiday. This was particularly true for sightseeing, visiting attractions, and tourist activities in nature: for travellers, sightseeing became more popular as the respondents' stays proceeded (Table 3). For both travellers and base tourists, visiting attractions is most common in the middle of the holiday (on average 25 minutes per day), and is carried out to a much smaller degree during the first and final two days (on average daily 11 minutes and 13 minutes, respectively). The reason may be that in contrast to sightseeing, visiting attractions often requires a prior decision and preparation. The popularity of activities in nature partly depended on the spatial form of the holiday: while travellers enjoyed spending time in nature in the middle of their stay, base tourists were eager to

do so rather in the beginning, after which this type of activity decreased. Many respondents spent their last days shopping, and both dining out and stopping by along the road were closely related to their mobility.

Table 3
THE AVERAGE DAILY AMOUNT OF SIGHTSEEING (minutes)

Time period within the holiday	Level of activity	
	Round tour	Base
1st day	10.3	0.0
2nd day	17.0	2.6
3rd day	14.1	15.2
4th day	14.8	22.0
5th day	12.1	7.1
Middle -2 days	16.3	10.3
Middle -1 day	14.3	10.5
Middle	19.8	12.2
Middle +1 day	15.3	6.5
Middle +2 days	24.1	2.8
5th last day	18.6	16.7
4th last day	17.8	15.0
3rd last day	26.0	9.5
2nd last day	26.5	14.7
Last day	25.7	10.5

Time in terms of clock time was rather unimportant to the respondents. Many organised their days according to daylight. One respondent used to get up "roughly when the sun was shining into the tent", another describes that they "rather... let ourselves be led by position of the sun ... by our appetite, by our bodies ... that was more important than specific times of the day". However insignificant concrete times of the day may be, most activities were carried out between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. The rest of the day was preferably spent at the accommodation, so it was only rarely that more than seven hours were spent on mobility and tourist activities.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Information on tourist supply was of importance for almost all respondents and constituted a substantial part of a pleasant anticipation of the journey. Travellers generally prepared their itinerary and activities in more detail than base tourists. The latter group tended to plan their activities on a day to day basis and the possibility to be spontaneous was obviously of great importance to them: "I really dislike rigid structure ... my personal freedom is very very important to me". For travellers, the plans usually simply consisted of broad outlines. One respondent explained that "We had the route roughly mapped out, but

... we decided on the actual tourist spots rather spontaneously", another stated that "We decide spontaneously, well we don't have a ... plan where we are going the next day. We just wake up, have breakfast, look at the sky and what turns up that day, we do ... we just wait and see what the day brings".

The use of tourist information increased the number of activities at the destination. In the case of guidebooks, the average number of tourist activities rose from 1,4 for non-guidebook readers to 1,7 for those who used guidebooks on their tours. This indicates that a higher level of knowledge creates the desire to make better use of the tourist supply. However, guidebook readers stayed at the respective spots for a shorter period of time (on average 91 minutes vs. 117 minutes for non-guidebook readers). While information thus increases the number of tourist activities, it has almost no influence on the daily level of activity. This indicates that there exists an upper bound of tourist activity that is rarely exceeded. This is the case for information as well as for the other three factors that are analysed in this study.

The decision to take part in various activities was influenced by different sources of information, the most important of which turned out to be guidebooks. For 69% of the respondents, they constituted the basic source of information which could be supplemented to varying degrees, depending on the different books. The use of guidebooks was negatively correlated with the number of previous visits to the tourist region. Internet information was not used much on the tourist spots, although many respondents used this information source prior to departure. The fact that information is available in German and free of charge is important for the relative success of this medium. However, compared to other sources of information, the internet was not found to play any major role.

Firsthand experience and information from tourist bureaus and brochures were also important (Table 4). Personal knowledge, including experience from previous visits, was primarily used in relation to activities, shopping opportunities, and infrastructure. When visiting tourist bureaus, many respondents collected brochures, and many also asked the employees for personal suggestions. One respondent even stated that "without these people, our holiday would not go as smoothly as it does". These results may be of importance for marketing organisations in search for effective ways to disseminate information.

Table 4
**THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCES OF INFORMATION
FOR THE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES**

Type of activity	Most important information sources*		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Sightseeing	Guidebook (44,0%)	Personal experience (17.7%)	Brochure (9.7%)
Visiting attractions	Guidebook (30.4%)	Brochure (21.3%)	Tourist bureau (13.2%)
Activities in the nature	Guidebook (31.0%)	Brochure (13.0%)	Tourist bureau (12.5%)
Shopping	Personal experience (31.7%)	Guidebook (16.3%)	Coincidence (10.1%)
Dining out	Personal experience (19.2%)	Coincidence (16.4%)	Guidebook (15.1%)

*As only the three most important sources of sources are presented in the table, the cumulated percentages in the rows do not reach 100.

With respect to the characteristics of place, guidebooks and personal experience were most important in city areas, while brochures, signs, and maps were significant sources of information in rural areas. The tourist supply in bigger cities is probably so varied and complex that it can only be described properly by an information source of greater size, like a guidebook. Spatial mobility influences the way the respondents make use of information. Three out of four travellers read one or more guidebooks, while base tourists mainly rely on their own experience. Personal experience is the source of information that is affected most by the time the respondent has previously spent in Sweden: the longer the stay, the more important personal experience becomes.

Conclusions

This paper has studied the factors influencing tourist behaviour as well as the meaning of the term tourist behaviour in relation to home behaviour. Comparing tourists' favourite tourist activities as presented by Lehto *et al.* (2004) and McKercher and Wong (2004), no major differences were found. Motivation and actual tourist behaviour on the spot should not be confounded, as has unfortunately sometimes been the case in tourism literature. The results show that some tourists engage in fewer activities than originally planned (cf. Stewart & Vogt, 1999), while others decide spontaneously to visit additional tourist spots, depending to a large extent on the availability of appealing and well located information. Tourists are committed to an activity for a rather short period of time, before losing interest. Having visited a certain site and being able to tick it off is of major importance. The famous Swedish writer August Strindberg once said to his driver, asking him to drive on: "*I have not come here to see, I have come to have seen*" (Sörensson, 1989, p. 52). This attitude still seems to hold for many tourists. How come? To begin with, tourists tend to choose activities that can quickly be ticked off. Furthermore, people quickly tire of the supply, as there are other activities waiting – although in the end, they may never be pursued.

The aspect of place is of importance in two ways. It is considered the decisive factor in the difference between home and tourist behaviour. In addition, its characteristics are responsible for a higher or lower level of activity, whereas tourists' spatial mobility is only of minor importance in this respect. However, spatial mobility does play a crucial role for the succession of activities. Time may not be of explicit importance to tourists, yet it is important for the daily routines. Many tourists spend up to seven hours outside their accommodation without scheduling this consciously. Cooper (1981) produced a similar result when studying tourists on Jersey. Time was also found to be of some importance for the activity level during the holiday. While it is mainly travellers that are more active at the beginning of their holidays, anxious not to miss anything, most base tourists spend their first days relaxing, before trying to catch up during later parts of their vacations. Last, access to information is of great importance for the choice and duration of tourist activity. The shorter the tourists visit a region or place, the more important tourist information becomes.

In tourism discourse, the general assumption is that tourists incessantly engage in tourist activities during their holidays. This assumption has been contradicted by the present study. Being geographically separated from their everyday lives, tourists enjoy a slower pace, which allows them to find a balance between rest and action. This may be attractive enough in itself when even leisure times at home become increasingly hectic. This result is similar to that of Richards (1999). Tourists do not completely replace home- with tourist behaviour, but take part in similar activities to a great degree. In this respect, the results are parallel to Carr's (2002) and Prentice's (2004) findings. Home behaviour is complemented with tourist behaviour, but to a lesser degree than

has been reckoned in tourism literature (Quan & Wang, 2003). Tourists enjoy taking part in tourist activities outside their accommodation, but one should not underestimate their need for unplanned time and their wish to spend time together with fellow travellers, irrespective of activities. The focus is rather on surroundings and togetherness than on tourist supply, at least when there is more than one person travelling together. Many tourist activities that are carried out during the holiday are pursued at home, too – then referred to as "leisure activities". The major difference between home and tourist behaviour is thus not the activity itself, but the absence of daily routines, the limited time period and the different place and spatial surrounding.

It was the intention of this study to analyse the behaviour of individual tourists with a methodology that does not pre-choose activities for the respondents. Although the number of participating respondents is considered satisfactory for this type of study, it is questionable if the results hold can be generalised. Therefore, the author certainly invites similar studies in other countries and/or with other nationalities involved. A comparison of length and types of activities, and of the information sources that influence the choice of activities is encouraged in relation to tourists with different nationalities and socio-economic backgrounds. A comparison between the results presented here and the factors that have been chosen, and further studies in sparsely populated regions is also considered fruitful.

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