9 The Interrelationship Between Place Symbolism, Memory and Voluntary Income Schemes (VIS): The 'Stick up for Stanage' Campaign

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Introduction

Since the foundation of the Peak District National Park in 1951, national park authorities within the United Kingdom have an increasingly varied and complex role to play in the conservation and management of some of the UK's most visited and visually emotive natural areas. While the initial inception of the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act (1949) and the revised Environment Act (1995) supported the establishment of a structured set of principles akin to conservation, opportunity, enjoyment and social wellbeing, the wider environment with which national parks have to operate in is dynamic and susceptible to macro and micro change. An increased focus within all national parks now lies in the identification and delineation of so called 'tensions' between parks and people (Barker and Stockdale, 2008). In many respects, it is unsurprising that the facet of tension would become of concern to UK national park management, as the spatial boundaries were born from such social movements as the kinder trespass in 1949, leading the way for a change in legislation in the UK. Since this period of time, the democratization of travel and tourism has increased, enacting an increase in the development of both international and domestic UK markets for national park regions.

While recent visitor data is sparse due to the methodological challenges of undertaking data collection within UK national park boundaries, predications made between 2009 and 2012 suggest that this equates to around 73 million visitors annually, generating in excess of £5.5 billion for the UK economy per year (adapted from nationalparks.gov.uk). Also of note within recent decades is the rise in recreational pursuits undertaken by a variety of demographics, as well as the prominence of the already established interlinking motivations such as nature, scenery and heritage (Jepson, 2015). The Peak District National Park, like its counterparts, incorporates an element of uniqueness that reinforces the symbolic nature to that of the tourist/recreationalist who frequents the area. The limestone valleys of the white peak and the gritstone outcrops and moorland of the dark peak are a sharp contrast that further complements the aesthetic nature and distinctive landscape used for the purposes of tourism. Regionally, the Peak District has acted through contemporary history as a barrier between the industrial heartlands of the midlands region, greater Manchester and further north of England. This aesthetic beauty is therefore bound to the industrial heritage of the area. Cook (1996) passionately elaborates on this relationship which reinforces the symbolic within the Peak District:

> . . . but it is not their scenery which makes them unique. What does is the fact that on every side

a combination of fast flowing streams, coalfields and industrial revolution have bound a network of industrial towns to their valleys . . . Their uniqueness is usually summed up by the combination of views from their crests: in one direction, industrialisation, or at least it's outrunners; in the other, the plateau of black peat and emerald bog, way up the wilderness league

(1996, p. 147).

The argument here reinforces the link between the symbolic significance, coupled with the inevitable pressure put upon national parks through historic and contemporary micro and macro change. This arguably requires new and innovative methods of understanding the significance of the site and how its interpretation by a variety of stakeholders can contribute to effective future management. The aim of this chapter explores this as a central tenet, specifically focusing on the symbolism and affinity apportioned to place by a variety of recreational groups and how this can contribute towards management, for example encouraging participation in voluntary income schemes (VIS), where the tourist/recreationalist helps contribute financially towards the site.

Stanage Background and Sticker

Located just six miles from the fifth largest city in the UK (Sheffield), the Stanage North Lees estate in the Peak District National Park receives more than an estimated half a million visitors a year (Peak District National Park Authority, 2017). Significant elements of the landscape include:

- The provision of a variety of recreational activities including climbing, walking, bird watching, cycling, mountain biking, camping, horse riding, hang-gliding and para-gliding.
- The 'flagship' species of the ring ouzel, said to represent 'The fragile relationship between people and the conservation of this internationally important landscape'.
- Being regarded as the birthplace of climbing with more than 1200 identified routes and is internationally famous for its bouldering (lower level climbing with mats and without ropes/other equipment for securing protection).

- Cultural significance for its literary connections and as a film venue (including locations used in the film adaptation of Pride and Prejudice) (adapted from http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/stanage-and-north-lees).

A further unique aspect of the site is its history of public contribution to management. The Stanage Forum and Steering Group was set up in 2000, amid the feelings from stakeholder groups that 'the Park Authority's scheme for charging at carparks was "taxing recreation"', that payment machines were 'urbanizing their countryside' (Bramwell and Cox, 2009, p. 197). The forum produced a Management Plan from 2002–2012, acknowledged as ground-breaking due to being the first of its kind on public property in partnership with site users (Peak District National Park Authority, 2016). Following talk of its possible sale in 2013, a petition was launched to retain Stanage under public ownership, with concerns raised that the Peak District National Park Authority's need for more income could result in less focus on conservation and freedom of access (British Mountaineering Council, 2013). Predicted reluctance of climbers and walkers to provide money not solely reinvested in Stanage (British Mountaineering Council, 2014) was reassured through the 'Stanage Sticker' (British Mountaineering Council, 2015). Introduced in Spring 2015, a Stanage Sticker cost £15, all of which was invested in the site while entitling the buyer to free parking and a camping discount for a year. The income was £6300, as of January 2016 (Stanage Forum Steering Group. 2016), which funded access improvements, bird conservation, woodland management works and visitor information (Peak District National Park Authority, 2015).

The previous points made regarding geographical proximity, place connectedness and the associated benefits this has for both the individual and the environment propose a key attachment to the site for recreational users. It is therefore pertinent to further explore the origin of this connection and the perception of value in creating care for the natural environment. This mutual benefit for person and place is reinforced by Richardson and Sheffield (2015), understanding individual differences in creating connection to nature being important 'as those that

are more connected tend to be more caring towards the environment and benefit from better well-being' (p. 166). The necessity of an attitudinal shift to recognize the importance of nature is expressed by Bleakley (2016, p. 9) 'we have an egological surplus and an ecological crisis, we need to recover sensitivity towards the world around us – its cries and pleasures, its sufferings and beauties'. This awareness of, and relationship between, a places' suffering and beauty is highlighted by Suckall *et al.* (2009, p. 1197), 'as Rolston (2002) puts it, there is a connection between 'beauty and duty'; an individual who finds an area beautiful is more likely to feel a sense of duty towards its protection'.

The exploration of user-generated memories creates potential to not only understand place affinity, but to directly use these within sustainable management; alluding to the potential for ego and eco, beauty and duty, to merge.

Place Symbolism, Belonging, Narratives

The amalgamation between 'beauty and duty' as suggested, reinforces the individual interpretations and collective group significance that make places meaningful and symbolic (Milligan, 1998). Places are therefore assigned value for various reasons, tangible and intangible, by various groups (Halpenny, 2010). This demonstrates the notion that tourism is not purely about visual consumption, but narrative can be created through engagement, self-reflection and viewing a place as more than something which enables activities (Meethan, 2006). Managers of these destinations can also influence the occurrence of concepts such as place attachment by creating experiences that engage the visitor emotionally, and allow for self-expression, growth and awareness (Tsai, 2012), further exemplifying the recognized distinction and significance of space and place. The multidimensionality of place attachment is furthered to include place affect, the emotional relationship between people and place; place dependence, the functionality and interaction with place; place social bonding, interpersonal relationships within a place; and place identity, the connection between self and place (Ramkissoon *et al.*, 2012).

Proshansky (1978, p. 155) historically defines place identity as incorporating 'dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment'; undertaken by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioural tendencies relevant to this environment. Occurrence of concepts such as place identity can result in emotional reactions; and this personal connection can be utilized to benefit the environment through a feeling of being personally affected by threats to it (Clayton and Myers, 2009). Not only can managers of such sites therefore encourage this attachment, but this chapter explores methods of harnessing the narrative of place meaning so as to encourage engagement in conservation, specifically through financial voluntary donation. This is perhaps particularly relevant to the Peak District National Park, where there is an abundant opportunity for recreation and adventure experiences, and participation potentially stemming from the motivation to convey an adventure 'self-image' (Ewert *et al.*, 2013). It also reinforces the significance of how social identity can be demonstrated through lifestyle choices, representing the distinct values of consumption behaviour (Zografos and Allcrofts, 2007).

The value associated with sites can be also influenced by the perspective the individual has on nature. Anthropocentrism at its strongest can see viewing the environment as a commodity, with weaker anthropocentricism still focusing on nature's human value but more how it can benefit personal growth (Cocks and Simpson, 2015). An anthropocentric individual may support environmental conservation based on how this will benefit them (i.e. conserving the recreational setting), with an ecocentric individual supporting the same action based purely on the respect they have for nature (Xu and Fox, 2014). This is furthered by Brügger *et al.* (2011) stating that some assume personal affinity and translation of positive experiences into ecological commitment, whereas others see the existence of nature in a person's character to be the explanation. This has resonance with the concept of stewardship and the sense of wellbeing created for the individual by being within these natural environments, instigating a desire to contribute to environmental wellbeing (Willis,

2015). Within modern stewardship then, environmental and personal wellbeing are inextricably linked; merging eco and ego, place and self, to potentially influence the ability to make a contribution to the landscape's wellbeing through a sense of belonging to it.

Place interaction and achievement as variables for influencing voluntary donation

The recreational context of a landscape can be a source of attachment, and can arise from functional meanings or emotional-symbolic meanings (Schreyer *et al.*, 1981). This signifies the distinction, and potential interrelationship, between a landscape used for functional meanings as a recreational outlet, or one that holds more emotional significance, which denotes the consumption decision is also based on a more personal connection. It is this personal connection that can have multiple meanings. Symbolic interactionism, and the three premises contribute to this term, can provide a way of understanding these interpretations of place: people act towards things based on the meanings they hold for them, this meaning occurs from social interaction with others, which is then followed by a process whereby the individual interprets this (Blumer, 1986). Understanding these meanings and therefore the value associated with such sites can make this symbolic connection a circular process whereby users are part of these social interactions utilizing the ecological interactions within the landscape to create shared meanings.

Voluntary Income Schemes

National park authorities have wrestled with the concept of 'pay to play' for many years (White and Lovett, 1999). While this approach has seen increased variances of implementation within regions within the United States, in the United Kingdom (due to the nature of national park boundaries, history of implementation, relationship to activism and the trespass movement, etc.) National park authorities have never found this discussion a feasible solution to the ongoing funding challenge inherent within environmental management. More recently, funding through quasi-voluntary means has been increasingly explored. At the heart of this challenge is a fundamental need to understand how recreational users to a national park are educated in their current role and responsibility in funding ongoing environmental conservation through increasingly diverse methods. Theoretically at least, the 'pay to play' concept within national parks can be organized through voluntary financial participation. This raises the philanthropic and altruistic nature of contemporary tourism and recreation.

Cooperation through altruism in tourism is not a recent phenomenon (Fennell, 2006) and is gaining increasing attention worldwide. Gelcich *et al.* (2013) highlight the tendency of environmentally sensitive areas throughout the world (urban as well as nature-based) to encounter significant challenges in sourcing appropriate funding to manage sites effectively. This has resulted in a competitive environment where potential sources of income are reducing, but a constant requirement for conservation management and sustainable schemes is needed. It is therefore unsurprising that the altruistic behaviour of the tourist has become a more prominent solution in securing funding. With this increasing awareness, there has been a growth in a variety of related terminology used to describe this non-mandatory economic input. For the purposes of this study, these concepts have been grouped under one singular term of VIS, and relate to policy involvement such as:

- micro-payment donations;
- voluntary contribution mechanisms;
- payment schemes for environmental services;
- social activism;
- individual donation;
- personal fundraising; and
- volunteering.

Crucially, the concepts above demonstrate a reciprocal benefit between the host, the environment and the guest. The benefits of such an arrangement are varied and are not based solely on economic incentive, but also contain social advantages that help develop the host–guest relationship. Novelli *et al.* (2016. p. 826) reinforce this perspective by suggesting that these

post-modern forms of philanthropic activity help build upon added value to community-focused projects, rather than one-off payments, while also empowering the local community in helping to micro finance local innovative sustainable practice. Chaves (2007, p. 13) furthers this point by suggesting the concept of payment schemes for environmental services are flexible compensation mechanisms through which service providers are compensated by service users.

For the tourist/recreationalist, the benefit stems from the service or engagement of the experience, coupled with the knowledge that this type of tourist activity benefits the local population, as well as the local environment, and crucially is done so voluntarily as opposed to being a mandatory financial contribution. This voluntary financial input is argued here as being a potentially powerful incentive within a tourist experience, providing a further component to the understanding of how behaviour can influence wellbeing. This, in turn, reinforces the apparent relationship between altruism and egoism within tourist behaviour, and supports the need to look at how specific motivation works when attempting to succeed in encouraging voluntary income donation. The reciprocal nature of this experience is of course significant, and is what Paraskevaidis and Konstantinos (2017, p. 27) refer to as 'reciprocal' versus 'true' altruistic behaviour in tourist consumption. The nature of 'true altruism' here proposes that with the inevitable evolution of leisure time, there is a concurrent development of what we consider to be true altruistic behaviour. In essence, the nature of recreation and tourism in national parks is bound by, and reliant on, reciprocal engagement between a variety of stakeholders (Murphy, 2014), and strengthens the need for environmental management groups to consider how VIS can be incorporated into the overall recreational experience. This is a tantalizing prospect, as it then begins to question the motivational factors that influence participation in contemporary recreational activity within national parks, and how some of these wants and needs can encourage altruistic behaviour.

This is a potential shift in thinking regarding what motivates recreational users to contribute towards VIS. Cárdenas and Lew's (2016) study on the willingness to donate to species recovery in the Galapagos highlighted the importance of previous voluntary donations made to environmental causes as being significant in positively influencing future donation. This perhaps identifies the blurred boundary between true and reciprocal altruism, as they in turn identified 'motivation to engage' (in recreational activity that resulted in species interaction) as being of high value to the tourist when considering a willingness to contribute financially towards to environmental protection (Cárdenas and Lew, 2016, p. 7).

The implementation of such a voluntary income scheme is not without practical challenges. Work undertaken by Heldt (2010) identifies the significant tests with implementing a process of micro-payment donation schemes in Sweden. Lack of engagement within this scheme was argued as initially down to poor marketing and promotion, and a lack of understanding of the scheme from the perspective of the recreational user (skiers in this respect). This does point towards a fundamental argument that success in relation to VIS participation is conditionally based on the type of information that is delivered to users as to how the funding is being used. Lacey *et al.* (2016) propose philanthropic tourism needs to also think about voluntary codes of practice and accreditation schemes to reinforce the significance of a voluntary donation given.

The current literature reinforces a perspective proposed throughout this chapter, that notions of philanthropic travel can be applied to domestic recreational scenarios such as that of Stanage within the Peak District National Park. An initial exploration of the potential success of implementing a policy such as this is based around how these initial challenges can be overcome.

The Stanage Sticker scheme was designed to fulfil users desire to help care for the unique and inspirational landscape (Newman in Peak District National Park Authority, 2015), alluding to a financial and social sense of involvement and stewardship; reinforcing the links between altruism, recreation and wellbeing for both person and place.

Research Methodology

The study implemented two main strands to the research design, which incorporated a mixed

methods approach. The mixed methods balance here allowed for the opportunity of collecting prominent user memories of the Stanage site, while also providing descriptive data on the voluntary income scheme. In conjunction with the Peak District National Park Authority, one section of the questionnaire included demographic information, buying decisions regarding the Stanage Sticker scheme and perceptions of management. To gain a more in-depth understanding of the symbolic nature of Stanage and the individual experiences and interpretations of the site, narrative and photo elicitation techniques were also incorporated into the questionnaire. This understanding and thematic analysis of memory and attachment to place is the focus for this chapter. Purposive sampling was implemented through the Stanage North Lees Twitter account, acknowledged as having generated broader awareness of the site, particularly by increasing its profile among specific groups (Stanage Forum Steering Group. 2016), and to specific 'cultural gatekeepers' that represented a variety of recreational user groups, for example the British Mountaineering Council. This resulted in a snowball sampling approach, as the questionnaire was shared on additional social media accounts. As well as allowing for more reflection on the qualitative aspects of the questionnaire, the aim was to gain a more extensive range of respondents. Over the data collection period it generated 189 usable data sets, each one providing written memories of their own experiences through:

- An open discussion question asking them to provide their most significant memory of Stanage.
- A question requiring respondents to choose an image from a selection of five photos that hold most significance to them, giving reasons why.

Interpretations of landscape are not only generated from the physical attributes of environments, but are 'linked to symbols, meanings, talks and narratives, which are stored in the human mind and form the basis for understanding or even "reading" a landscape' (van Marwijk *et al.*, 2007, p. 62). Such narratives give meaning to lived experiences and communicate the ways in which a place is valued, through a focus on 'what kind' of meaning, as opposed to 'how

much' (Stewart, 2008). Seemingly, understanding and sharing the differing values among a site's multiple user groups, such as those at Stanage, could help alter perspectives on nature and therefore contribute to sustainable management as the shared value of place is recognized; reinforcement of the 'ours to care for' tagline associated with the Stick up for Stanage campaign and the sense of inclusivity. Arguably, conveying memories would disseminate the various interpretations of the landscape, with the goal of translating this into a voluntary income scheme that inspires users to donate to its upkeep.

To enable an understanding of the storytelling and symbolism associated with Stanage, photo elicitation was used as a way of explicitly incorporating the imagery of the landscape into the research (Fig. 9.1); this method used by Loeffler (2004, p. 537) to 'investigate the inner significance of outdoor experiences'. This was also considered as a way of providing a surrogate to experiencing Stanage, bridging the spatial gap between person and place that the online questionnaire created. The photographs were selected from the Stanage Twitter account, taken by the site warden and purposefully selected for this research based on the literature explored, and not taken for the purposes of the research.

A limitation was the inability to prompt respondents to develop their answers, though this was interesting in itself in order to consider willingness to construct a narrative; particularly interesting within the context of social media, specifically Twitter, as a platform built upon the concept of short and quick information transfer. The degree of freedom in not specifying the length of answer seemingly creates a more voluntary construction of memory and expression of place meaning. The following sections present and discuss the findings emerging from this primary data collection.

Emerging Themes for Consideration

Familiarity and milestone achievement

Of the 189 respondents, only 35 (19%) had purchased a Stanage Sticker. By looking at the two

Fig. 9.1.   Image 1: Stanage Plantation: demonstrates the physical attributes of the site for activities such as climbing and the view up to the 'Edge'. Image 2: The view from the top of Stanage Edge: a representation of the 'iconic' view of the landscape on top of the 'Edge'. Image 3: Chip Shop Buttress: incorporating aspects of Stanage's nature, wildlife and climbing/bouldering routes. Image 4: Road side parking: shows site damage and the management/conservation issues faced, as well as the 'ours to care for' concept. Image 5: Stanage Pole: represents the historical and cultural significance of Stanage in terms of recreation and heritage.

main recreational groups, significantly more climbers had purchased than walkers; 43% ($n = 22$) compared to 6% ($n = 4$). Interestingly for this scheme, and for this research in exploring opportunities for encouraging participation in VIS, the main reason for not buying into the scheme was due to being unaware of it (in 55% of cases). Inevitably, this suggests that the conduits to which VISs are promoted to varying user groups is critical in generating initial income

(Heldt, 2010). This suggests that there is further opportunity to explore the use of cultural gate-keepers to understand the poignant places where recreational users congregate (online and off-line), particularly as motivation for recreational engagement can stem from the value of identity and sense of inclusivity with like-minded people (Ewert *et al.*, 2013).

Although this chapter is focusing on the subjective narrative provided (as opposed to the overall survey data), it is interesting to note that the majority response regarding threat to the future of Stanage, was its increasing popularity with recreational users. This is significant as, while there is a general consensus of increasing users as a negative environmental impact, the subsequent qualitative material discusses the symbolic nature of the site having powerful con-notations regarding the interactions (and lack of) between users. Fundamentally, it is this dual-ity that is causing significant challenges to sites like Stanage, in terms of conservation manage-ment of impacts such as erosion due to the increased users, and appropriate use (Murphy, 2014). This may require rethinking as to

whether encouraging financial participation in VIS is most effectively done by highlighting the environmental impacts inherent at the site.

Figure 9.2 provides an overview of the themes drawn from poignant memories of the site and offers a starting point to investigate in closer depth the content of narrative themes that arise; namely recreation enabler/site attribute, recreation milestone/memory and landscape/views. Despite these often-mentioned themes, it is interesting to consider the differ-ence in meaning here, much in the way that Stanage provides a multitude of recreational outputs and motivations to visit, so too are the variety of inter-related lesser mentioned themes. These can be considered the 'reinforcers' to the experience, creating individuality of memory amid the shared symbolic landscape (Milligan, 1998).

Figure 9.3 shows that, likewise, to memo-ries, proportionally the same three images were selected (images 1, 2 and 3) within buyers and non-buyers of the scheme, further implying sim-ilar processes in using memory to generate sym-bolic place. These showed the unique landscape
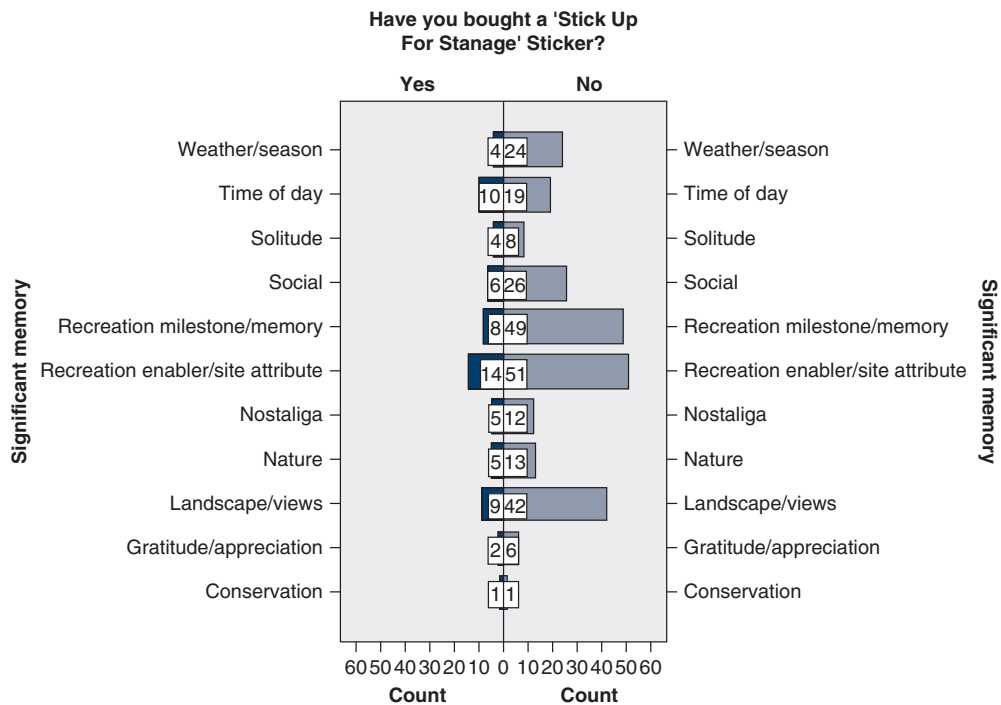

Fig. 9.2. Interrelationship between significant memory and voluntary sticker purchase.

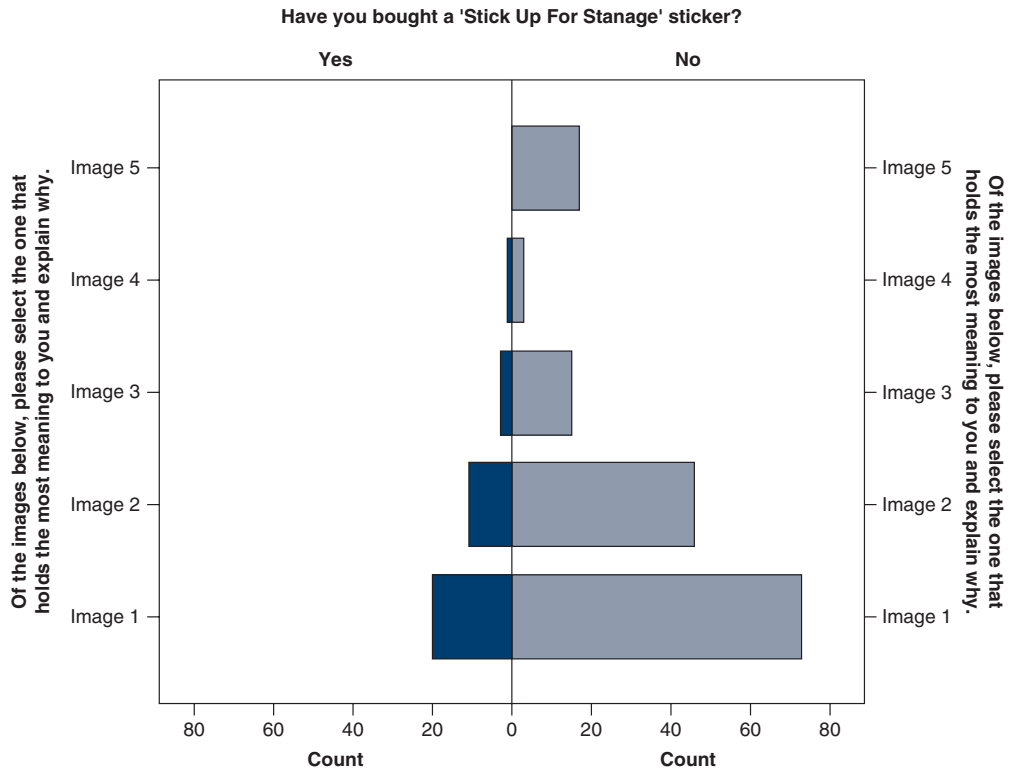**Have you bought a 'Stick Up For Stanage' sticker?**

Fig. 9.3. Relationship between voluntary sticker purchase and photographic selection.

and natural resources of Stanage, arguably providing a reference point for recollecting significant individual memories, instigated through the symbolism within the photographs.

## Unique experiences which are familiar to millions

Thematically, when exploring the reasoning behind photo choice, a number of interesting components emerge, which at first glance could be interpreted as contradictory. However, these themes highlighted the interrelationship between recreational participation and appreciation of the site. There is a duality that exists between two components of uniqueness and familiarity, and through this study it is argued that there is a stronger case of incorporating these attachments into schemes which encourage financial voluntary donation.

> Image 1: I instantly recognized it as Stanage & it bought a smile to my face
>
> (Walker)
>
> Image 1: It shows Stanage in all its majesty and reminds me of how much I love to run along the top hearing the sound of karabiners below me
>
> (Runner)

There was an element of familiarity associated with both image one and two. Image one, which is taken within the plantation area of Stanage, looking up at the plantation boulders and the gritstone outcrop, is interesting in the sense that the narratives exhibits familiarity on a number of levels:

• familiarity through expectation in recreational participation;
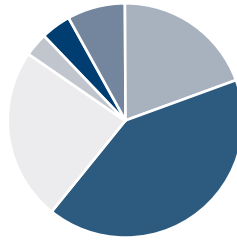
■ Access works including works on Long Causeway and through Stanage plantation (£1212)

■ Conservation works including support for volunteers (£2588)

□ Car park maintenance and signage (£1492)

■ Drystone wall restoration works (£200)

■ Support for Refugee & Asylum Seeker groups at Stanage (£258)

■ Contribution to Stanage Pole costs (£500)

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- familiarity through visible/auditory evidence of other user groups;
- familiarity through recollections of satisfaction; and
- familiarity through personal/family history associated with the site.

In this sense, the symbolic nature of Stanage as a site to recreationalists is reinforced through a number of different times during any one encounter. Inevitably, there a number of factors that subsequently impact upon this (climate, group size, time of day, season, etc,). However, the iconic nature of Stanage is reinforced through a process of continued familiarity throughout each specific visit. This raises very interesting discussions as to how this 'pre/in-situ/post' construction of Stanage as familiar can be used in its promotion, and in particular, encouraging participation in conservation. This could provide and encourage reflection on these familiar experiences, whereby realization of their value can occur, encouraging connection with self and environment (Greenway and Knapp. 2015).

While it could be argued that Image 1 is most associated with rock climbing and bouldering, it is interesting to note that the familiarity is also interpreted by other users, notably walkers and fell runners. While one of the identified pressures on Stanage is the increased use by recreational groups, it is also important to note that this diversity of recreational groups is also now part of place attachment of the site for many users (an expectation). While solitude is sought after, the data provided through memory suggests that it is not expected, and like a sunny evening, it is sometimes a case of fortune or luck whether we experience this.

Landscape as a reinforcing mechanism for experience

The recognition of the iconic beauty of the Stanage landscape was personalized through the unique elements to constructed memories, reflective of interpretations of beauty not only generated from the physical landscape but linked to symbols and narratives (van Marwijk *et al.*, 2007). In contrast to the recollections and elicitations regarding the 'iconic' view from the 'Edge', many significant memories encapsulated how specific conditions made the landscape particularly unique, many of these incorporating typically desirable elements such as sunsets, sunshine and early morning solitude, alluding to experiencing Stanage at its symbolic 'best'.

> Early morning solitude listening to the soft song of a male ring ouzel singing to his mate sitting on their nest
>
> (Bird watcher)

> Watching the sunset with my wife and a bottle of wine
>
> (Climber)

> Most memorable was when cloud filled the valley with just the hill tops visible like islands. The views in snow come a close second
>
> (Walker)

Significant memories also incorporated components that could be interpreted as 'imperfect', exemplified by the following respondents' comments.

> Peace and solitude in hailstones and wind
>
> (Runner)

> Walking from Moscar to Redmires in torrential rain with a strong westerly wind. Despite full waterproofs we were drenched
>
> (Walker)

These examples highlight the significance that climatic diversity of the seasons within the United Kingdom provide towards the experience, and subsequently to memory and place. As landscape is shaped by climatic conditions on a physical level, climate also shapes landscape in terms of the experience (Jepson, 2015), and therefore the symbolic memory that we assign to place. The nature of beauty incorporating climate is an already well-used approach for Stanage as a site for tourism and recreation. However, there is a further interesting opportunity here to explore the significance of seasonal experiences in generating a diverse appreciation of the same site, and how this relates to the diversity required in sustainable management and conservation initiatives.

Recreation enabler: goal setting and achievement of milestones

The experience of the external environment can be influenced by how well matched the user is to the recreation setting, defined as recreationist–environment fit (Tsaur *et al.*, 2014). This notion is demonstrated by one respondents who, talking about image one, stated:

> Image 1: As a climber it's the 'almost iconic' view of Stanage you see on the approach from Hooks car park . . .
>
> (Climber)

The statement above provides a number of connotations in how the significance of place is created, especially through the photographic choices available to respondents. The use of the term 'iconic' reinforces the symbolic nature of this specific area of Stanage to a rock climbing community (a theme drawn from many of the memories), reflective of Stanage being acknowledged as the birthplace of climbing (source: http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/stanage-and-north-lees).

The inclusion of the word 'almost' proceeding it, coupled with 'as a climber', denotes a need here to highlight the distinction between user groups as to the differing interpretations of which area of Stanage might be perceived to be iconic. 'Hooks car park' further elaborates towards personal experience for the recreationalist, where they park and how this influences their view of the site upon approach, helping construct place symbolism. This latter was a feature of other respondent's memories, with how they 'look up' on approach, and 'look back' when departing, helping reinforce the site through pre- and post-recreational participation.

The degree of 'fit' was particularly noticeable through differing interpretations of the same image. 'It shows the reason I visit Stanage; the climbing' suggesting a degree of substitutability; the climbing areas within the overall site being the iconic feature rather than the overall place. Conversely, other responses to the same image describe it as 'some of the most beautiful rock in the world', recognition of Stanage as significant on a much larger scale and the aesthetic integral to the interpretation of these physical attributes providing a vehicle for recreation.

Interestingly, does this therefore suggest that sites like Stanage for some is perceived initially as a mere vessel for indulging in their chosen recreational activity? Budruk and Stanis (2013, p. 59) point at an interesting conundrum in terms of 'does a recreation setting evolve from a place that one visits to attain certain experiences to a place that is simply valued for itself?'. The thematic analysis undertaken on poignant memories, suggests that there is an interrelationship between recreation and landscape aesthetic that is predominant for a large proportion of respondents. However, it is also worth noting the increasing focus for some users to base their

symbolic memories around the predominant value of the site as a 'recreational playground' that satisfies needs, goals and milestones. The nature of participation in recreational activities has historically always incorporated an ongoing process of achieving milestones. For groups such as serious walkers and mountain bikers, this could be through the completion of iconic routes which incorporate Stanage as a feature. Thus, it is in this context that it is possible to interpret comments such as 'Riding down the stone steps down to the plantation on my bike for the first time . . .' and 'Driving this historic road with its Roman road surface in the 1980s–2000'.

It is similar for rock climbers, yet Stanage Edge holds a poignant value when it comes to achievement, incorporating thousands of single pitch routes and boulder problems from the introductory/easy, to the most technically difficult, involving the most serious risk. Many of these routes are iconic to rock climbers/traditional climbers/boulderers, and therefore hold special value in the completion of them. This relationship between accessibility to a variety of opportunities for milestones, coupled with the iconic nature of the site, reinforces the significance that achievement in the recreational activity has on symbolic appreciation. The expected practice when promoting VIS within a well-used site, is the significance of the landscape and its uniqueness, and therefore its fragility when considering increased usage. However, the argument proposed from this investigation posits that as recreational milestones and achievements were highlighted through memories as having a distinct relationship to appreciation of the site, it should be given value when approaching the promotion of conservation schemes such as financial voluntary donation. Interestingly, only a small percentage of respondents highlighted an interrelationship between the significance of landscape and the need to conserve within their poignant memory.

This reinforces the lack of substitutability of the site in these cases where the combination of the site attributes, recreational achievement and personal progression merge, for example:

> Too many to list. Like many climbers I tick routes I've climbed. I put a date alongside the route, and who I climbed it with. I only have to open up my Stanage guidebook and look at these ticked climbs, with their dates and brief notes, and rich memories of Stanage moments flow . . .
> (Climber)

In this sense, the 'beauty' (escapism in the outdoors, solitude, landscape) is balanced with recreational 'duty' (achievement of milestones, progression). It is the interrelationship between these two notions that potentially provides an optimal experience, resulting in activities such as climbing being 'much more than an activity, but is transformed into a meaningful experience and a way of making sense of the world' (Brymer and Schweitzer, 2015, p. 137). This can be seen in responses such as 'My first ever rock-climb. A moment of realization that Stanage was where I wanted to spend a lot of my time', emphasizing site symbolism for recreation creating personal symbolism. Progression ranging from a significant milestone ('my first severe climb'), to the ongoing affinity this creates with the site through memory and repetition of that experience, ('The first time I successfully climbed a route that I'd previously failed on. It's now one of my favourites'), not only acknowledge points of reference, but also uncovers the promise of future recreational milestones ('Image 1 Careless Torque. One day maybe ;)'.

Again, this highlights the ongoing relationship with the landscape in its ability to provide a sense of continuous achievement and attachment (Tsaur *et al.*, 2014). The difficulty some respondents had in symbolic construction around one particular memory further reinforces this:

> Impossible to say, Terazza Crack, L&R Unconqurables, just walking, looking at the climbs. Tunneling through a cornice two years ago!
> (Climber)

> Too many good times to think of one. White Wand, Brad Pit, Boys will be boys
> (Boulderer)

Finally, as the quote below shows, recreational activities can play a significant role in providing a further purpose in life, implying the perceived value of the site, symbolically, for the recreationist:

When considering how this type of analysis can be applied to encouraging participation in VIS, it adds to the points suggested by Cárdenas and Lew (2016) regarding the history of

Image 2: Because it illustrates the scale of Stanage. It isn't just one thing for me: one activity, or one memory. Its woven through the fabric of my life.

(Climber)

environmental donation and relationship to site as influencing voluntary financial donation. As recreational users continue their leisure careers in not just one activity, but a variety of outdoor experiences at Stanage, it further helps attach symbolism, continually reinforcing affinity to place. This process could help identify cultural gatekeepers who may influence other users, but importantly also help explore how understanding and mapping individual/group recreational history at a site will help encourage voluntary participation in its conservation.

Conclusion

This chapter proposes that by reliving these recreational moments through conveyance of memories, it can encourage appreciation of the value of them for users, groups and also for conservation. The notion of ego and eco/beauty and duty is therefore acknowledged as place provides personal achievement and celebration of this through memory, in turn conveying the significance of the site through the affinity the user has for it. Seemingly, acknowledgement of this through means of storytelling with other recreationists of the site could further encourage recognition of the interrelationship between 'beauty and duty' as well as collective call for action in voluntarily donating to the wellbeing of the landscape. The increasing utilization of VIS allows, if successful, for a site to manage itself through voluntary donations. There is, however, a distinct challenge to reinforcing the significance of such schemes to users,

particularly when national parks still rely on public funding mechanisms to ensure survival. This funding emphasis through public finances may influence the motivation to 'chip in' when the perception of payment throught taxation is already prevalent.

The Stanage Sticker mission underpins conservation, and voluntary participation is always reinforced through the attachment that we have as users, in the sense that it is 'ours to care for'. However, this study has explored the further characteristics as to why it should be conserved, and while incorporating historical importance and aesthetic of landscape which provides a key enabler to the participant when visiting the site, it is also contemporary enablers (e.g. recreational milestones and achievement) that appear to be increasingly significant in contemporary society. These not just reinforce the experience, but they also provide a further purpose as to why we should all participate in a conservation. The argument posited here, is that this association with symbolic place through achievement and milestone can be used to reinforce the notion of voluntary conservation within sensitive areas which see an increased participation in a variety of recreational user groups. Such an approach to VIS would therefore emphasize this link between individual achievement and memory, and the importance of contributing to environmental wellbeing. While there is a life cycle inherent within all outdoor recreational activities (seasonally high and low demand, increases and decreases in participation rates, etc), it is important to note that due to the symbolic nature of Stanage as a site, its popularity will always be consolidated at higher levels of group usage and demand. It is by further exploring the wider motivational characteristics of why we attend sites such as this for recreation, which we begin to explore further options of encouraging voluntary participation and protection.

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