



Developing Rural Scotland

Experiences and values of recreational landscapes

Katrina Brown and Keith Marshall

email: k.brown@macaulay.ac.uk The Macaulay Institute, Aberdeen

How do ways of moving through a landscape affect the ways in which it is valued?

Pressure to take account of people’s values about landscapes during policy development and decision making is increasing – particularly with the UK signing up to the European Landscape Convention.

However, our understanding of how people actually experience landscapes, why people hold the landscape values they do, and under which circumstances, is still rather poor.

Landscape evaluations are often made from a generalised and static position, and neglect the influence of what people are doing – and how they are moving – within the landscape.

This research explores how different forms of recreation shape participants’ landscape experiences and values.



Approach

Capturing the complex nature of landscape experiences and values – especially visual, non-visual and mobile aspects – demands innovative methods.

Our approach develops and tests various combinations of new and established techniques for collecting and analysing visual, audio and observational data.

These include:

- Indoor semi-structured interviews
- Outdoor ‘go-along’ unstructured interviews
- Participant observation
- Review interviews using video data as a prompt, involving a range of walkers and mountain bikers

Objectives

- To investigate how different recreationists experience rural landscapes
- To further understanding of the relationship between landscape experiences and values
- To examine how landscape experiences and values are influenced by factors such as practice, motion, identity and social dynamics
- To test the relative merits of different methodological techniques at incorporating key dimensions of landscape experiences, such as social interaction, and the playing out of particular identities and practices



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