

Development of recreational areas using spheres of experiences

Martin Goossen¹

Keywords: experience, motives, design, recreation

Experiences seem to be the key-word of modern recreational use. These experiences are strongly related to the motives with which people recreate (Elands & Lengkeek 2000, Tyrväinen et al. 2007). In our research we distinguish five motives: amusement; having a break; interest; immersion and physical challenge. Research shows that each recreationist recreates with different motives during a year, but "having a break" is the most popular one (Goossen & de Boer 2008). The research question is: What must be added in recreational areas to design spheres of experiences according to the motives people have to recreate.

In a case-study we asked 117 recreationalists living in the densely populated Western part of the Netherlands to send by post or upload pictures (from their own photos or photos from magazines) of recreation destinations with, according to their ideas, a certain sphere of experience related to the motive. One of the questions in the attached questionnaire was also to describe why they had chosen that picture (Goossen et al. 2009). The 250 pictures which were sent in gives a first insight in common features of the sphere of experience related to the motives. Partly using the classification of Hunter (2008) and Oku & Fukamachi (2006) we classified the pictures into people, activity, objects, space, temporary, vista and nature. The photos differentiate highly between the various motives. Respondents with the motive "Amusement" sent pictures with people on it, relaxing and a lot of terraces. Walking, landscape and water were on the pictures of the respondents with the motive "Having a break". Walking, heritage and landscape for "Interest". Animals, detailed shots of plants and water for "Immersion" and people, hills and all kinds of sporting activities for "Challenge". The images on the photos was fairly similar to what we have found in the literature (Goossen & de Boer 2008). The respondents with "Amusement" as motive pointed out that cozy, family, fun, together and pleasant were the most important reasons why they had chosen to send in that specific picture. The reasons of silence, enjoy, pleasant, close by, nature and beautiful were used the most for "Having a break". Learn, flowers and animals, history and information are the reasons for "Interest". The reasons enjoy, beautiful, observe, nature and birds are the most mentioned for "Immersion". And challenge, tough, enjoy, exert, sport are the most important reasons for "Challenge".

Interestingly, the respondents use the same words in a variety of reasons. The word "enjoy" is used in every motive but the respondents enjoy different elements however. The meaning of the word "enjoy" has different values related to the motive. The same results are similar with the words "pleasant" and "nature".

The photos and reasons behind it seem to point out that the motives are not separated units, but slide into each other. They also point out that respondents use a combination of motives in a single trip. Another study (Goossen et al. 2010) supports this hypothesis. A vast majority (79%) of hikers use a combination of motives; on average 2,3. But the majority of the hikers (53%) has one main motive which counted for at least 50%.

On the basis of the pictures and reasons, we developed landscape additives to be used in design concepts. These additives are not static 'blue prints', but must be used to stimulate managers and landscape architects to create different spheres of experiences related to the motives. The most important additives in "Amusement" are things to do together, which are fun and create meeting places. In "Having a break" the sphere must be serene and silence, a contrast with daily life, beautiful and nearby. Additives in "Interest" must be authentic, interesting, relate to heritage and

¹ Centrum landschap, Alterra, part of Wageningen UR, P.O. Box 6700 AA Wageningen, The Netherlands, Martin.goossen@wur.nl

biodiversity and where you can learn something. The sphere in "Immersion" must be a rather unique biodiversity and something to discover. The additives in "Challenge" are to stimulate physical experience, where you can reach a goal and a landscape which is rather challenging.

The conclusion is that the motives differ but the experience spheres could slide into each other, except for the motives "Amusement" and "Immersion"; they are almost opposite. The consequence is that a region should deliver a diversity of spheres of experiences according to the distribution of motives. A specific recreational or protected area does not have to deliver all experience spheres but must be able to complement the experience spheres in other areas in the region. An 'experience zoning' of a region is rather essential to create alternatives in the total recreational supply. This offers new opportunities to develop an integrated approach with other spatial functions like ecology, agriculture, culture history and sports.

References

- Elands, B. and J. Lengkeek (2000). Typical tourists. Research into the theoretical and methodological foundations of a typology of tourism and recreation experiences. *Mansholt Studies 21*, Wageningen University.
- Goossen, C.M. & T.A. de Boer, (2008) Recreatiemotieven en belevingssferen in een recreatief landschap; Literatuuronderzoek. (recreational motives and spheres of experience in a recreational landscape; literature study) Wageningen, Alterra. Alterra-rapport 1692.
- Goossen, C.M., Kruit, J., Donders, J. en Rooij, B. (2009) Smaakmakers voor landschappen op basis van recreatiemotieven. Eerste aanzet om belevingssferen in landschappen te creëren. (tasting landscape with recreational motives; First attempt to create experience spheres in landscapes) Wageningen, Alterra, Alterra-report 1932.
- Goossen, C.M., R.J.H.G. Henkens, I. Woltjer, (2010) Behoeftte aan vrijetijdsvoorzieningen in en om de stad. (Need for leisure facilities in and around the city). Wageningen, Alterra, Alterra-report in print.
- Hunter, W. C. (2008). "A typology of photographic representations for tourism: Depictions of groomed spaces." *Tourism Management* 29 (2008) 354-365.
- Oku, H., K.Fukamachi (2006). "The differences in scenic perception of forest visitors through their attributes and recreational activity." *Landscape and Urban Planning* (75 (2006)): 34-42.
- Tyrväinen, L., Mäkinen, K. and Schipperijn, J. (2007) Tools for mapping social values of urban woodlands and other green areas. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 79: 5-19.