

Matthias Breuer / Victoria Taylor

Development of tourist typology and image
of the area in the Lake District, UK and
Rheinsteig (Hiking Trail), Germany

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Nature Based Tourism
Dept. of Geography and Tourism
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Spring Semester 2010

History of tourism

**How tourist typology and image of the area has developed
in the Lake District, UK vs. Rheinsteig (Hiking Trail), DE**

Victoria Taylor and Matthias Breuer

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1 Introduction

The aim of this report is to compare the history of tourism in two areas and show how tourist typology and image has changed over time. The areas chosen are the Lake District in the UK and the Rheinsteig Hiking Trail in Germany. These areas were chosen due to nationality of the authors and their personal knowledge of the areas.

Understanding the image of an area and the tourist typology is important in understanding why destinations rise and fall in popularity over time. Numerous models have been created to attempt to define and predict the evolution of tourism including Butler's model of evolution of tourist areas and Plog's psychographic scale. This report aims to evaluate whether these models can be used to define the tourist typology within the areas selected and to show how it has developed over time.

2 Methods

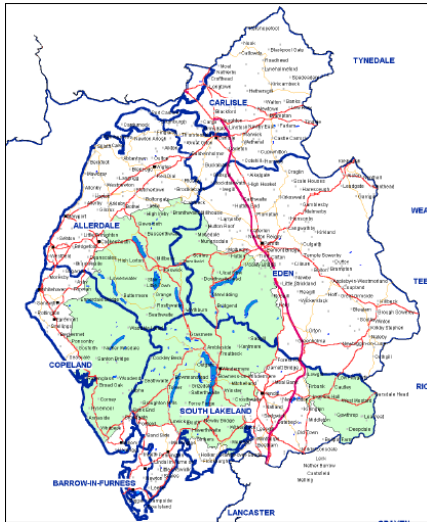
Data concerning the general information for the Lake District such as the yearly number of tourists and lengths of stay were taken from two reports provided by the Cumbria Tourism Board. The first report concerns Cumbria Tourism, Tourism Volume and Value from 2000-2008 and the second is a visitor survey from 2006.

The Rheinsteig could not be taken separately as a destination, since it uses the existing infrastructure of the Rhein valley and is closely connected to its history and the evolved attractions. It was also not possible to gather enough data on the Rheinsteig itself, since its initiation is only five years ago. Information concerning the Rheinsteig region was mainly taken from research material of the German Hiking Institute (Deutsches Wander Institut) run by Dr. rer. nat. Rainer Brämer of the Institute of educational science (Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft) at Philipps-University in Marburg, Germany. The institute has focused on research concerning hiking since 1992. As the Rheinsteig Hiking Trail was only established in 2005, the information used pre-2005 was obtained mainly from comparative studies on similar hiking trails such as the Rheinsteig. Post-2005 papers include the study area of the Rheinsteig. Frank Gallas, manager of the Rheinsteig-Bureau, supplied further statistical information collected by the Rheinsteig-Bureau as well as estimations.

The historical timelines of the Lake District and the Rheinsteig were created by the author's using the information obtained via the tourist boards of the areas and the internet.

3 Background

3.1.1 Lake District -General Information



The Lake District National Park is located in the north west of England in the county of Cumbria (Figure 1). The national park has a total area of 2,292 km² and was established in 1951. The popularity of the area comes from its nature and geology. It is a mountainous region with U-shaped valleys resulting from periods of glaciations which ended approximately 15,000 years ago and includes England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike and numerous mere's and lakes. Due to a high average yearly rainfall the area can be boggy but the surrounding countryside is general made up of moorland, heather and bracken. In 2008 the county of Cumbria had 15.3 million visitors of which 8.3 million visitors visited the Lake District National Park itself.

Figure 1, Location of the Lake District National Park (Trembath, C., & Tennstedt, K., 2006).

Tourist Numbers by Category of Visitor	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Millions									
Serviced	2.05	1.95	2.30	2.52	2.67	2.67	2.65	2.66	2.51
Non-Serviced	1.74	1.53	1.68	1.66	1.72	1.52	1.51	1.60	1.69
Staying with Friends and Relatives	0.75	0.75	0.74	0.75	0.75	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.77
Day Visitors	9.53	9.36	10.13	10.28	10.36	10.31	10.24	10.36	10.37
Total	14.08	13.59	14.86	15.21	15.50	15.26	15.16	15.38	15.34

Table 1, Tourist Numbers by Category of Visitor (millions) from 2000-2008 (Cumbria Tourism 2000-2008).

Between 2000 and 2008, the number of visitors has remained relatively stable (Table 1) with a slight increase after 2003. The Lake District area was hit hard by the 2001 foot-and-mouth outbreak and the result was a decrease of visitors in that year.

Surveys from 2006 show that over 91 % of visitors to the Cumbria region come from within the UK itself with only 9% coming from countries such as Australia, North America and from within Europe (Trembath & Tennstedt, 2006). Efforts are being made to attract more foreign visitors to the region. This strategy has been assisted by the increase in heritage tourism in the area and the use of popular media-induced tourism within the UK (Iwashita, 2006). The main types of accommodation used within the national park where self-catering, camping and guest houses. The average length of stay within National Park was 7 nights (Trembath & Tennstedt, 2006).

In 2008, 496,000 people lived within the Cumbria area in the towns of Copeland, Carlisle, Allerdale, Eden, Barrow in Furness and South Lakeland (Cumbria Intelligence Observatory, 2010). Tourism is rapidly taking over as the main source of income for the region and brought in 1.17 billion pounds to the local economy (Cumbria Tourism 2000-2008). Previously sheep farming and agriculture had been the main industry for the region.

The main image of the area is one of nature (open areas, hiking and camping) and culture (heritage sites, restaurants). The area is associated with a number of famous authors such as Arthur Ransom and Beatrix Potter. A growing number of tourists visit the Lake District to see Beatrix Potter’s family home, Hill top and to see the lakes that inspired Arthur Ransom. The region has also benefited from the increasing awareness in the media of the image of the British countryside and population in films such as Harry Potter and the Full Monty (Iwashita, 2006). One of the main tourist attractions of the area and the UK’s second most popular charging tourist attraction is the Windermere Lake Steamer (Wikipedia, Lake District, 2010).

3.1.2 History of Tourism in the Area

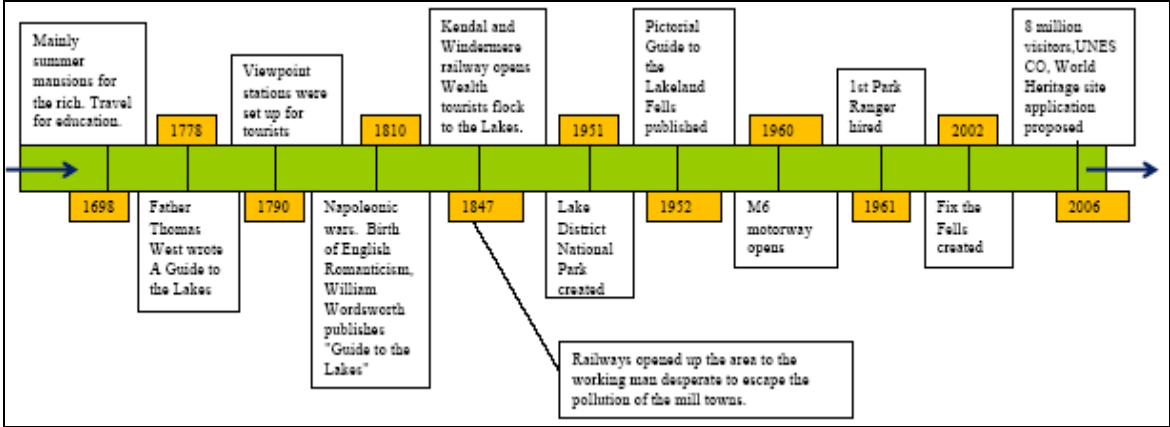


Figure 2 Historical timeline of tourism development within the Lake District

At the start of the 16th Century the Lake District was mainly visited by the very rich and exploring academics. Large summer mansions were built which employed the local population during the summer season. Popularity with travellers grew towards the end of the 18th century, and the first guide book to the area was written by Father Thomas West in 1778. With increasing numbers of visitors, more visitor infrastructure was put in place. Examples include the viewpoint stations set up for tourists which gave the best views of the landscape at popular sites.

At the start of the Napoleonic wars the popularity of the “Grand Tour” to Europe declined and travellers were forced to look for alternative destinations within Britain itself. This was also the start of the period of romanticism of nature in the area started by William Wordsworth when he wrote “Guide to the Lakes” in 1810. In 1847 the railway was opened to Kendal and Windermere and local tourists began to flock to the Lakes. The new railway allowed the working population from the surrounding towns and cities to escape the pollution on day trips and enjoy the open space and beauty of the area.

Tourism grew gradually in the area throughout the 18th and 19th Century but the area continued to be visited mostly by people from the surrounding towns and cities. It is not until the 20th Century that overseas tourism has begun to grow. In 1952 Alfred Wainwright published the “Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells”. The book provides detailed information on 214 peaks within the Lake District and is still used to this day by hiking visitors to the area. Due to the increasing numbers of tourist and growing environmental problems in the area, the Lake District National Park was created in 1951, with the first park ranger being hired 10 years after the creation. In the 20th Century, emphasise is increasingly being put on sustainable tourism and protecting the unique cultural and natural heritage of the area as concerns grow about the environmental damage that tourism is causing in the area.

In 2006 it was decided to proceed with a bid for World Heritage Status for the National Park on the basis of its natural and cultural history which according to the applicants “have inspired great thinkers and encouraged positive, social and environmental changes since the 18th Century” (Lake District World Heritage Project, 2010) .

3.1.3 Rheinsteig -General Information



The Rheinsteig is the second certified high-quality hiking trail in Germany. The “Premium Long-distance Hiking Trail” of 320 km starts or ends in either Wiesbaden or Bonn. It passes through three major regions along the right-river side of the Rhine. Going downstream, starting with the more gently sloped Rheingau dominated by vineyards and forest. The canyon of the Upper and Lower Middle Rhine Valley, where the Rhine has cut its pass through the Rhenish Massif forming a rough hiking terrain along its steep slope. The northern part of the trail cuts through the once volcanic active Siebengebirge. The entire area enjoys a mild and fairly dry climate. Along the steep slopes even warmer microclimates provide a large number of Mediterranean flora and fauna and even some endemic species. The area is heavy forested and vineyards can be found in the lower elevated parts (Blum, 2005).

The Rheinsteig is a physical demanding trail with many ascents and a maximum elevation of about 330m a.s.l. 70% of the trail consists of near-natural trail, with a high portion of narrow footpaths. Hikers can enjoy breathtaking views and wonderful picnic spots. Along the trail many interesting sights such as castles and antiquities can be visited (Gallas, 2010). The uniqueness of the trail is in its natural diversity with frequent changes in landscape leading through forests, fields and vineyards. Furthermore romantic wine villages offer another attraction to the visitors and provide all classes of accommodation and restaurants (Blum, 2005).

¹http://www.bmub.bund.de/fileadmin/bmu-import/files/bilder/allgemein/image/jpeg/deutschlandkarte_naturparke.jpg

² http://www.meintrekking.de/assets/images/0/karte_rheinsteig-c7ce5620.gif

Premium Hiking Trails are hiking trail certified for quality, with a specific standard such as frequent landscape changes and a high percentage of narrow natural paths. 18% of German hikers have already tested these quality-certified premium hiking trails, with an estimated 27 % who are planning to do so soon (Deutsches Wanderinstitut e.V., 2008)

There has been no research on numbers of people hiking on the Rheinsteig. Nevertheless, both the Rheinsteig manager Frank Gallas and Achim Schloemer, the business manager of the Rhineland-Tourism board estimate that the numbers range between 250.000 and 500.000 visitors each year (F. Gallas, personal communication, March 10, 2010). Statistics of *Kleins Wanderreisen*, a travel agency offering guided hiking on the Rheinsteig show an absolute peak of bookings (306) for September, relative peak in May/June (176) and almost no bookings in winter for the years 2007 to 2009. The same peaks can be found in the statistics for visitors on the official Rheinsteig.de website (Rheinsteig-Büro, 2009).

The following general information was gathered from similar German premium hiking trails and is estimated to also apply to the Rheinsteig: The average age of the hiker was 50 years, with 47% percent female hikers (Brämer & Gruber, 2008). One third of visitors went hiking for several days (Brämer, 2008c).

The infrastructure for the Rheinsteig is very well developed. People can arrive easily by car, train or boat to almost any town along the trail. Two international airports are within less than 50km distance of the Rheinsteig so that international visitors (especially British) have easy access to the region. The train stations in every town along the Rhine provide easy transport for day hikers either back to their starting point or back to their place of residence. Boat services provide river crossings as there are no bridges along the river and also provide the service to return to the starting point.

3.1.4 History of Tourism in the Area

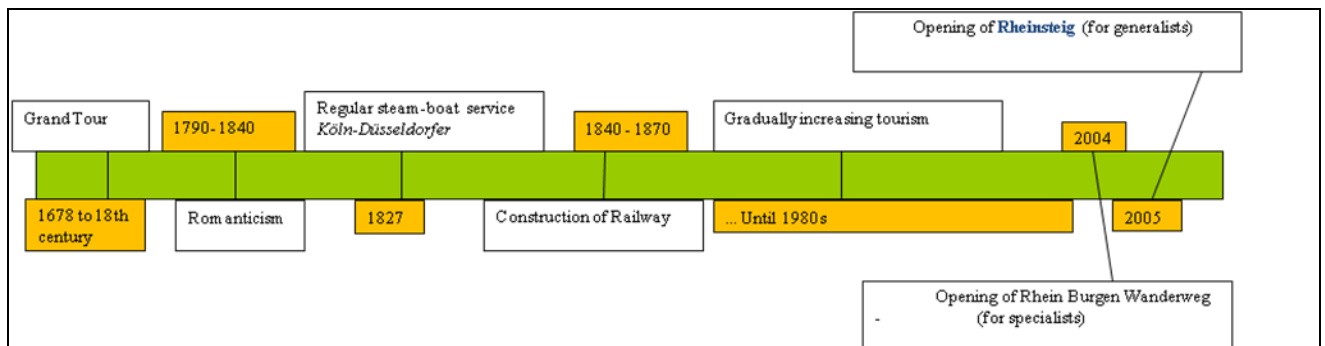


Figure 3: Historical timeline of tourism development in the area around today's Rheinsteig

In the late 17th century and throughout the 18th century, a large proportion of young upper-class Englishmen went on the “Grand Tour” travelling through the Rhine valley, most often on their way back from travelling in Italy. Always regarded as the most dangerous part of the Rhine due to currents, cliffs and reefs during romanticism (1790-1850), German and international artists discovered the area and reinterpreted the image leading into the so called “Rhine romanticism” (1795-1900) (Knoll, 2002). Amplified by their poems and travel literature people were attracted to the area as a way to “return to nature” (Nouza, 2010). Apart from these few single characters it was not until Napoleon’s hegemony in mainland Europe ceased that the region increased in popularity. Thereafter Englishmen rediscovered the region first and visited the Middle Rhine for decades, shortly followed by German

travellers. A form of “modern tourism” was established as early as the beginning of the 19th century (Knoll, 2002).

At first travelling was for the rich, but the initiation of the regular steam-boat service of Köln-Düsseldorfer in 1827 and the construction of the railway between 1840 and 1870 made the area accessible to a wider public. This infrastructure led to a gradual increase in tourism until the 1980s. In 1856 the Prussian-Rhenish-Steamboat-Company registered 1 million passengers, establishing the region as a modern tourist destination with mass tourism dimensions. An increase in the number of travel guide’s recommended accommodations from 40 in 1856 to 72 in 1879 shows the fast development in the region (Knoll, 2002).

The statistical bureau of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate³ states for 2008 that 18,326 beds in tourist accommodations and 900,000 visitors made up 2 million overnight-stays. 200,000 were international tourists, which were responsible for 430,000 overnight stays. Additional 130,000 visitors were registered in camping sites (13% of all arrivals), of which 28% were internationals. The list is headed by the English, followed by the Dutch, US-Americans and the French. (Statistisches Landesamt Rheinland-Pfalz, 2009). For the Rheingau⁴, 5 million daily visitors were estimated in 2004 (dwif-Consulting GmbH, 2005). In 2008, 884,568 visitors stayed an average of 2.2 nights. (Hessisches Statistisches Landesamt, 2009). Adding these numbers, the total overnight stays in the region make approximately 3 Mio.

The region of the Upper Middle Rhine Valley makes up around one third of the hiking trail and was added to the list of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 2002 (Knoll, 2002).

Tourism officials noticed the general decline in visitors in the area. In 2003, after almost a hundred years as an official long distance hiking trail “Rheinhöhenweg” failed the analysis for a certificate and the installation of one new hiking trail on each river side was approved (Brämer, 2009a). In 2004 a hiking trail on the left-hand side of the Rhine was opened, shortly followed by the opening of the Rheinsteig in September 2005 (Gallas, 2010) The Rhine-Castles-Hiking-Trail (orig. Rheinburgenwanderweg) on the left side specialises in castles and can hardly compete with the Rheinsteig that is appealing to a wider range of visitors (Brämer & Gruber, 2008). The opening coincided with the hiking hype in the beginning of the 21st century in Germany. From 1995 to 2005 hiking in Germany enjoyed an increase of 12% or 8 million people. The most rapid increase happened to be at the same time as the opening of the first premium hiking trail (Brämer, 2009b). After 2005 the general popularity of hiking in Germany decreased slowly (Brämer, 2008c), though the frequency in hiking trips has been rising. Hikers don’t aim to do as many kilometres anymore. They rather enjoy hiking in a wellness-style to rest from every-day life (Deutsches Wanderinstitut e.V., 2008).

The Rheinsteig won the prize for Germany’s most beautiful hiking trail in 2006 (Rheinsteig, 2010) and attained the second highest grade (1.4) among the German long distance hiking trails. Brämer & Gruber (2008) mention that this is most likely due to the good quality transport infrastructure which enables the most popular half-day and day hikes (Brämer, 2008c). Another reason is the visitor’s high value of the natural diversity.

³ Rhineland-Palatinate makes up around 60% of the Rheinsteig® area.

⁴ situated in the state of Hessen making up 30% of the Rheinsteig® area

The marketing of the Rheinsteig is comparably easy because the integrated name of the famous Rhine is the thriving force. The estimated numbers of hikers on the Rheinsteig skyrocketed in the years following its opening but has decreased again in recent years (Brämer & Gruber, 2008).

4 Results

4.1.1 Burkart and Medlik, 1974

According to Burkart and Medlik (1974) there are three epochs of tourism. Following the history of the Rheinsteig and Lake District areas, it can be seen that they provide a good example of the evolution of tourism in these areas according to this model. The first epoch leads up to the early days of the railway where travel was limited, mainly for business, or official purposes. It was not until the end of this epoch during the 18th Century that domestic travel began to become more conventional. In the Lake District this can be seen with the development of spa's and seaside resorts and in the development of the summer mansions for the rich who had the time and means to travel. Within the Rheinsteig region, early development of the area began with the arrival of the rich Englishmen traveller's taking part in the Grand Tour who were then followed by the adventurous artists after the end of the Napoleon wars in 1815.

The second epoch (Burkart and Medlik, 1974) is the railways age itself and the rapid increase in domestic population and industrialisation. Within both areas, railways were introduced between 1840 and 1870 which opened up these regions to increased modern tourism in the form of local day trippers wanting to escape the confines of the towns and cities and reconnect with nature.

The third epoch (Burkart and Medlik, 1974) follows the years between the two World Wars, with the development of the car and civil aviation leading to mass tourism in both areas.

4.1.2 Plog's Model

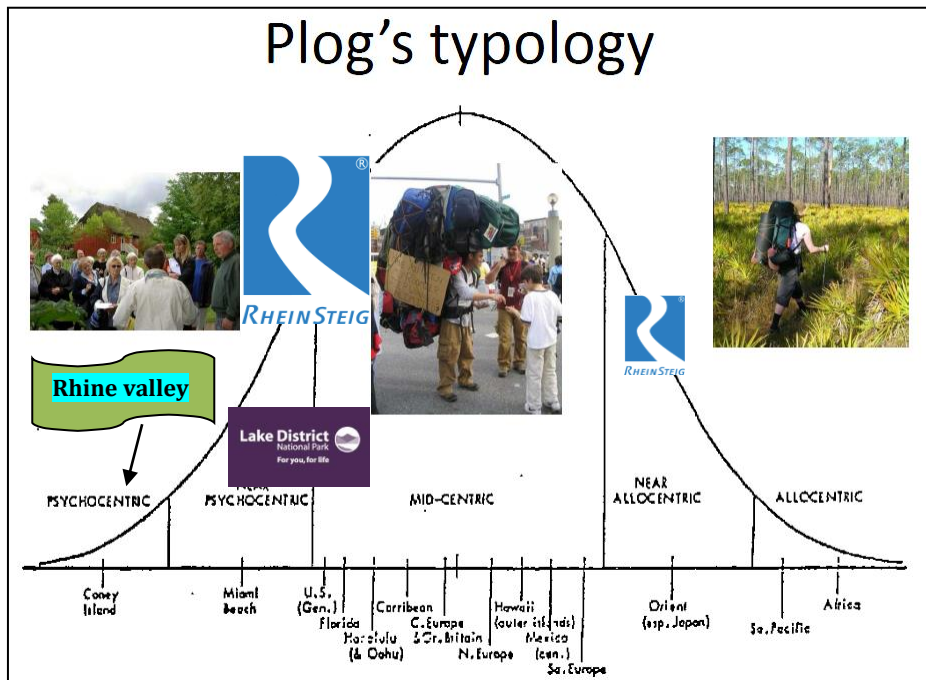


Figure 4: Placement of the two study areas on Plog's model

According to Plog's definitions, people can be defined according to two distinct groups of personalities, with most people being distributed along a normal curve from Allocentric to Psychocentric (Plog, 2001). The tourism history of the Lake District follows Plog's model accurately. Originally a small number of better off visitor's started coming to the area but along with these were academics and adventurers keen to discover new places and ideas. As the area became more popular and infrastructure developed the visitor's became more Mid-Centric. As can be seen from Figure 4, the present day tourist typology of the Lake District has been located between the Mid-Centric and Near Psychocentric areas. Using the data obtained in the Cumbria Visitor Survey 2006, visitors to the Lake District often manifest the following Plog's characteristics that are used to define the psychocentric personality;

- Prefer to go by family car. Over 85% of people coming to the Lake District arrive by car.
- According to the survey are generally older (+45)
- Prefer self-catering, camping and guest houses.
- Are likely to return to the Lake District. According to the Cumbria Survey from 2006 approximately 64% of the visitors interviewed had visited the area previously more than 2 years ago. This data shows that the Lake District has a loyal base of customers who return again and again.
- Prefer highly developed tourist spots- visitor's to the Lake District in 2006 came mainly for the countryside but also came for the shopping, restaurants and pubs etc.

The present day Lake District was not placed at the extreme of the Psychocentric area because the large majority of people visiting the Lake District usually travel in groups of two to four and generally take part in structured but individual activities rather than taking part in escorted tours (Cumbria Visitor Survey, 2006). There are also a small percentage of people who come to the Lake District to take part in more venturesome activities such as canoeing, hiking and climbing.

Visitors to the Rheinsteig area can be divided into two groups. The majority travelling in the area perfectly fit the Psychocentric type. These are the people that come with travel agencies who put their clients on boats or buses and make almost all the decisions for them.

Observing the visitors hiking on the Rheinsteig, another division can be made. A larger group does not come for several-day hiking (66%) (Brämer, 2008a). They either arrive and depart on the same day or book their accommodation ahead, possibly purchasing a customer-fit “hiking package” by one of the lodgings.

A major part of Rheinsteig travellers come from the surrounding region and preferably stay for very short periods. This traveller type is Mid-centric, recognisable with the following Plog (2001) characteristics:

They ...

- are somewhat restrictive in spending income. Many save costs by saving money for accommodation and go back the same day.
- like to be surrounded by friends or family.
- are likely to return to the destination again and again once they tried it, because it was a good choice. Another time they would do a different tour on the Rheinsteig, at the best until they have walked the whole trail.

A smaller group though comes to hike several days (Brämer, 2008c). Following characteristics of Plog’s (2001) Near-Venturers can be found on the Rheinsteig:

- Spend the time travelling active, spending most of their time exploring. Their level of education is relatively high. (Academic quota of hikers rose from 25% in the early 1990s to 40% in ‘05/’06)
- They spend their income readily (high class hotels, good dinner, wine) and more each day per capita.
- Purchase mostly authentic local arts and crafts, rather than souvenirs (Wine)
- They take relatively long trips (There is a significant trend from hiking to trekking (several days), especially among young academics. -25 % liked the idea of doing that)
- Most trekkers refuse the offers of having their luggage transported and prefer to take only essential items that they can carry on their backs.
- These trendsetters choose a new product (Rheinsteig) shortly after introduction into the marketplace rather than sticking with the old popular brands (Rheinhöhenweg)
- organize arrival and accommodation themselves, but equipped with a guide book follow the marked trail in the day, leaving it only at the end of the hike for an individual exploring of one of the towns.
- They probably don’t visit another time.

Brämer (2009c) frames it as follows:

“The new hikers become more and more individualistic. Mass tourism is not enough to find one self as a complete human being. It is only possible with a mixture of activity and enjoyment for all senses. The new hiker’s habits proof him as a wellness traveller par excellence, because only with the change of activity and relaxation a sustainable sense of wellbeing can develop, that let one find oneself.”

Applying Plog’s model to the Rheinsteig region faces important contradictions if the aim is to place the region on one spot on Plog’s curve. Considering the characteristic that Allocentric/ Venturers

would avoid traditional tourist traps and crowded tourist places and that they prefer unusual, underdeveloped destinations, a second consideration concerning the Rheinsteig area is needed. Even though a noticeable part of the Rheinsteig hiker tourist type is not the extreme Venturer that makes quick decisions easily and takes risks, but yet the mentioned facts prove him as a Near-Venturer in an area crowded with Psychocentric's. Intellectual curiosity and the urge to explore, leads to a convergence of Allocentric and Psychocentric tourist types. As Plog (2001) mentions, "venturers still seek unspoiled and unusual locations, but since travel is now so common the search for new kinds of vacation experiences and places to go has become more difficult. As a result Allocentric/ Venturer-types take trips that they might not have considered in the past." In the case of the Rheinsteig the convergence separates both tourist types during the day by a few hundred meters. While the Psychocentric's are moving along or on the Rhine, the Venturer just travels within sight on the slope of the valley. Merely at the end of the day, both tourist types come together to stay in the villages. While between 1992 and 2005 the tourism in the major destination Rudesheim am Rhein [mass tourism] experienced a decrease of 18.3% in overnight stays), less visited towns such as Eltville (+90,2%) or Geisenheim (+54,3%) could register remarkable increases of overnights (Büro für Stadt- & Regionalmarketing, 2007). This demonstrates the trend to a more individualistic travel.

Looking at the history of tourist typology in the Rheinsteig area, the artists that discovered the area in the 18th century belonged to the Venturer-type. As infrastructure was built up, the area was opened for a larger group and the major tourist type shifted further right on Plog's curve (Mid-centric). After WW1 more and more Psychocentric tourists travelled to the region. Realising a decline in the tourism industry, officials tried to attract the Venturer type again and to sell the original image, for which people came to the region in the first place (nature & romanticism). The first people who came to hike on the Rheinsteig showed these characteristics; especially academics who played an important role as trendsetters for the Rheinsteig (Brämer, 2007).

4.1.3 Butler's Model

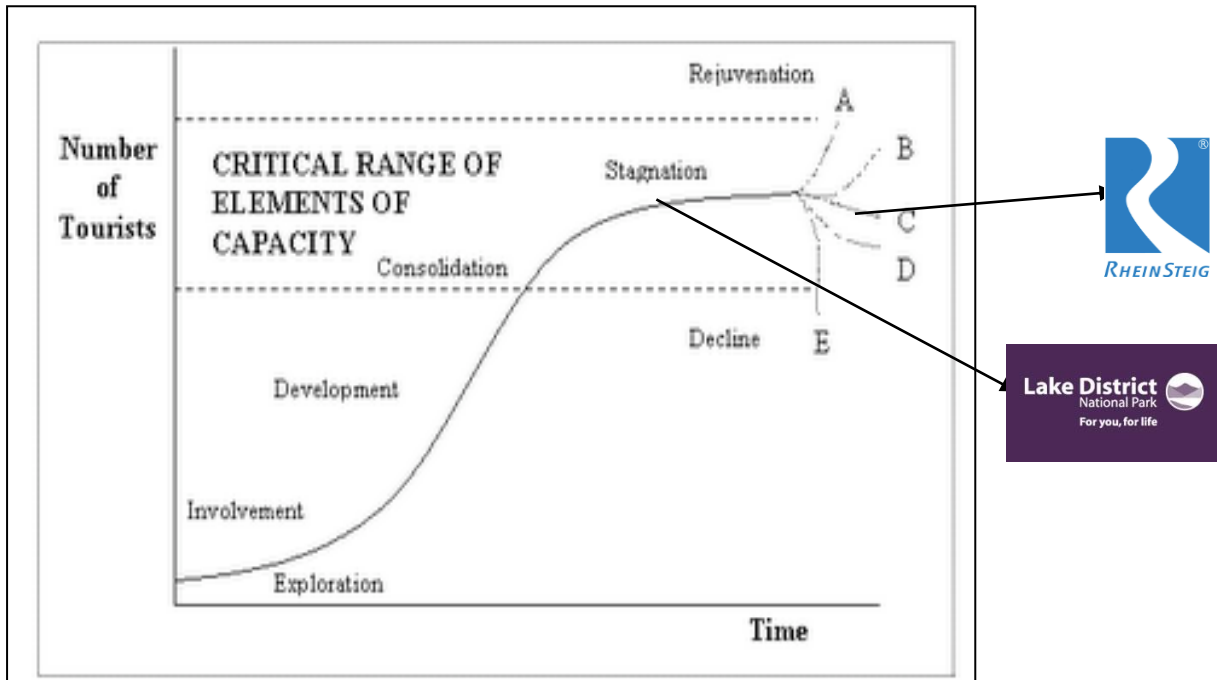


Figure 5 Location of the Rheinsteinig and Lake District on Butler's Model

Butler's Model of area evolution is based on the product cycle concept. According to Butler:

“Visitor's will come to an area in small numbers initially, restricted by lack of access, facilities and local knowledge. As facilities are provided and awareness grows, visitor numbers will increase. With marketing, information dissemination and further facility provision, the area's popularity will grow rapidly...”the rate of increase in visitor numbers will decline as levels of carrying capacity are reached” (Butler, 1980).

This history of tourism in the Lake District follows Butler's model to a point. The Lake District went through Butler's stages of Exploration and Involvement during 18th century where visitors and locals interacted and limited visitor facilities were created (e.g. the employment of local people in the summer months for summer mansions). The 19th and 20th centuries brought with them a substantial increase in number of tourists and infrastructure as the area entered Butler's development phase and became more widely known and accessible to a larger population.

The main issue for the 21st Century is whether the Lake District is at Butler's consolidation or stagnation stage? Here it becomes more difficult to define the Lake District. From 2000-2008 the number of visitors to the Lake District has been slightly increasing each year (Cumbria Tourism 2000-2008). This suggests that the Lake District has not reached its carrying capacity for visitors. Tourism related jobs have increased 6.7% since 2002 and the revenue from tourism from the Lake District National Park increased by 14,9% from 2000-2004 (State of Tourism, 2006). This data shows the Lake District to be at the consolidation phase of Butler's model. However in 2006, 64% of visitor's where making repeat visits and the type of visitor is increasingly moving towards visitors coming for weekend or day trips (Trembath & Tennstedt, 2006). Environmental factors such as hiking path degradation and water quality of the lakes is also becoming an issue for the area (Wikipedia, 2010). However within the National Park itself a number of management changes and policies such as the “Promoting sustainable tourism” report from 2005 from the Lake District National Park Authority

(LDNPA) show an increasing awareness to the environmental, economic and social issues that need to be addressed in order to maintain the future potential of the area in attracting visitors. The report recommends for the National Park and surrounding region:

“Tourism development will be permitted where this does not prejudice Cumbria’s distinctive environmental, cultural and historic character and visitors’ understanding and enjoyment of it. The emphasis should be on sustaining these attributes and adding quality. Tourism proposals in the Lake District National Park and AONBs will only be permitted where the statutory purposes of the designated areas are not contravened” (Lake District National Park, 2010).

This would indicate that the Lake District is moving towards Fennell’s cycle of evolution of sustainable tourism where the local government and population have started to respond to the growing social and ecological concerns by resisting a purely economical focus (Fennell, 1999), rather than following Butler’s stagnation or rejuvenation paths. An example of this is the restriction of further hotel building within the national park (Lake District National Park, 2010).

The Rheinsteig area has undergone the full path of Butler’s model. Exploration and involvement phases started in the 18th and early 19th century. The development phase went hand in hand with the development of the steam boat service and the railways in the middle of 19th century. After a steady growth in tourism, consolidation was reached in the 1970s, while stagnation and even decline (curve E) took place in the 1980s (Knoll, 2002). The construction of the Rheinsteig can be seen as a method of revitalise tourism in the region. Therefore the Rheinsteig region can be located on the far right side of Butler’s model – A mixture between the “B-” and the C-curve” best describes its position.

If Butlers graph is only applied to the Rheinsteig itself, the time scale is shortened from three centuries to only five years. It would be located somewhere past the stagnation phase, since the run after its opening has already decreased. New premium hiking trails have opened attracting some of the Rheinsteig visitors (Brämer, 2009b). It is also more likely that people do not return to the Rheinsteig once they have finished the whole trail.

5 Conclusions and discussion

It is important to mention that there are a number of differences between the two regions chosen. The Lake District is a national park whose borders are clear. The Rheinsteig is a long-distance hiking trail, a touristic attraction embedded in the Rhine valley. Another important difficulty in comparing the two areas was their geographic structure. While the Lake District is laminar, the Rheinsteig has a linear structure and is located in the linear structure of the Rhein valley. Furthermore the Rhein valley is one of the major transport axes of Europe with many people travelling through on their way to some other destination making transit a motive of visiting.

There are however similarities in the tourism history of the area. Both regions roughly follow the classic stages of Burkart and Medlik’s (1974) model of tourism development and evolution and also the early stages of Butler’s model. When comparing both destinations on Butler’s model, the Rheinsteig has progressed further within the model. The Rheinsteig region has gone through all of Butler’s phases. Nevertheless for the Rheinsteig area Butler’s model would need to be slightly modified or extended, since it undergoes decline (curve E) and rejuvenation (curve A) and can not be limited to one path. However, since the Rheinsteig has only been established for five year, it is not easy to define it according to Butler and to predict it’s near future.

Within the Lake District it is difficult to define its present day location on the graph as the region is changing rapidly to a more sustainable future before entering the stagnation phase of Butler's model and is more suited to the consolidation phase of Fennell's model.

Both areas show that large proportions of the visitors follow Plog's mid-centric to near psychocentric typology. However the Rheinsteig area has a significant fraction of its visitors that show near venturous traits, rediscovering an area where the majority of visitors show rather psychocentric characteristics.

Both areas are trying to broaden their appeal and increase tourism numbers by applying more sustainable methods. These include widening the tourist season into winter and by appealing to the changing type of modern tourist who prefers shorter breaks. The future of the Rheinsteig and the Lake District is dependent on the maintenance and further development of sustainable management practices in order to consolidate the recent adjustment to a more sustainable image. In order to preserve economic and socio-cultural success of tourism in the area both regions will need to appeal to the new ecological-friendly kind of tourist. If the Lake District is successful in its bid to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site, such as the main area of the Rheinsteig region, this will go a long way to helping them to achieve this goal.

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