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Title Adventure Cultures: An international comparison.

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Abstract

In previous work Lynch and Moore (2004) theorised that the current popularity of adventure in recreation and education contexts is deeply paradoxical at social, economic and technological levels. Extending this thesis, we investigated the extent to which 'adventure culture' can be considered quantitatively and qualitatively specific to particular national cultures. Content analysis of popular print media in New Zealand, Australia and the UK found significant differences between countries in the amount of adventure-related material, distinctive outdoor recreation 'signatures' for each country as well as broad similarities in three themes. Further research is needed to explore relationships between adventure in outdoor recreation and in the societies generally. We discuss the potential implications of different 'adventure cultures' for understandings of outdoor recreation and outdoor education.

Introduction

A short article in the *Beijing Review*, 7 November 2002, about deaths that have occurred in XGames events and mountaineering in China, concluded with the question: "Life or adventure, which is more important?" (Anon, 2002, p. 26). The New Zealand newspaper, the *Christchurch Press*, carried an article on April 4, 2009 headed "Kiwis chase adventure, culture ahead of cash" (NZPA, 2009, p. A15). This article reported that when highly educated New Zealanders move overseas they are more motivated by adventure and experiences of other cultures than by other factors: adventure is life.

The possibility - illustrated by these brief examples - that 'adventure' is a culturally nuanced notion has not been apparent in much of the relevant outdoor education, outdoor recreation or tourism literature (Humberstone, Brown & Richards, 2003; Lyng, 2005; Mortlock, 1984; Rinehart & Sydnor, 2003). In this paper, we report the findings of an empirical study into the ideas associated with the word 'adventure' in popular print media to explore such possible differences between and, potentially, within nations. The nations studied are New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom.

To establish the context for the study we first consider the historical emergence of adventure out of economic and social processes and its current positioning in

recreational and tourism settings. Then we review the meagre literature on adventure in the cultural discourses of the three countries and consider the ways in which cultural discourses become manifest in the representations and symbols of modern media. This leads to consideration of a number of specific research questions. We outline the methods used to explore these questions and present findings, analysis and conclusions, including implications for outdoor adventure education and for both the ‘cultural future’ of adventure and for theoretical development of the role of adventure in modern cultures.

Adventure as culture

“Cultures provide a way of seeing and a way of being seen ...”
(MacRury, 2009, p. 162).

Lynch and Moore (2004) drew on Michael Nerlich’s (1987) thesis that a medieval, feudal, European ideology of adventure was usurped in the early modern period by those with interests in creating nation-states and empires through exploration, resource capture and inter-national trade. The ideology of adventure that emerged with nation-states thus drove modern capitalism and still lies at its heart (Nerlich, 1987). Viewed in this way, the notion of adventure has specific historical and cultural origins. Its examination in current cultures should therefore provide some understanding of the ways in which it can evolve in different settings.

Nerlich’s (1987) analysis had utilised Marx’s innovative notion that the material conditions within which people live give rise to the ideas that have meaning in culture (Milner, 1991). Based on Nerlich’s (1987) analysis, Lynch and Moore (2004) proposed three different, yet overlapping, ways in which the idea of ‘adventure’ may have meaning in contemporary ways of life. First, adventure can be understood as central to modern capitalist culture wherever it occurs. The observation that adventure appears to be valorised in contemporary Western societies is consistent with it providing conceptual continuity, stability and reassurance during technical, social, political and economic changes (see, for example, Bessant, 2002). Yet, contemporary expressions of adventure are deeply and inherently paradoxical. The paradox rests on the assumption that adventure experiences are radically different from those of everyday life. There is a “conflict between the use of adventure to provide experiences supposedly ‘missing’ in contemporary societies and the extensive centrality of notions and ideologies of adventure in the history, literature and process of economic expansion of those same societies” (Lynch & Moore, 2004, p. 1).

Second, Lynch and Moore (2004) suggested that adventure is an ‘ideological tool’ of the capitalist project for promoting acceptance of rapid change. That is, adventure is promoted as ‘natural’ to humans and therefore should be embraced, even in the face of scepticism about the direction, nature and pace of change. In this, adventure is consistent with the impulse of high modernity.

Third, adventure is proposed as a vehicle of personal agency in emerging postmodern (‘risk’) societies (Beck, 1992; Van Loon, 2002). Here, individuals experience their ‘way of life’ as being unmoored from the social structures that shaped modernity (e.g.

class, race, work, education, religion) and become free to construct their own biographies (Elsrud, 2001; Giddens, 1991; Lyng, 1990, 2005; and see, for examples, Davidson, 2008; McNamee, 2007; Wheaton, 2004). This unmooring involves risk-taking and, by association, risk valorisation in order for individuals to live any life at all.

Recent research on adventure sports adds to the paradox of adventure. Sport is a modern phenomenon and, being organised in hierarchies and structured by rules, seems antithetical to postmodern culture yet sport is implicated in postmodern culture through the advent of adventure sports (Rinehart & Sydnor, 2003; Wheaton, 2004). Adventure sports are often promoted as 'extreme' yet at the same time their participants are admired for being "just ordinary people ... from all walks of life" (Bell, 2003, p. 241). In a sporting format, adventure activities provide participants with opportunities to engage with risk through performance, and through the public spectacle of performance also engage in the commercial exchanges that accompany many sporting events.

Adventure is far from being a clear and constant construct. It is utilised by diverse interests for a range of purposes so that it becomes a slippery, contested notion, disaggregated rather than a singular whole. Recognising this and seeking to resolve unhelpful dichotomies (adventure / not adventure), Varley (2006, p. 173) proposes an adventure continuum bounded at one end by an 'ideal form' of "original adventure" pursued by those dedicated to developing personal competence in specific adventure activities, and at other end of the continuum it is represented by commodified adventure which is packaged, convenient and purchased. All points on the continuum provide adventure of some sort.

Extending these conceptual analyses, we turn to an examination of the nexus of adventure, nation and popular culture.

Culture and Nation

In the current study, our interest in culture is limited to culture as a "particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group, or humanity in general" (Williams, 1983, as cited in Baldwin, Longhurst, McCracken, Ogborn & Smith, 2004, p. 4). This sense of culture has been defined as "the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action" (Geertz, 1973, p. 145).

Culture is implicated with identity – the culture into which an individual is socialised provides that individual with a distinctive identity. The existence of a national culture does not preclude sub-cultures within nations and, according to Anderson (1991), it requires the extension of an 'imagined community' across the many people who share a national geographical location without directly interacting. Maintaining a national culture requires continual re-presentation of meaningful inclusion and meaningful exclusion to produce the 'imagined community' with its limits and boundaries. Some adventure sports, for example, provide opportunities for identity construction by associating competitors or teams with their home nations (Bell, 2003). Kusz (2004) views national identity as a product of adventure sports, among other things, in the USA. In that setting, it is a deliberate media construction to project a renewed potency to white masculinity in that country in response to competition from diverse ethnicities

and sexualities. American-ness thus is reclaimed and projected through adventure sports in which participants can “cultivate (and be read as) a seemingly different, marginalised and unprivileged white masculinity” (Kusz, 2004, p. 208) in comparison to the major sports of football, baseball and basketball.

Like sport, landscape and nature are vital elements of nature cultures. They are social products of material circumstances (Baldwin et al., 2004). In outdoor sport and recreation practices, at least in some countries (Humberstone & Pedersen, 2001), differences in landscape and conceptions of nature may be associated with differences in adventure cultures. Jonas, Stewart & Larken (2003), for example, illustrate how wilderness can be intimately linked to adventurer identities in Grand Canyon (USA) river rafting. Further refinements in differences between adventure cultures may arise when sub-cultures within nations are taken into consideration.

Adventure in New Zealand

According to 2006 recreation participation data, New Zealanders were among the most physically active national populations in the Western world (Van Aalst, Kazakov & McLean, 2003; Lynch & Jonson, 2007). Higher proportions of New Zealanders participate in outdoor ‘adventure’ recreations than do Australians and UK citizens (Lynch & Jonson, 2007). Through national trade and tourism promotions, New Zealand-ness has been promoted as risk-taking, adventurous and innovative in fields well beyond, but including, outdoor recreation, outdoor education and tourism (Bentley, Page & Macky, 2007; Blumberg, 2008; Cater, 2006; Cloke & Perkins, 1998; ODENZ, n.d.). Recent research by Kane (2008, 2010) attributes New Zealand’s ‘adventure culture’ to the work of adventure ‘elites’ in New Zealand society. From this Bourdeausian analysis, Kane identifies an adventure continuum (similar to Varley’s (2006) continuum) in New Zealand, in which adventure has “... ‘existence in thought’ in the minds of both those designated as adventurers and those furthest from this position” (Kane, 2008, p. 64). The cultural work of ‘adventure elites’ thus produces adventure culture, though there may be other forces at play as well, such as popular media.

Adventure in Australia

Australian national identity has long been associated with the nation’s relationship with the UK, with rural masculinity (the ‘little Aussie battler’ and mateship cultural myths) and with landscape (Bode, 2006; Liepins, 2009; Murphy, 2008; Phillips, 1997). Adventure tourism advertisements utilise isolated outback landscapes to evoke associations with frontier, wilderness, spirituality and adventure: the stereotyped visual images of the desert represent an unknown frontier; an environment against which individuals can test their wits and muscle; where there is scope for personal self-advancement, self-discovery, heroic achievement (of survival, exploration and collection) (Waitt, 1997, p. 50).

Relatedly, in the context of this adventure ideology the indigenous population provides escape from the demands of contemporary urban society to a “primordial, timeless world ... as a mechanism for grappling with fear of the unknown” (Waitt, 1997, pp. 50-51). In addition, outback farming imagery serves to anchor a myth of physicality and physical toughness, though this may be changing (Bode, 2006; Liepins, 2009; Murphy, 2008).

In Australia, adventure is associated with contemporary pursuits in backcountry and urban spaces, in traditional outdoor recreations and recently developed ones, and with media representations of all these pursuits:

sports such as mountaineering, canyoning, bouldering, free-style motorcross, tow-in surfing, snow boarding and street luge, amongst others, now appear in feature movies and music film clips, and in television commercials for soft drinks, sandals and sunglasses ... these once marginalised sports now occupy key places in the public domain (Palmer, 2004, p. 55).

Adventure in the UK

Our use of ‘nation’ in the UK context needs some explication because it is complicated by there being four national entities involved in the union. Each nation is represented independently in some contexts (such as sporting events) and within the collective in other contexts. For practical reasons arising from the nature of the data sources consulted, we treat the union as a whole, though we acknowledge the distinctive cultures that exist within it and the possibility for distinctive adventure cultures as a result.

In the UK there has long been an association of nature with outdoor pastimes, especially for wealthy men (Humberstone & Pedersen, 2001), and of Scottish natural landscapes with adventure (Page, Steele & Connell, 2006). Popular cultural products are now routinely imbued with adventure ideology: some cuisine choices (White & Kokotsaki, 2004) and wine-buying practices (Ritchie, 2009) have been associated with adventurousness. However, risk limitation has become central to some, but not all, adventure education activities (Humberstone, 2009; Woollven, Allison and Higgins, 2007).

In the outdoor recreation sector, Lewis (2004) identified two distinct rockclimbing cultures in the UK – sport climbing and adventure climbing. Lewis argues against Rojek’s (1995) thesis of postmodern leisure comprising superficiality and action without commitment by illustrating how adventure climbing, unlike sport climbing, integrates the negotiation of risk with the act of climbing itself. In both forms of climbing, participants utilise the idea of adventure to make sense of their activity, yet the processes of engaging with risk and uncertainty are different.

The role of media in transmitting cultural contexts such as adventure is complex. We now address the links between cultures, media and, specifically, advertising in order to provide a conceptual and methodological opening to explore adventure cultures empirically.

Popular media, advertising and culture

Popular media include mass produced books, newspapers and magazines as well as radio, film, television and internet-based fora. The technological innovations that made popular media possible introduced cultural innovations as well - industrialised production and mass consumption of cultural artefacts. Postmodern theory holds that “mass media and popular culture are the most important and powerful institutions” in society and that they “control and shape all other types of social relationships” (Strinati, 2004, p. 205). Advertisements, for example, once communicated information about products in order to convince us to buy them. Now, though, while still primarily operating as motivators to purchase particular types of products, advertisements “are more concerned with the cultural representations of the advert than any qualities the product advertised may have in the outside world, a trend in keeping with the supposed collapse of ‘reality’ into popular media culture” (Strinati, 2004, p. 215).

Advertising and adventure as commodity

Advertising resides in, and creates, a space for buyers and sellers to meet and communicate. It represents the world and suggests how we might/should live in it, thus it has a role in both normalising and mediating commercial transactions (MacRury, 2009). The work of advertising is to transform “objects into ideas” (MacRury, 2009, p. 46) that make sense to consumers. As commodities, objects must become touchstones for social, cultural, moral and political desires as well as fulfil practical needs. In this framework, adventure advertisements transform adventure goods into ideas that resonate with the practical and cultural needs of consumers. Analysis of adventure advertisements should, then, illuminate the ways in which adventure makes cultural sense to consumers.

The ideas associated with commodities have been called ‘commodity-signs’.

Commodity-signs are the imagery that attaches to products and have real social value (Goldman, 1992). In advertising, commodity-signs such as ‘authenticity’ and ‘freedom’ are often communicated through images (MacRury, 2009). Conspicuous possession of adventure-oriented products and consumption of adventure experiences provide individuals with the means of conveying contemporary personae (Becker, 2003; Holyfield, 1999). Images of adventure tourism have been used in recent years for place-marketing by tourism organisations, local and national public agencies. Page et al. (2006, p. 54) report, for example, that the “dominant imagery of Scotland that is recognised globally is that of landscape” and this imagery has been constructed to evoke perceptions of a “wild environment, a place of adventure”.

Adventure commodities and self-image

Like adventure tourism and, possibly, adventure recreation and adventure education, adventure practices appear to be widely accepted in commodity forms. Consumers do not need to invest in long periods of skill development, specialised equipment and the

social relationships that attend groups of people with similar sets of expertise; rather, short-duration, high intensity activities can be purchased instead (Buckley, 2003). Further, there are close associations between commercial outdoor practices and other commodity industries, such as the clothing and fashion industries:

Particular clothing companies use sponsored athletes and specialist lifestyle entertainment media to sell clothing and accessories at both high volume and a high mark-up to non-sporting, but fashion-conscious urban consumers ... (Buckley, 2003, p. 126).

Through these commodities, individuals can project particular images of themselves.

Exploding the bounds of what is considered normal, a postmodern view asserts that individuals consume various experiences in an on-going process of identity construction and re-construction (Lyng, 2005). Further, advertising encourages individuals to use their bodies in particular ways. Through physical exercise, the body is either disciplined into performance at pre-determined levels times and forms, utilised as a mirroring device to project a particular image, utilised as a tool of domination, or utilised as a tool of communication (Frank, 1991; Phillips, 2005). The association of surfing and surfing professionals with the clothing industry is well-developed, and some other – but not all - outdoor activities (e.g., snowboarding, rockclimbing) are also used to promote and sell urban street-wear and other commodities that project adventurous self-image. As Buckley (2003) notes, from around the turn of the twenty-first century adventure became fashionable and closely linked with a wide range of lifestyle products and activities.

Adventure advertisements and culture

Advertisements “commodify meaning” (Goldman, 1992, preface) yet at the same time advertising “aims to de-commodify, to return to the objects some element/s of human social, personal, political meaning” (MacRury, 2009, p. 116). Activities that retain some quality or qualities that have meaning in a specific culture are not fully commoditised – qualities such as “tradition, intimacy, locality, attractiveness, elegance, belonging, naturalness, authenticity and so on” (MacRury, 2009, p. 113). They have meaning in relation to particular social and cultural relationships.

In adventure advertisements, then, lies the potential for meanings relevant to particular cultures. That is, even though most people ignore or only superficially register most advertising (MacRury, 2009), they still draw meaning from it and it follows that if there are distinctive adventure cultures, the meanings drawn from adventure advertisements will differ from culture to culture.

Adventure culture in magazine advertising

Both Nerlich’s argument that adventure ideology underlies modern capitalism and the postmodern view of consumption as the driver of social and cultural change (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991; Nerlich, 1984, 1987, 1997; Strinati, 2004; Taylor, 1998)

point to adventure ideology being expressed in major cultural media such as television, radio (Giddens, 1991) and print media. To investigate possible distinctive forms of adventure culture, we focused on print media because it represents an enduring and stable record, particularly of advertising copy. This focus limits the generalisability of the findings but if we are correct that the adventure focus is widespread – because it is a cultural form – it should be present in all forms of media.

We gathered data from selected New Zealand, Australian and UK magazines over a one-year period. These countries were selected because, as historically- and culturally-related nations, they represent a particularly good comparison for investigating similarities and differences in one aspect of culture: adventure. The historical and cultural ties between these three nations also facilitated access to empirical data because there is a shared language, publications from each nation were relatively accessible and we had some familiarity with their media. The specific research questions we address are:

- To what extent does the word ‘adventure’ feature in magazine advertisements?
- What, if any, differences are there between nations in frequencies of the appearance of the word ‘adventure’ in advertisements?
- Is the word ‘adventure’ associated with particular types of publication?
- What other words (and therefore ideas) are associated with the word ‘adventure’ in the advertisements?
- What can the magazine advertisements tell us about the idea of adventure in contemporary popular culture, in the three nations?

Methods

Given our original focus on the New Zealand context, we extended our analysis, in this study, to nations culturally aligned with New Zealand, historically as well as contemporarily, for the reasons just discussed.

Decisions regarding which magazines to analyse were complicated by the range of magazine types on the market (e.g., women’s, men’s, travel, gardening, motoring, sport, IT, teen, etc). We chose to focus on publically available (that is, not membership-only) current affairs (or general interest) magazines and outdoor recreation magazines. This decision was partly taken for feasibility reasons (publicly available magazines being more readily obtainable) and for comparability (comparing membership organisations’ publications across nations would be fraught with greater methodological difficulty). Outdoor-related magazines were included because of the apparent association between these activities and adventure.

Our decision to analyse publically available magazines precludes the possibility that adventure culture may be better represented by membership-only magazines (some of which may have higher circulations than their purely commercial equivalents¹). However, the focus of this study is ‘national’ cultures and the logic of its thesis is that publicly available magazines represent culture at national level, whereas membership-only magazines are more representative of sub-cultures within a nation. Uncertainty on this point is a limitation to the generalizability of the findings.

The outdoor recreation magazine market is differentiated by recreation type (e.g. tramping/hiking/walking, climbing, sailing, biking, etc). To avoid this specificity, we selected magazines of broad interest to outdoor recreationists. These we refer to as general outdoor recreation magazines (or 'outdoor' magazines). Current affairs/general interest magazines were included to gauge the degree to which adventure ideology is embedded in the culture. They carry items of interest for a wide cross-section of the population, including articles, news, advertisements, reviews, popular cultural products, productions and events and other information about contemporary life. Magazines were selected on the basis of greatest circulation and distribution across different audiences as reported in the relevant print media industry circulation statistics (New Zealand and Australian magazine circulation and readership data (n.d.); ABC Results July – Dec 2005 (2005)).

We also sought spread across different readerships by selecting two magazines in each category, in each country. Our attempts to distinguish between publications specific to Scotland, Wales and England were unsuccessful so, for pragmatic reasons, we amalgamated these countries into a 'UK culture'.

The magazines in the analysis were:

New Zealand: *NZ Adventure, Wilderness, North and South, NZ Listener*

UK: *Country Walking, TGO (The Great Outdoors); Private Eye, The Week.* (The latter was only accessible for the first three months of analysis, after which it was replaced by the second highest circulation general interest UK magazine, *The Spectator.*)

Australia: *Wild, Outdoor, The Bulletin* (this was the only national general interest magazine identified for Australia, so we doubled the sampling from it to match the sampling from NZ and UK magazines.).

We analysed one issue of each magazine bi-monthly – in February, April, June, August, October and December of 2006. Where magazines were published quarterly (*Wild*), we included all issues for the year. Bound- or stapled-in supplements were analysed but loose supplements were excluded.

For practicality and consistency, we distinguished sponsorship from advertising so that where a sponsor's logo appeared on magazine pages it was not included in the data as advertising material. Similarly, information on the magazine covers that 'advertised' magazine content, and extended equipment reviews and book reviews could be considered forms of advertising, but we did not treat them as such.

Using the word 'adventure' as a filter when scanning advertisements provided a clear basis for identifying relevant data. Only advertisements including the word 'adventure' (anywhere) were included in the data set. The decision to analyse only these advertisements and to analyse only the text of those advertisements increases the validity of the data but inevitably limits the potential 'adventure' content of the advertisements in the magazines sampled.

Some magazines contain pages of small adverts, often the same ones, on the back pages of every issue. In practical terms, gathering data from these each issue would not add significantly to the results. Following our rationale that if adventure is a major 'commodity-sign' it will be evident in major advertisements, we analysed these advertisements only once, in the February issue of each magazine. Thereafter we set aside whole pages containing more than 6 advertisements (and no other content). This

decision limits the comprehensiveness of our study but not, we think, the overall pattern of results.

Using an agreed and tested proforma with standardised categories for capturing data, each magazine was searched independently by two people. Data were entered into Filemaker Pro 8 database. Before analysis, the database was ‘cleaned’ for inconsistencies in spelling and categorisation (such as date, publication names, ‘yes’ or ‘y’). Records found by more than one researcher were amalgamated with all information retained.

Quantitative data were calculated to enable comparison between magazines and countries. A standard ruler was used to measure advertisements to the nearest millimetre. The text of the advertisements was analysed thematically.

Inevitably, in an extended data collection by multiple researchers, anomalies will arise. Inadvertently, data from *Listener* for February 2006 was drawn from the wrong issue. To handle this, we used the correct magazine measurements, including total advertisement counts, and the adventure advertisement information from the wrong issue. Further, a major workplace disruption during the course of the data gathering exercise compromised access to some sources, especially the UK material. As a result, the October and December issues of *Private Eye* and *The Week* were analysed in 2009 from the then oldest available (2008) issues. For both magazines, the formats, size and overall tone and style of the publications had not changed since 2006 and the adventure advertisement content was similar. While these anomalies limit the purity of our data, the overall integrity of the study was not harmed.

Only the data found by all three researchers (called the ‘final set’) is included in the analysis. The fact that only 60% of the data found are included in the ‘final set’ limits the generalizability of the results.

Findings: Adventure in Three Nations

The ‘final set’ of data comprises 270 advertisements. As Table 1 shows, we found far more adventure advertisements in outdoor magazines than in ‘general’ magazines, in all three countries.

The number and total area of adventure advertisements in outdoor magazines differs significantly from country to country. The Australian outdoor magazines contained, on average, the highest number and greatest area of adventure advertisements and the UK outdoor magazines contained by far the lowest number and least area of adventure advertisements.

In New Zealand and Australian outdoor magazines, the proportions of adventure advertisements are similar and far greater than in UK outdoor magazines. Australian outdoor magazines have a higher number of adventure advertisements but represent a similar percentage to those found in New Zealand outdoor magazines. Further, in the New Zealand outdoor magazines the proportion of the area covered by adventure advertisements is slightly greater than that in the Australian magazines.

Each of the researchers found adventure advertisements in general magazines from all three countries, but the ‘final set’ only contains those found in New Zealand magazines. The New Zealand general magazines had the largest average (total) area

of all the general magazines (70207.5 sq cm compared to 47970 sq cm for Australia and 28290.5 sq cm for UK) and this may explain the higher number of adventure advertisements found in them.

We used a weighting to measure the overall ‘presence’ of adventure advertisements in the magazines. The weighting was calculated by multiplying the proportional number by the proportional area of advertisements made up by the ‘adventure’ ads. By this measure, there is a slightly greater presence of adventure advertisements in New Zealand outdoor magazines than in Australian outdoor magazines, and there is a higher presence of adventure advertisements in New Zealand and Australian outdoor magazines than in UK outdoor magazines.

Table 1: Comparison of averages, all magazine types.

Magazine type	Average # adventure ads	Average % total ads made up by adventure ads	Average area adventure ads (sq cm)	Average % of total magazine area made up by adventure ads	Weighted measure of ‘presence’ of adventure ads’
NZ outdoor	7.75	18.6	3091.9	21.3	449.9
NZ general	0.25	0.9	130.3	1.2	4.7
Australia outdoor	14.0	18.6	5430.3	20.3	409.8
Australia general	0	0	0	0	0
UK outdoor	3.0	3.8	1271.7	5.3	27.6
UK general	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2 contains the relevant data for each *individual* outdoor magazine and shows differences between magazines from the same country. For the New Zealand outdoor magazines, the average number of advertisements per magazine title is fairly similar but the proportion of advertisements is quite different. Ironically, adventure advertisements make up a larger proportion of the total number and area of advertisements in *Wilderness* magazine than they do in *Adventure* magazine. For the UK outdoor magazines, *TGO* outstrips *Country Walking* on every measure. The differences between the two Australian outdoor magazines are less pronounced.

Table 2: Comparison of averages, outdoor magazines.

Magazine	Average # adventure ads	Average % total ads made up by adventure ads	Average area adventure ads (sq cm)	Average % of total magazine area made up by adventure ads	Weighted measure of 'presence' of adventure ads'
NZ					
<i>Wilderness</i>	8.5	24.9	2816.4	24.7	650.5
<i>Adventure</i>	7	12.4	3367.4	17.8	249.3
Australia					
<i>Outdoor</i>	13	17	6065.1	20.2	386.7
<i>Wild</i>	15	20.1	4795.5	20.4	432.9
UK					
<i>Country Walking</i>	1.1	2.0	722.7	3.8	10.2
<i>TGO</i>	5	4.7	1821.4	6.9	45.0

Like the New Zealand outdoor magazines, one of the New Zealand general magazines carries more adventure content than the other: as Table 3 shows, *New Zealand Listener*, carries a higher number, larger area and higher proportion of adventure adverts.

Table 3: Comparison of averages, New Zealand general magazines.

Magazine	Average # adventure ads	Average % total ads made up by adventure ads	Average area adventure ads	Average % of total magazine area made up by adventure ads	Weighted measure of 'presence' of adventure ads'
<i>NZ Listener</i>	0.3	1.2	150	1.8	7.6
<i>North and South</i>	0.1	0.5	110.6	0.5	1.86

To delve into the similarities and differences identified so far, we analysed the adventure advertisements' text content qualitatively by assigning descriptors to the advertisements. The descriptors describe eight major types of things being advertised: products (with subcategories of vehicle, book/film/TV), event/competition and outdoor activity, travel and accommodation, education/training, service, and miscellaneous. More than one descriptor could apply to any one advertisement. (See Table 4.)

The ‘event, competition and outdoor activity’ descriptor was applied to text relating to participation in some form of outdoor-related activity, such as multisport competitions, fund-raising treks, outdoor recreation exhibitions, or any outdoor recreation (hill walking, kayaking, climbing, etc.). The ‘travel’ descriptor was applied to tourism activities and the ‘service’ descriptor was applied to services such as guiding (climbers, walkers), rental kayaks and informational websites.

Table 4: Frequency of descriptors of advertisements, by country and magazine.

		Descriptor						Total [^]
		Products and retailers*	Activity**	Travel***	Education and training	Services	Misc.	
New Zealand								
Outdoor	<i>Adventure</i>	23	10	13	4	3	0	53
	<i>Wilderness</i>	33	7	5	6	4	1	56
General	<i>Listener</i>	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
	<i>North and South</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Australia								
Outdoor	<i>Outdoor</i>	47	14	19	10	1	1	92
	<i>Wild</i>	43	7	12	1	3	1	67
UK								
Outdoor	<i>TGO</i>	17	2	10	0	2	0	31
	<i>Country Walking</i>	5	1	1	0	0	1	8
Totals		168	43	61	21	13	4	310
Percentages		54.2%	13.9%	19.7%	6.7%	4.2%	1.3%	

*Includes sub-categories of vehicle, book, film, TV.

** Includes events, competitions and trips.

*** Includes accommodation.

[^] Totals do not necessarily match the total number of advertisements.

As Table 4 shows, over half the advertisements are for products. Nearly 20% are for travel, and almost 14% are for events, competitions or outdoor activities. Education and training courses, services such as guiding, rentals and information portals make up nearly 11% and there are a few miscellaneous items. New Zealand’s *Wilderness* and the UK’s *Country Walking* magazines appear to carry different mixes of advertisements to the other outdoor magazines sampled. In *Wilderness*, there are fewer travel advertisements than outdoor activity, event or competition advertisements. In *Country Walking*, product is the only descriptor that applied to more than one advertisement (but this may be due to the very small amount of data for this magazine).

Notably, not one of the three advertisements in the general magazines involved advertising products. There are too few data from these magazines to draw any firm conclusions.

Product advertisements make up over half of all adventure adverts in the final data set and so are worthy of closer examination (see Table 5). There were seven advertisements for retail outlets only (another one advertised retailer plus products).

These were included in the products descriptor because retailers trade in products. Putting them aside, the rest of the product advertisements were made up of advertisements for equipment (such as camping gear, drink bottles, sunglasses, packs, dry bags), clothing, footwear, food, navigation tools, monitoring tools (including weather, altitude, time, physical performance monitoring), guidebooks, vehicles and the magazines themselves. Some advertisements advertised more than one category of product.

Table 5: Proportion of product advertisements by product type and country.

	Product									Totals
	Equip	Clothing	Monitor	Navig	Footwear	Food	Mag	Book	Vehicle	
New Zealand	45%	16%	2%	7%	2%	13%	13%	0	2%	100%
Australia	45%	20%	11%	13%	6%	4%	1%	0	0	100%
UK	33%	17%	0	17%	17%	0	6%	10%	0	100%

Percentages are rounded to nearest whole number.

There are marked similarities and differences between countries in products advertised. In all three countries, equipment advertisements are far more common than any other type of product advertisement. Clothing is the second most common type of product advertisement. In all three countries there are few advertisements for vehicles. The differences mark each country individually. Australian magazines carry a much higher proportion of advertisements for monitoring tools than the magazines from the other two countries. The New Zealand magazines carry higher proportions of advertisements for food and for the magazine itself. In the UK magazines, unlike those in the other countries, there are as many advertisements for footwear and navigation tools as there are for clothing, and a significant proportion of the advertisements (10%) are for books.

The imagery used in the product advertisements gives meaning to the products and clues about adventure ‘cultures’. An advertisement for Petzl products (*Wild*, April-June 2006, p. 82), for example, reads “Preparing for adventure takes planning, that’s why you need a free Petzl catalogue”. Here, a meaning associated with adventure is that it is complicated or difficult and so needs preparation and planning. In *TGO* (December 2006, p. 52), an advertisement for Craghopper clothing associates adventure with (among other things) limited opportunity and ubiquity: “be an adventurer and make the most of it while you still can”, “no matter where you are”. An advert for Macpac equipment (*Adventure*, February-March 2006, inside front cover) states: “New Zealand’s choice for adventure, mate ... From the world’s adventure playground”. By associating adventure with New Zealand (the global ‘playground’), this advertisement invokes national identity and implies that adventure has particular characteristics, such as those found in New Zealanders, perhaps particularly a jocular informality signalled in the contemporary vernacular, ‘choice’ and ‘mate’.

Putting aside words for products (e.g., boots, headlamp, sleeping bag, altimeter) and words that describe product functions only (e.g. folding (hammock); expandable memory; hand-held; waterproof), allows a focus on the imagery associated with the idea of adventure in the magazine advertisements. Analysis of text-imagery entailed thematically coding words and phrases into clusters. Clusters arose from subjective interpretation of the words in the context of their use in the advertisements and in the context of the coders' perspective². Clustering generated themes; 'key themes' are those that were clearly more common than others.

The nine key themes that emerged from the analysis were sorted by country, resulting in the rank orders reported in Table 6, below. (The minor ranks applied to more than one theme are not shown.)

On our reading of the descriptors, then, adventure is associated with 'extreme-ness' in all three countries, especially in Australia. Performance is a key theme in only New Zealand and Australia, not in the UK. Risk is the dominant theme in the UK and does not appear at all in the key themes for New Zealand and Australia (in fact it is amongst the lowest ranked themes for those two countries.) For all three countries, adventure is associated with specialisation – in knowledge, skills, equipment, clothing. This theme is most pronounced in the UK magazines. Toughness is the sixth ranked theme in the Australian data, but does not appear in either the New Zealand or UK data.

Extreme performance using specialised equipment, skills and knowledge, and toughness, in risk situations is consistent with many accounts of adventure activity, but other themes are also apparent in the magazine advertisements. These are comfort, inclusion, and 'not exclusive'. Inclusion refers to human social relationships. 'Not exclusive' refers to geographical, temporal and economic factors. Interestingly, inclusion is a key theme in the UK and New Zealand advertisements but not in the Australian ones, whereas 'not exclusive' ranks high in the Australian and New Zealand, but not the UK, adverts. Only in the New Zealand data does 'control' feature as a key theme.

Table 6: Rank order of key themes, by country.

	Key themes		
Rank	Australian data	New Zealand data	UK data
1	Extreme	Performance	Risk
2	Performance	Extreme	Specialist
3	Specialist	Not exclusive	Extreme
4	Comfort	Specialist	Inclusion
5	Not exclusive	Comfort	
6	Tough	Inclusive	
7		Control	

Discussion

The outdoor magazines from each of the three countries studied carried far more 'adventure' adverts than did the general magazines. This finding underlines the close association of adventure with outdoor physical activity compared with general life in these countries. While this may be unsurprising, there is no particular reason why outdoor activities should be framed as 'adventure' rather than something else (for example, as social gatherings). Nor is there any reason why other human endeavours should not be framed as primary sites for adventure (e.g., commerce, education, etc.). One possible explanation for this could be that, as Nerlich (1987) argued, adventure was originally developed within the context of the emerging merchant/trading class for whom travel to unknown places, potentially facing unknown challenges, represents the 'archetypal' form of adventure in Western societies. The modern 'outdoor' focus of adventure, therefore, may simply leverage off the dominant 'archetypal' form to enable the most efficient commodification process. A related but distinct possibility, is that, because of the archetypal notion of adventure being associated with physical travel and exertions, adventure in other settings has been subtly transformed – and re-named – to suit other settings. One potential example of such a transformation would be the use of words such as 'innovation', 'entrepreneurship' in business, 'green fields' projects in technology and 'blue skies' research.

One of the most striking findings in this study is the marked difference between the presence of adventure advertisements in UK outdoor magazines compared to New Zealand and Australian outdoor magazines. Overall, approximately 20% of the advertisements in the New Zealand and Australian outdoor magazines in the study comprised 'adventure' ads, compared with approximately 4% in the UK outdoor magazines, yet the UK magazines had higher average total area (77485.8 sq cm compared to 62577.9 sq cm for Australia and 55042.8 sq cm for New Zealand). One explanation for this is that in the UK, outdoor recreation is less commodified than in Australia and New Zealand, though it is not clear why this should be so. There is, however, a possible historical explanation for this discrepancy. Australia and New Zealand – as modern nation-states – began as British colonies. The 'pioneering' context may well more easily support the commodification of adventure (as opposed to other values). By contrast, the United Kingdom was, itself, the stable hub at the centre of the colonial enterprise. Values that underpinned that role – at 'home' – may well have been less adventurous and more conservative and cautious.

Another, methodological, explanation is that there is a selection effect at play; that is, the UK outdoor magazines selected for the study are differentiated in the market in relation to more adventure-oriented magazines. However, if this is the case, adventure still remains less evident in outdoor recreation in the UK because the more adventure-oriented magazines (if they exist) have lower circulation – and therefore less cultural cache – than those selected for this study.

Overall, then, the results of this study suggest that both New Zealand and Australia have more pronounced adventure cultures than the UK. If, in addition to historical differences between the societies, landscape and nature are important elements in national cultures (Baldwin et al., 2004) there may be a connection between landscape/nature and adventure in New Zealand and Australia that is not available in the UK. Future analysis of other magazine content (and other media) may provide

useful insights into relationships between colonial experiences and production of national adventure narratives.

If general magazines are a good indication of the projection of adventure culture in a society as a whole, these results suggest that New Zealand has a stronger adventure culture than Australia and the UK. However, magazine selection is likely to have influenced this result. Whereas the outdoor magazines were similar in type of content, the general magazines differed markedly across the three nations. The New Zealand magazines focused on current affairs and cultural events, largely within the nation. The Australian magazine carried national and international current affairs and financial news in the main. The two UK magazines offered political satire (*Private Eye*) and commentary on national and international political affairs (*The Week*). In each case, the magazines had the two highest circulations in their respective nations, so there was no obvious reason, we thought, why the magazines selected would not provide a reasonable gauge of the respective nation's cultures. However, we found very few data and this, along with the problems in comparability, means that results from these sources cannot be considered conclusive. Other media may provide more fruitful comparison.

The differences noted between outdoor magazines within the UK and New Zealand suggest that 'adventure' markets in these two countries may be more differentiated than in Australia. That is, in order to survive, the magazines must target different audiences. We cannot say *how* the markets in each country are different but we view the differences between magazine data as a sign of different adventure cultures. In the UK, for example, both *TGO* and *Country Walking* use adventure adverts (among other content) to draw readership. In *TGO* there is a much stronger 'presence' of adventure. It follows that its readership has a greater interest in adventure, or a particular form (culture) of adventure.

Similarly, the New Zealand general magazines can be differentiated by adventure advertisement content. The *NZ Listener*, which carries weekly TV and radio schedules, arts and book reviews as well as general interest articles carries three times as many adventure advertisements as does *North and South*. Here again, the data point to *NZ Listener* readers having a greater affinity with the idea of adventure, although there is only a small amount of data so we cannot be too certain of this claim. A competing explanation is that one of the magazines in each case simply carries many more adverts than the other. In New Zealand, for example, *Adventure* magazine carries more adverts in total than *Wilderness* and so the average proportion of area comprising adventure adverts is lower even though the average area of adventure advertisements is higher. Arguably, if the advertising mix is consistent throughout, carrying a greater number of advertisements should not alter the proportional data. Our argument is that, following MacRury (2009) the word 'adventure' is a tool used by advertisers to bind particular qualities to the product being advertised and that the advertisers in *Adventure* deliberately choose to use it or not. Given the name of the magazine itself, it is possible that some advertisers consider the idea of adventure to be implicated in all its advertising content; this possibility is yet to be explored. On balance, the data from this study indicate the presence of different adventure markets, signalling the possibility of different adventure cultures within New Zealand and within the UK.

The qualitative data indicate that adventure associated with outdoor recreation is highly commodified. This is consistent with Nerlich (1987) the risk society thesis (Beck, 1992) and Buckley's (2003) analysis of adventure tourism. Commodification is to be expected when advertisements are used as a source of data; however, it is the qualities associated with the advertisements that are of interest. Adventure is available in the market place, particularly through the purchase of specialised commodity-signs such as sunglasses, drink bottles, footwear, raincoats, watches and compasses (Goldman, 1992). That clothing and equipment – that is, personal rather than shared possessions - are major categories of products advertised is consistent with the idea that adventure is a means by which individuals can construct meaning in their lives and identity in the world (Lyng, 2005). The focus on *specialised* equipment and clothing suggests that adventure is available only to those who have access to these particular products.

The relative prominence of monitoring tools in the Australian advertisements suggests that performance and control over performance is more important in Australian 'adventure' action than it is in New Zealand and UK 'adventure' action. This distinguishes Australian 'adventure' as a particular cultural form. Measured, monitored, controlled adventure contrasts with descriptions of edgework as "the seductive, intoxicating tension between artistry and abandon ... the dialectic of chaos and control ... [the] 'strange music' that plays when you stretch your luck, but stretch it just right" (Ferrell, 2005, p. 78). In New Zealand, performance is controlled, but not obviously through use of new technologies. In both New Zealand and Australia, there may be parallels between the sporting cultures of those nations and performance in the outdoors and this warrants further exploration.

Finally, the three countries are distinguished by key themes: 'comfort' in New Zealand and Australia, 'toughness' in Australia only, and 'inclusiveness' in New Zealand and UK only. The relationships between these themes, and between them and others is not clear and need further study.

Notwithstanding the above, it is possible that factors other than culture explain the prominence of some themes over others in the magazine 'adventure' advertisements. Affordability of products in one nation, for example, may influence the number and size of advertisements for those products. Similarly, the cost of advertising in some magazines (especially purely commercial magazines) may also influence the extent to which they carry advertisements for 'adventure' products, services and activities. These speculations await further research.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that there are meanings associated with adventure that are shared by all three countries and meanings that are nation-specific. Shared meanings are 'extreme' physical activities using specialised gear. In New Zealand and Australia, performance is important and it is not limited to particular outdoor practices, places or times. In the UK, extreme specialised outdoor activity is coupled with risk, whereas in New Zealand and Australia it is coupled with performance. This suggests that in the latter two countries there is a stronger association between adventure and the creative construction of 'any life at all' than in the UK.

What does all this mean for outdoor adventure education and outdoor recreation?

Through advertising in outdoor magazines at least, the associations drawn between the idea of adventure and adventure practices work to shape the field in the public

imagination and therefore shape expectations of what adventure practices, including outdoor adventure education, offer. Outdoor activities are highly commodified, at least in New Zealand and Australia. In those countries, if not others, outdoor adventure practices may work to bind participants to the technologies and consumption practices that the practices purport to avoid. However, consumption, technological tools and risk-taking may be the means by which individuals create meaningful lives for themselves (Lyng, 2005) in late modern societies. In educational settings, then, it is useful to ask what cultural work is done by the use of the word 'adventure'. Intra- and intercultural investigations of how individual outdoor education participants make sense of, and make use of, the idea of adventure would be useful follow-up studies.

Further, meanings associated with the outdoors are not necessarily straightforward; there may be differences within and between nations. Where there are differences, it follows that clear communication about adventure and adventure practices across cultures must address the differences. Adventure in one culture or nation is not necessarily the same as adventure in another culture or nation. Extending from this point, in a globalised world, where national populations are becoming more heterogeneous, it is increasingly likely that within outdoor adventure education participant groups there are multiple meanings associated with the outdoors and with the idea of adventure. Expectations of how participants experience outdoor adventure programmes, and the outcomes they accrue from them, may need to be adjusted as a result. There is both scope and rationale for research on meanings ascribed to adventure by people who identify with different cultural groups.

Finally, a word on method is required. This study analysed only adventure texts. It is possible for 'adventure' to be interpreted from advertising images, from words or word combinations that do not include the word 'adventure', from magazine material other than advertisements and from media sources other than magazines. Future studies could take a wider approach.

Conclusions.

The methodological limitations already noted preclude definitive conclusions about adventure cultures in the nations studied. However, tentative conclusions are tenable. As far as can be determined from a study of this nature, the three countries studied appear to have distinct adventure cultures. New Zealand may have a more pronounced adventure culture than Australia or the UK.

New Zealand's adventure culture emphasises extreme performance in any environment, any time and for anyone. Performance is controlled, though not necessarily by using technological aids and it is made possible and more comfortable using specialised equipment.

Australian adventure culture is similar to that of New Zealand, but control is closely associated with use of monitoring technologies. Toughness is a marker of adventure in Australia and (perhaps therefore) adventure is not necessarily for everyone.

By contrast, in the UK, adventure culture is much less pronounced, more aligned to risk in a negative sense, available to everyone but not anywhere or any time. Adventure in the UK appears to be a more tightly constrained idea than it is in NZ or Australia.

In all three countries, adventure is associated with outdoor recreation and within these national outdoor recreation fields there may be more than one adventure culture. This study shows that adventure is not a straight-forward concept. It is manifest in particular cultures in particular ways. Globalised references to adventure must, therefore, be supported by evidence for globalised adventure meanings or replaced with more culturally nuanced references.

At the theoretical level, it remains an issue for future research as to why outdoor activities may have been particularly prone to processes that have commodified the notion of adventure. If Nerlich's (1987) analysis is correct, we would expect to see adventure feature across a range of socially dominant or prominent activities. One particular area that could be used to test this possibility is the area of information and communication technologies. 'Surfing the web' may be a dated notion but that descriptor entails at least some aspect of adventure, precariousness and the open process of discovery.

Notes.

1. We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that some UK membership-only outdoor magazines may have higher circulations than the commercial magazines. We discuss the implications of this in the methods.
2. For reasons of page space, the coding rules are not provided here but may be obtained from the authors on request. We note that as the rules were generated during the coding process, they are intimately bound to the theme they coded.

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