Categories of rationale for the walking pairs choosing their two images

To gain an overview of the eighteen images chosen by the co-researchers from the 100s of photographs they took on their walks, and the rationales they gave for their final selections, the academic research team conducted an analysis of these selections to see what themes were emerging. This was approached primarily from a qualitative methodological position, drawing on two conceptual frameworks for the analysis.

First was Berger's (1) notion that photographs in themselves have no meaning, and the only facts they can tell us is the descriptive details captured in the image itself, (e.g. the colour of things, the shape of things, the types of clothes a person is wearing, etc). Besides this, photographs in themselves cannot tell us anything definite about the emotional dynamics of the scenario, how people were feeling, or what the narrative of the scenario was. Any such ideas we read in an image is what we as spectators bring to the image and is implied. It is a conceptual bridging that spectators are doing by reading their own personal experiences, contextual knowledge and tacit knowledge to deconstruct the (possible) meaning of the photographic image. Therefore in the process of our initial analysis, any themes we attach to these images must be drawn only from the either the factual information in the image itself, the rationales given for these choices, and triangulated using audio recordings from the walks. As tempting as it may be, drawing on academic prior knowledge and theory of particularly disability and identity discourse to interpret these images was resisted at this first level analysis of the emerging themes.

The second methodological concept drawn upon was Lyn Yates' (2) notion of how photographic images emerging from participatory projects (in Yates' case looking at working with young people) can be identified in two categories depending on the motivation of when the photograph was taken. '*Windows to the world*' images are descriptive imagery '*where the visual purpose is primarily to find out or show more about things/events in the world that are the experiences of the participants*', (for example showing the obstruction of a dropped kerb on a pavement). Yates' second category is called '*windows to identity*', where '*the central intention* [of the project or photographer's motivation] *is to find out more about the subjectivity of the person taking the photographs ('who they are', 'what matters to them'*). The Walking Interconnections project spans both categories of '*windows to the world*' and '*windows to identity*', and during the walks the co-researchers had free licence to take whatever photographs they were inspired to make. Although at the first analysis stage we resisted labelling the photographs too strongly to one or other (or both) categories, we were mindful of these notions when identifying the emerging themes in identifying the descriptive and reflexive rationales given in the photo-elicitation conversations, and other data which triangulated the moments the photographs were taken, such as the audio recordings.

The categories of locations in which walks were carried out with the numerical quantities of walks and selected photographs are:

- Built-up urban areas and building interiors (e.g. residential area, and art gallery) - (3 walks / 3 selected photos)
- Urban water areas (e.g. river path) (5 walks / 2 photos selected)
- National heritage parks (5 walks / 8 photos selected)
- Coastal areas (1 walk / 1 photo selected)
- Pockets in urban spaces (e.g. allotments) (5 walks / 3 photos selected)

On first reflection of the numerical data it could be suggested that the overwhelming majority of selected images in the National heritage parks category, could be seen as a leaning towards the picturesque, though when the images themselves are looked at and the rationales read, you see that

far from being concerned with aesthetics, those landscapes offered deeper insights in themes related to both their experiences of those spaces and relations to their identity. More on this issue will be discussed in subsequent research papers.

The themes emerged from this analysis is shown in the following list, along with an accompanying number of how many images were interpreted to that theme. Some images related to more than one theme, and have been coded to multiple themes and counted accordingly. Although, as already noted, this analysis was primarily a qualitative rather than quantitative exercise, the frequency of themes is still of interest to determine emphasis and conceptual patterns. However the list has not been arranged in numerical order, as the quantitative analysis is not the primary concern. The list is arranged in order of walking groups and the chronology of the themes that emerged, (i.e. The first photograph from Walking Pair 1 was themed to both 'vulnerability', and 'dynamic relations to the landscape', so they are the first themes in the list.)

- Vulnerability (3)
- Dynamic Relations to landscape (4)
- Solidarity (5)
- Interdependence (5)
- Work (4)
- Embodied Learning (3)
- Agency (1)
- Risk (1)
- Togetherness / Levelling (1)
- Persistence / Stubbornness (4)
- Commitment (2)
- Kindness of strangers (1)
- Resourcefulness (1)
- Attentiveness (1)

Further interpretive work is now being carried out on this analysis in conjunction with the rest of the project's findings, which will be reported on in due course.

Dr Shawn Sobers - 14 April 2014

References:

1 - Berger, J. (1977) The Ambiguity of the Photograph, in K.Askew and R.R. Wilk (Eds.) The Anthropology of Media: A Reader, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, p.p. 47-55

2 - Yates, L. (2010) The story they want to tell, and the visual story as evidence: young people, research authority and research purposes in the education and health domains, Visual Studies, 25:3, 280-291

See the chart below for the analysis of images to themes.

THEME	IMAGE	Description	Image
Vulnerability	Pair 1 / Image 1	Perception of risk Internalised pressures (perception)	
	Pair 4 / Image 1	Lack of agency	
	Pair 8 / Image 1	Fear / concern	
Dynamic Relations to landscape	Pair 1 / Image 1	Multiple uses of space	
	Pair 3 / Image 1	Environmental terrain	
	Pair 7 / Image 1	Multiple uses of space Environmental terrain	
	Pair 8 / Image 1	Challenges of terrain	
Solidarity	Pair 1 / Image 2	Community Shared anticipation	

	Pair 4 / Image 1	Working together	
	Pair 5 / Image 2	Taking on the grievances of others	
	Pair 7 / Image 2	Affinity	
	Pair 8 / Image 1	Working together	
Interdependence	Pair 2 / Image 1	Allowing confidence Lack of detailed planning allowing sense of freedom	
	Pair 2 / Image 2	Collaboration	
	Pair 3 / Image 2	Shared knowledges Different seeing practices	
	Pair 4 / Image 1	Working together	

	Pair 9 / Image 2	Stuck in the lift	
Work	Pair 2 / Image 2	Effort Planning in the moment Responsibility	
	Pair 7 / Image 1	Effortful	
	Pair 7 / Image 2	Effort	
	Pair 9 / Image 1	Tiredness	
Embodied Learning	Pair 3 / Image 1	Negotiating terrain (consciously or unconsciously)	
	Pair 3 / Image 2	Consciousness of being in the world Heightened senses	
	Pair 9 / Image 1	Noticing new things in the landscape (attentiveness)	
Agency	Pair 4 / Image 1	Making choices ("breaking the rules")	

Risk	Pair 4 / Image 1	Internalised pressures (perceived risks or laws)	
Togetherness / Levelling	Pair 4 / Image 2	Shared experience Equally able	
Persistence / Stubbornness	Pair 5 / Image 1	Frustration Grievance Internalised pressures (perception)	
	Pair 7 / Image 1	Determination	
	Pair 8 / Image 2	Overcoming problems	
	Pair 9 / Image 1	Working through pain	
Commitment	Pair 7 / Image 2	Shared experience	
	Pair 8 / Image 1	Overcoming problems	
Kindness of strangers	Pair 8 / Image 2	Serendipity	

Resourcefulness	Pair 9 / Image 1	Inventively making use of the environment Overcoming problems	
Attentiveness	Pair 9 / Image 1	Seeing opportunities and new insights at times of challenge	