The role of tourism in personal nationalism: A case study

Julie S. Tinson [a,*], Michael A.J. Saren [b]

[a] Marketing & Retail Division, Stirling Management School, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA, Scotland, UK
[b] School of Business, University of Leicester, Brookfield Campus, 266 London Road, Leicester, LE2 1RQ, UK

ABSTRACT

Drawing on interviews with twenty tourists at the National Wallace Monument in Stirling, Scotland, this case study uses the concept of personal nationalism to understand how national identity is interpreted and communicated in personal and (post) tourist space. It uses a narrative analysis of domestic and international tourists' experiences to realise how heritage tourism sites could benefit from understanding individual meanings of a nation. The research reveals personal nationalism is characterised by inclusion, interaction and individualisation. Participants consolidate their personal nationalism by connecting with and on behalf of others as well as through various ways of belonging, and by interpreting their experiences in relation to their families. The findings represent a nuanced articulation of the role of tourism in the appropriation of national symbols, myths and values by tourists at a national heritage site. The study offers an alternative perspective on the relevance of what cultural producers convey to tourists.

1. Introduction

This paper examines the role of tourism in personal nationalism by considering how individuals interpret and communicate nationhood through stories of their visits at the National Wallace Monument. Drawing on interviews with domestic as well as international tourists, this study conducts an interpretive examination of experiences at a heritage site, located in Stirling, Scotland. An emphasis is placed on the participants' own reconstruction of their experiences through the interview design to ensure an emic and narrative perspective. Analysing the content of their stories offers an opportunity to determine aspects of personal experience the storyteller has identified as significant and of note. The narrative approach adopted here is based on thematic analysis and analytic induction (Spiggle, 1994). Importantly, narrative analysis is a method of inquiry recognised by scholars as providing rich, empirical material and insight and offers an alternative way of understanding tourist experiences (Mura, 2015; Woodside & Megehee, 2009).

The rationale of the research case study is threefold. First, despite calls for research to place a greater emphasis on understanding individual meanings to fully comprehend the association between tourism and identity (Brown & Ibarra, 2018) an individual interpretation of how a nation is understood and personally communicated is limited (Edensor, 2000; Jaworski & Pritchard, 2005; Marschall, 2017). While researchers have considered the role of nationalism at heritage sites (e.g.,

Chronis, 2005; Chronis, Arnould, & Hampton, 2012; Palmer, 2005; Park, 2010, 2011), showing how identification with a nation can influence the way in which tourists collectively think and behave, an individual understanding of selfhood in tourism has received less attention. Second, studies on heritage tourism have typically examined cultural producers' choice of material displayed without reflecting on the differential interpretation of such information by the audience (Hughes, Bond, & Ballantyne, 2013). Third, this study was conducted against a backdrop of renewed interest in Scottish national identity, in a city synonymous with Scottish nationalism (Soule, Leith, & Steven, 2012). By using a specific context, this research offers insight into the continuities of tourists' experiences of national identity in tourist space and everyday life, with implications for a multi-dimensional communication approach for heritage sites.

2. Literature review

2.1. National identity in tourism

Heritage tourism is central to maintaining and promoting a nation and is inextricably linked with experiencing both tangible and intangible remnants of a nation's past (Palmer, 1999; Park, 2010). A nation is constructed from its history that creates a sense of place (Durie, Yeoman, & McMahon-Beattie, 2006). Symbols and stories can shape our sense of

who we are, and historical myths take on greater significance with the distance of time, space, place and people (Smith, 1986). Nationalism, in its broadest sense, is the unity derived from historic territory and a common, civic culture (Smith, 1991). National identity can be viewed as how the nation is understood, characterised and conveyed to nation members and others. Concepts that make a nation distinguishable, including flags, parades, anthems and heroes reflect a shared national identity. Cultural producers include or exclude interpretations in their own construction of a unified nation, offering dominant accounts of history, as well as politicising fables and legends (Edensor, 1997a, 1997b; Park, 2010, 2011). Spectacular and memorable tourist experiences associated with a nation may elicit a surplus of emotion and related performances as well as being memorable for those taking part (Billig, 1995). However, less is known about how individuals interpret, give meaning to, and express their own interpretation of nationhood in relation to the self.

There are a variety of competing paradigms on the ideology of a nation, offering different perspectives for tourism scholars to examine and cultural producers to employ. For example, primordialists (Smith, 1998) are proponents of the view that national identity relates to a body of people who are part of a group; their connection to a nation is spiritual or mythical, where a sense of self is inescapably associated with blood, kinship, language and tradition (e.g., Geertz, 1973). This interpretation of national identity suggests the nation is not a social construct and any change to the historical depiction or interpretation of the nation is considered meaningless. In this regard, nation members are merely recipients of a shared national identity. This collective understanding and communal position are also important to perrenialists. In differentiating one nation from another, perrenialists emphasise the inter-relationship between how history is represented, and a national identity (Bell, 2003). Such a perspective is useful in understanding 'in group' and 'out group' identity in tourism studies (see Park, 2010).

Conversely, modernists posit that national identity relates to an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) where a shared cultural code exists amongst members of a nation who are never likely to meet one another. This 'invented tradition' has been attributed to class, where national myths perpetuated by industrialists and elites legitimise the status quo (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). For postmodernists (see Smith, 1998), how stories pertaining to national identity are formed and disseminated shape how the nation is imagined. Importantly, such perspectives emphasise the significance of a collective national community to which members belong. Knox (2006) contends that heritage tourism focuses on, 'what it means or is to be part of that nation' (p.196), highlighting the importance of belonging and attachment through collective memory (see also Packer, Ballantyne, & Uzzell, 2019). However, as Verdery (1996) notes, national identity is personal as well as social. An individual not only understands the nation in relation to others, but also connects to the nation as part of their self-identity. In doing so, individuals 'draw upon the differing identities available to them to construct their own sense of self and how they fit in' (Palmer, 1999, p. 314).

2.2. Personal nationalism

Yet exploring the individual importance of nation, and nation to self, is difficult; it is far less complex to explore how a nation is portrayed through examining emblematic structures (Hearn, 2007). This view is exemplified through existing tourism studies that tend towards illustrating variances and inconsistencies of shared memories in relation to regions, religions, and nation building, in addition to examining the schema of those who own and manage heritage sites (e.g., Packer et al., 2019; Palmer, 2005; Park, 2010, 2011; Zhang, Xiao, Morgan, & Ly, 2018). Although the individual significance of the nation is more varied, understanding how national discourses are understood and communicated by individuals to ensure their unique meaning requires further research; notwithstanding individual perceptions will be influenced by

social, cultural and political experiences as self and social identity are undoubtedly intertwined (Bond & Falk, 2013).

Personal nationalism is 'the association that individuals make between themselves and the nation' (Cohen, 1996, p. 802). Observing that individuals are not simply members of a nation, Cohen suggests we are 'preciously individualistic'. This supports the view that rather than understanding how meanings associated with the nation are conveyed by cultural producers, there is a need to examine how cultural forms enable the construction of 'identity' in relation to the 'nation' (McCrone, 1992; McIntosh, Sim, & Robertson, 2004). Further, to understand the personal significance of the nation, Hearn (2007) suggests that national identity should be explored through structures and contexts in which the self and the social interact. While Palmer (2005) has considered how the role of heritage sites facilitate the way in which tourists experience their national identity, her study explores and analyses the concept of identity in relation to Englishness as a social construct.

Cohen (1996) recognises the nation as only one of many means of articulating a self. He argues that the nation is politicised where a collective or shared view is imposed and suggests individuals interpret and personalise how a nation is characterised. Individuals play a variety of roles as well as nation-state member, e.g., grand\parent, professional, sister, neighbour, and the self is in continual process (Goffman, 1973). This means individual perceptions of the self and how this is expressed will evolve and be influenced by life changes and particular events, including tourist experiences. While appreciating that both political and cultural factors will impact on individual perceptions of the nation, there are calls for further research to investigate the relationship between the nation and identity, as well the contexts in which national identity is drawn upon to construct and express an aspect of self (Layder, 2006; McCrone, 1992; Palmer, 1999).

2.3. Context

The 150th anniversary of the opening of the National Wallace Monument in Stirling, Scotland, was commemorated throughout 2019. After a brief period of closure for refurbishment, the National Wallace Monument was re-opened to reveal the redesign of the three exhibition rooms inside the monument itself, 'telling the story of William Wallace better than ever before' (Mair, 2019). In commissioning the remodelling, Stirling District Tourism who managed the site, intended three important messages to be conveyed to tourists: emotional (the spirit of Wallace and his bravery), historical (the significance of the Wars of Independence and the Battle of Stirling Bridge) and physical (the landscape, the setting of the Abbey Craig). This messaging was outlined in Stirling District Tourism's design brief which was disclosed to the researchers. As with other sites of commemoration, the National Wallace Monument contributes to personal and shared memories and identities (e.g., Packer et al., 2019), but with a particular focus on one character.

Rebel, legend, freedom fighter, patriot, martyr, Guardian of Scotland, enigma, commoner, and son of nobility, depict roles ascribed to William Wallace. Each characterisation tells a different story, offering political and cultural interpretations of the scant information of one of Scotland's most infamous heroes. Wallace has also been immortalised as 'Braveheart'. This Hollywood film creation offers a romantic if historically inaccurate and mythical version of events, albeit one that has been lucrative for Scottish tourism (Martin-Jones, 2014). Edensor (1997b) has explored how attitudes towards the positioning of William Wallace can act as a political gauge. Politicians, as well as social commentators, continue to capitalise on Braveheart in promoting a particular view of the Scottish nation and its future direction. Such observations focus on a collective national identity. What is less well known is how domestic and international tourists draw on their own experiences of the National Wallace Monument to interpret, give meaning to and express their own sense of the Scottish nation in relation to the self. This is the focus of this study.

3. Methods

A qualitative approach has been chosen for this research as it is recognised as offering an understanding of phenomena that is embedded within tourists themselves (McCabe & Foster, 2006). This study employs a narrative analysis of stories created by tourists following their experiences of the National Wallace Monument. Narratives are both an interpretation of events and a forming of the storyteller's reality (Boje, 1991). Tourists create their own stories, and these narratives are recognised as an important way in which they relive memories, and give meaning to episodic events (Moscardo, 2010). The framing of a tourist's story reveals not only an understanding of their experience, but also what is important to them as individuals (Woodside, Cruickshank & Dehaung, 2007). Further, what is recalled and (re) told at any specific time is aligned with, and influenced by, a contemporary sense of self (Marschall, 2017). Narrative analysis was therefore considered a suitable method to examine how tourists (re)create stories of their National Wallace Monument experiences, to explore how their own noteworthy and meaningful moments informed an understanding of how their personal nationalism was expressed.

Between April 2019 and October 2019, interviews were conducted using a variety of sampling techniques. This was with the aim of recruiting diverse, distinct and purposeful participants, as well as securing the inclusion of local to the area, domestic (UK) and international tourists. Twenty tourists including those with annual card membership of the National Wallace Monument were interviewed (see Table 1). The sampling approach was designed to ensure different types of tourists were represented (e.g., inter-generational families, couples, individuals, part of tours, repeat visitors), from a range of countries and with a diversity of age, occupation, gender and historical understanding of William Wallace. Given this purposive approach, the tourists were initially spoken to in person (or, for the National Wallace Monument annual card members, contacted via email) and asked some identifying questions such as nationality, tourist category and prior knowledge of William Wallace. Following this initial screening, the overwhelming majority of participants were willing to take part in the study and were chosen based on their purposefulness and availability.

To collect data, there were ten visits to the site across six months (different days and times) that included 'systematic lurking' (Park, 2010) and note taking, as well as recording images inside the monument and of the surrounding area. This was to allow the field researcher to become immersed in the experience offered by National Wallace Monument. Tourists were approached to take part in an interview, and these

were conducted in the Gatekeeper's Lodge positioned at the entrance to the monument. Those with annual card membership of the National Wallace Monument, who typically had a Scottish and\or local profile and were repeat visitors, were invited to share their experiences via telephone\Skype at a time convenient to them. This was with a view to capturing stories that were distinct to those tourists travelling only for the day. Other secondary materials were also gathered to triangulate data as suggested by Yin (2018). This included reviewing the National Wallace Monument website, social media posts and marketing resources. Further, a series of evening lectures organised by those managing the site, as well as private guided tours by the Marketing Manager, offered insight into how the history of William Wallace was communicated.

The university ethics panel of the first author approved the study. A condition of such permission required a completed consent form from each participant, as well as a detailed information sheet to be given to those taking part in the research. In addition to ensuring anonymity and confidentiality at the beginning of the interview, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Martin (2010) observes that asking direct questions is not the most effective way of understanding tourist experiences. Rather, by employing a less structured approach to interviews, the underlying meanings and complexities of tourist accounts can be revealed (Prayag & Ryan, 2011). Consequently, a single broad question was used at the beginning of the interviews: 'can you tell me about your (last) experience of visiting the National Wallace Monument?'. After this initial question, the interview was prompted only by specific areas of interest to the participant. This was to support and enable the participants to reconstruct their own experiences, rather than imposing an etic perspective. On average, the interviews with tourists on-site lasted on average 20 min and Skype or telephone interviews (with those in receipt of annual card membership) varied between 15 and 40 min. All were audio-recorded and transcribed, and data collection was sufficient to ensure saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The data enabled the researchers to derive varied and detailed insights from the participants' story (re) telling and narrative (re)interpretation of their experiences associated with the National Wallace Monument.

Mura (2015) notes that three different perspectives have been adopted by tourism scholars in relation to the study of narratives. Firstly, there is a body of extant studies on narrative as an object of inquiry e.g., exploring tourists' narratives before, during and after their experiences. Secondly, narrative inquiry can be used as a method (e.g., exploring narrative as text such as transcripts or blogs to understand tourists' perspectives). Lastly, narratives can be considered as a product of inquiry e.g., academic articles that are culturally and socially situated. This study adopts the second of these perspectives i.e., narrative as a method of inquiry and, following Spiggle (1994), employs thematic analysis and analytic induction to understand the essence of the narratives, giving primacy to the nation in relation to selfhood. In order to determine the diverse types of stories and their relationship to personal nationalism, this analysis comprised discrete stages of categorisation, abstraction, dimensionalization, comparison, integration, iteration and refutation.

The first stage of the analysis began with the process of coding to classify key categories. For example, locating data that illustrated *a priori* themes such as national identity perspectives. Emergent themes were also noted e.g., how understanding national identity enhanced family relationships. Building on this categorisation, abstraction was used to group codes into more general concepts e.g., the role of women in history, patriotism and heritage, legacy and education, and inclusivity. Abstraction preceded the comparison phase that examined similarities and differences in responses between different types of participants e.g., local, domestic and international tourists. Different dimensions were then characterised and explored, e.g., varying degrees of desire to 'belong' or 'fit in'. Axial and selective coding was then employed to integrate data with theory, mapping connections between concepts e.g.,

Table 1
Sample demographics.

Pseudonym	Member	Age	Gender	Occupation	Domestic\International
David	Yes	40	M	Events	Local (Stirling area)
Edith	Yes	32	F	Education	Domestic (UK)
Mary	Yes	58	F	Finance	Local (Stirling area)
Sean	Yes	34	M	Tourism	Local (Stirling area)
Alfred	Yes	72	M	Retired	Local (Stirling area)
Jasmin	Yes	28	F	HR Services	Domestic (UK)
Maisie	Yes	68	F	Retired	Local (Stirling area)
Patricia	Yes	32	F	Student	International
Jon	No	58	M	Construction	Domestic (UK)
Veronica	No	80	F	Retired	International
Barbara	No	70	F	Retired	International
Ron	No	32	M	Engineering	International
Delia	No	33	F	Civil service	International
Mona	No	39	F	Education	International
Ross	No	45	M	Government	Local (Stirling area)
Elizabeth	No	50	F	Education	Domestic (UK)
Brandon	No	26	M	Student	International
Andrew	No	46	M	Health	Local (Stirling area)
Aidan	No	36	M	Media	International
Ian	No	31	M	Government	International

perceptions of the Braveheart movie and inter-relationships between authenticity of place, self-identity expression and national ideologies. Such inferences involved an iterative process, with the authors going back and forth through the narratives to aid induction. Lastly, refutation required the researchers to be sceptical of their interpretation by seeking examples that would disconfirm emergent analysis.

Finally, as Billig (1995) notes, it is often assumed that researchers belong to a world of 'point-zero nationalism', yet the experiences of the researchers will influence the way in which the tourists' stories of their experiences are interpreted. Born and raised in Scotland, with Scottish \Polish heritage, the first author holds both insider and outsider positions in Scotland. The second author, with Scottish\Russian heritage, has lived in England for over 30 years and engaged with this project as though studying both a home and a foreign country. While the authors' partial outsider positions afforded a more objective analysis of personal nationalism, it is acknowledged that had the research been conducted by an insider, a non-national and\or by a multi-lingual researcher, the stories of the tourists (subsequently retold by the researchers) may have been altered and could have revealed a different aspect of their experiences.

4. Findings

4.1. Creating personal connections with and for others

All the participants offered a rationale for their visit and their motives included exploring historical interests (education), being part of a tour or friend group, entertainment, curiosity, demonstrating nation pride, hedonism, as well as making sense of the past. In this regard, the findings were consistent with those identified in previous studies (see for example: Calver & Page, 2013). However, the analysis also revealed how those participants local to the area thought it significant and noteworthy in recalling their experiences that their visit allowed them to engage with others on site as well as in everyday situations. For example:

There were several women in a group I was [talking to]. *They were American and they didn't really know much about Wallace. I told them about the Suffragettes breaking the cabinet* [smashing the glass] *containing the Wallace sword to bring attention to their cause* [in 1912]. *The Americans loved that story … it ties into freedom, but it's also making Wallace relevant for them as women.* Sean, annual card member.

Braveheart, you can say what you like about it. It brought Wallace to the people. Everybody now knows who Wallace was and why he is so significant to Scotland. I was in Moldova watching Scotland [playing football] *getting involved in a conversation with a Moldovan guy who watched Braveheart, and he wanted to know the true story, so I told him. And that's somebody in Moldova!* Ross, local tourist.

It can be inferred that local participants interpreted and expressed their personal nationalism as a way of creating a connection for and with others. The importance attributed to their experience manifests here as being inclusive rather than reinforcing national boundaries (Lloyd, 2014). This inclusion is achieved using different approaches. For example, reverse valuation is exemplified in relating the past to the present (Chronis et al., 2012) by connecting William Wallace to the Suffragettes. This illustrates not only how multiple themes and stories can be offered at the same destination (Moscardo, 2010), but also shows how nation-related material is made meaningful by local participants on behalf of others. Participants can also be seen as viewing their self in the role of educator on and off-site, and it appears to be important to convey their understanding of the nation in a way that others can relate to, regardless of distance travelled or location in which connections are made.

Further, although the authenticity of the Braveheart movie is questioned, it affords opportunities to involve others in the interpretation of the story of William Wallace in everyday life e.g., while watching football. This example also illustrates the continuities of visiting the

National Wallace Monument in mundane situations. What is recalled and (re) told in this context aligns with a national ideology that is a dominant aspect of selfhood, reflecting values that contribute to an expression of self. The reference to 'the true story' of Wallace shows how a primordial perspective (Geertz, 1973) has been adopted in expressing personal nationalism. This outlook is one where individuals are simply recipients of a shared national identity, where there is only one version of historical events. As the lens through which local participants make individual sense of a nation is shown here to be influenced by their own national ideology, the intertwining of self and social identity in relation to personal nationalism is underscored.

4.2. Ways of belonging

While the motives of international participants visiting the National Wallace Monument were often associated with their appreciation of and affection for the Braveheart movie, there were also participants who were altogether unfamiliar with William Wallace. These participants revealed they were curious about the imposing 67 m tall icon that stands on top of the Abbey Craig, and either stopped to investigate further or were part of a tour group exploring Scotland. However, rather than connections being made on their behalf, in recalling what was notable about their visit, these international participants can be seen to convey their own sense of self and how they belong or fit in:

I'm generally interested in history and William Wallace is quite a popular Scottish figure. I've seen Braveheart, I mean I loved the movie, it's one of my favourite movies. There's actually a picture of Mel Gibson inside [displayed in the National Wallace Monument] *… so I would definitely say that* [Braveheart] *motivated me to come here* [and shows the researcher how she re-enacted a scene from the film during her visit by lifting her arm in the air as if holding a sword aloft]*, now I can truly say 'freedom!'.* Patricia, international tourist.

I like history. I don't study, I don't memorise dates. I just love reading fictional history. It tells the story of what it was like and what they wore and how people lived. I like people and I like to know about people, and I like the history. And I like to talk to people about history. I like sacred spaces. I like walking in the footsteps of other people. Veronica, international tourist.

International participants were performative or interactive in making sense of William Wallace and his national significance in the stories told by cultural producers. This could be considered as tourist 'work,' perhaps expected as part of a tourist visit and motivated by a desire for self-identity expression (Edensor, 2000). There is evidence of a halo-effect of warmth for Wallace because of the film (Kotler & Gertner, 2002) and meaning is given to their experience through authenticity of place (Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010). International participants also formed their own connection to the nation by drawing on their own historical knowledge and travel experiences and personalised their visits through performance. These memories can be seen as being actively reconstructed from a variety of sources (Marschall, 2017). International participants' personal interpretation of the nation is expressed through bodily involvement and enactment (Chronis, 2005). Here, they imagine William Wallace through modern myths (Nimmo & Combes, 1980) as well as engaging in the creation of their own tourist moment (Cary, 2004).

However, ways of belonging were not only transitory or short-lived as outlined above, but also could indicate a desire to be permanently recognised as a member of the nation. International participants often referred to themselves as diaspora, imagining a community to which their ancestors belonged. On occasion their motive for visiting Scotland was to research their genealogy, and their personal nationalism reflected their aspiration to be considered Scottish. Interestingly, this yearning to be considered a nation member was not limited to international participants. In the following extract, Jon proudly demonstrates his own permanent commitment to Scotland, a thistle tattoo:

I've always had a fascination with Scotland, I love it. This is about my third time in Scotland in the last five years. I love everything about Scotland. This is my … [shows the researcher a tattoo of a Scottish thistle on his upper arm].

Researcher: Goodness, that's commitment to the cause! You being an Englishman as well.

Well, yeah, I'm sure I'm not English, [both laugh].

The tattoo reflects a renowned Scottish symbol, reproduced in everyday use, which conveys personal and national values (Barthes, 1972). As Billig (1995) notes, it is a waved or signalled 'flag' that is seen. The showing of the tattoo is significant in demonstrating a commitment and ambition to be 'interpellated' as a national subject (Edensor, 1997a). Such is the significance of 'being Scottish', fixed and fluid markers of Scottish national identity have become established. For example, accent and name illustrate fixed markers, while fluid markers include place and length of residence (Kiely, Bechhofer, Stewart, & McCrone, 2001). The shared laugh at the end of the story represents a 'knowingness' between the researcher, who has obvious fixed markers of Scottish identity, and the participant. Here, there is tacit acknowledgement of the boundaries of national identity (Leith, 2012), and in identifying what is important to his National Wallace Monument visit, there is an awareness of national ideologies and the complexities associated with effecting changes in the self; there is a longing to be an in-group member from an out-group position.

Although it can be surmised that ways of belonging varied in degree and commitment for these participants, their visits not only allowed them to satisfy their curiosity or engage in performance, but it also afforded them an opportunity to situate and convey their self in relation to their own interpretation of the nation.

4.3. Keeping it in the family

Participants also gave meaning to their experiences of the National Wallace Monument in relation to their families. This supports the importance of family togetherness and creating memories as contributing to a growing trend in family tourism (Schanzel & Yeoman, 2015). Durko and Petrick (2013) observe family tourism can strengthen family bonds and improve communication within relationships, but that a greater appreciation of the nuances of tourism and family relationships is needed to understand how families benefit from their visits in (post) tourist space. In this study, the participants often recalled their noteworthy experiences of the National Wallace Monument with specific reference to their individual role in the family, e.g., as a parent, grandparent, sister, and how these roles typically related to the reason for their visit e.g., entertainment, education, learning, and spending time together. Participants also reflected on how their memorable experiences of this heritage site enhanced their emotional satisfaction (Lee & Lee, 2021), revealing intangible values of heritage site visits (Park, 2011):

We've had a bit of fun because three young men in their kilts who were playing bagpipes came upstairs and it was very windy. Their kilts were being blown up and they were trying to keep them down [traditionally Scotsmen do not wear undergarments beneath their kilts]. *They were shouting, 'children, don't look, don't look!'. We've had a giggle about it.* Edith, local tourist

We took our grandsons to the Monument. The two younger boys are on the autistic spectrum. We got up there and it was at the time when an actor came out, dressed in old battle clothing and had a sword, and he told a story of the battle, and I thought these boys will never sit through this, but they did,

they were enraptured. At the end, the one who has the most autistic characteristics, he went and had his photograph taken holding the sword, and that was a huge success of a visit. I just thought that was it was such a gift the whole thing just caught the boy's attention. Mary, local tourist.

The participants demonstrate that national 'remembering' has been appropriated in a way that is differentiated from its original context (Edensor, 1997a). That is, although tangible symbols of national identity (i.e., Wallace's sword, kilts, bagpipes) are evident in recollections of the monument visit, these relate to individual interpretations and meaning in the larger narrative of the participants' own life stories (Moscardo, 2010). The lived family experiences of this heritage site show that rather than supporting a particular ideology of the nation, participants' experiences are made meaningful through different depictions of self and familial roles; what is remembered is not the bravery of Wallace and how his story shapes the history of Scotland, but rather the participants' emotional connection and shared family occasion, conveying an understanding of the benefits to relationships from being in tourism space.

While participants' motives for their visit primarily comprised entertainment and spending time together, those local to the area were also aware of the publicised recent redesign of the exhibition space. Consequently, there was both interest and excitement among these participants to observe how the changes inside the monument had reimagined the story of William Wallace. While tourism space in both language and imagery has tended to privilege the male, heterosexual gaze (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000), as part of the 150th anniversary of the opening of the National Wallace Monument, two female sculptors were commissioned to produce two female sculptures for the Hall of Heroes (i. e., the first-floor exhibition space in the monument). The choice of female sculptures was voted for by the public, and their inclusion at the monument was to represent and recognise the achievements of Scottish females in history. All the other sculptures in the Hall of Heroes are men.

Reaction to the inclusion of female heroes varied, with not all participants convinced of their relevance, "*I've nothing against these heroines … but surely there is enough* [material] *about William Wallace's lifetime and the people he met, the aftermath and what's happened since his death. Why do* [the heroines] *need to be in the monument?*" David, local tourist. However, for others, their inclusion was a significant aspect of their visit, allowing family bonds to be reinforced:

I've been to monument before and saw all these old men [in the Hall of Heroes] *fantastic figures, but I thought about how there weren't any women. After the refurbishment I wanted to go again but I waited until my sister-in-law was over from France. We went to the monument, and we climbed up as far as, I was keen to see the Hall of Heroes. We went and climbed as far as that we didn't get right to the top. I voted for the two women* [sculptures] *in there* [the Hall of Heroes]. *But it was such a climb to get up there. We really enjoyed seeing the women though, and* [sister] *did as well. It's such a part of our history.* Maisie, local to the area.

As Winter (2009) notes, cultural producers are required to update how social memories are portrayed in response to varying generational needs, and there are growing calls for the tourism industry to reflect diversity and offer 'just representation' in remembering the past (Bright, Foster, Joyner, & Tanny, 2021). For some participants, such representation was an important aspect of their experience; honouring under-represented female historical figures, despite the metaphorical and physical exertion, was the primary reason for their visit. By communicating the significance of 'being there' (Brown & Ibarra, 2018) and bearing witness to female inclusion, the nation is made individually meaningful. Importance is also placed on the various roles of a nation member i.e., sister, female, citizen, revealing the multi-dimensional nature of identity in tourism space (Bond & Falk, 2013).

5. Conclusions

This study extends the debate and contributes to the development of theory relating to the difference between 'national' and 'identity' at a particular heritage tourism site. A focus on tourists' stories of their experiences furthers an understanding of how national identity in relation to the self is variously articulated and illustrates how cultural forms facilitate the creation and development of an individual and national identity (McCrone, 1992) in (post) tourist space. This research illustrates that there are multiple perspectives on the interpretation, meaning and communication of stories associated with the National Wallace Monument experience and that these are differentially expressed by 'cultural imaginaries', with each individual conceiving their narrative in their own way (Chronis et al., 2012).

This research also shows that Scottish symbols of national identity are used to support national identity claims (Edensor, 1997b) as well as illustrating commitment to a nation, but that these can also be representative of meaningful family occasions in tourist space. There was evidence of drawing boundaries of fixed and fluid markers (Kiely et al., 2001) in a tourism context, pointing to different ideological perspectives of tourists themselves. This was often reflected in their 'self-aspects' which are context and situation-specific (Simon, 1999), and expressed in the recollection of their experience. However, a national self is only one way in which tourists sought to make their visit meaningful, and multiple roles or selves were interwoven in stories of participants' visits. Braveheart, while recognised as 'invented tradition' (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) afforded connections with others. Although local participants viewed the popularity of the film as an opportunity for (re) education, international participants were more interested in the individual appropriation of Braveheart in their experience and the related opportunities for performance in the retelling of their own story (Moscardo, 2010).

The findings also raise several managerial implications as well as further research opportunities. Firstly, while heritage sites have sought to personalise tourists' experience e.g., through promotion, recommendation, augmented reality, and rewards, this study offers an alternative approach to differentiate content at various stages of the tourist journey. Building on the analysis, the following strategies for *inclusion, interaction* and *individualisation* suggest how a nation can be personalised in different situations and contexts in tourist space. Rather than focusing on what messages should be conveyed, greater consideration should be given to how individuals can connect with materials that reflect their personal experience by placing cultural producer narrative in a broader context.

1. To support inclusion, more detail on day-to-day life at that period of time should be incorporated and\or parallel historical global events identified so tourists can locate how they belong or fit in. Inclusion can also be improved through facilitating a connection between diverse types of tourists and tourism material\s as this has been shown to be beneficial through enhancing a sense of belonging. In addition to local volunteer schemes (see Chen, Liu, & Legget, 2019), creating value through tourism experiences and between actors should be advocated (see examples, Campos, Mendes, do Valle, & Scott, 2016). Space should be created on-site to afford organic discussion and debate.

2. To facilitate interaction, those managing heritage sites should be conscious of the inter-connectedness of tourists' experiences at heritage sites with everyday life. National remembering can vary from its original context, while heightening the meaning of a tourist's visit. As suggested by Bond and Falk (2013) understanding tourists' identity-related needs (e.g., performative, role-related) offers cultural producers the opportunity to profile and qualitatively anticipate the outcome of their experience.

3. To enable tourists to individualise their experience, it is important not to privilege one ideological perspective and to realise that multiple themes do not detract from involvement with the narrative. Tourist experiences are defined by their motives, thoughts, beliefs and preferences that they bring with them (Hughes et al., 2013). Consequently, engaging with equality, diversity and inclusion will not only allow for a greater creative and innovative cultural producer approach but will also enhance opportunities for tourists to personalise their visit and inform their subsequent (re)telling of experiences e.g., on social media platforms.

In conclusion, as personal nationalism is likely to vary against a backdrop of evolving political and cultural change (Cohen, 1996), this narrative approach could be used to explore personal meanings of the nation at different heritage sites or in different regions or countries. As previous studies have underscored dominant political and cultural producer interpretations of a nation, this study offers an alternative approach to understanding tourists' perspectives. Capturing a more individual and nuanced explanation of how nations are interpreted could offer insight to enable a more multidimensional and purposive communication approach at heritage sites.

Impact statement

This study was conducted against a backdrop of renewed interest in Scottish national identity, in the city known as the 'seed-box' of Scottish nationalism. Following the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, and the overwhelming vote of Scots to remain in the European Union in 2016, the story of William Wallace and what he represents, collectively as well as individually, is particularly pertinent. The positioning of William Wallace can act as a political gauge and politicians, as well as social commentators, continue to capitalise on 'Braveheart' in promoting a particular view of the Scottish nation and its future direction. This study contributes to a wider cultural debate about what national identity is and for whom. While heritage tourism research has focused on types of ideological and cultural information conveyed at heritage sites, this study offers an alternative perspective on how a nation is individually interpreted and given meaning by tourists.

Credit author statement

Tinson: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation (Interviews), Writing – original draft preparation & Reviewing and Editing. Saren: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing – Reviewing & Editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2022.104612.

References

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Bell, D. S. (2003). Mythscapes: Memory, mythology, and national identity. *British Journal of Sociology, 54*, 63–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/0007131032000045905

Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. London: Sage.

Boje, D. M. (1991). The storytelling organisation: A study of story performance in an office-supply firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 36*, 106–126. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393432

Bond, N., & Falk, J. (2013). Tourism and identity-related motivations: Why am I here (and not there)? *International Journal of Tourism Research, 15*, 430–442. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.1886

Bright, C. F., Foster, K. N., Joyner, A., & Tanny, O. (2021). Heritage tourism, historic roadside markers and "just representation" in Tennessee, USA. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 29*, 428–447.

Brown, L., & Ibarra, K. A. (2018). Commemoration and the expression of political identity. *Tourism Management, 68*, 79–88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.03.002

Buchmann, A., Moore, K., & Fisher, D. (2010). Experiencing film tourism: Authenticity & fellowship. *Annals of Tourism Research, 37*, 229–248. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.09.005

Calver, S. J., & Page, S. J. (2013). Enlightened hedonism: Exploring the relationship of service value, visitor knowledge and interest, to visitor enjoyment at heritage attractions. *Tourism Management, 39*, 23–36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.03.008

Campos, A. C., Mendes, J., do Valle, P. O., & Scott, N. (2016). Co-creation experiences: Attention and memorability. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 33*, 1309–1336. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2015.1118424

Cary, S. H. (2004). The tourist moment. *Annals of Tourism Research, 31*, 61–77. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2003.03.001

Chen, X., Liu, C., & Legget, J. (2019). Motivations of museum volunteers in New Zealand's cultural tourism industry. *Anatolia, 30*, 127–139. https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2018.1542521

Chronis, A. (2005). Co-constructing heritage at the Gettysburg storyscape. *Annals of Tourism Research, 32*, 386–406. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.07.009

Chronis, A., Arnould, E. J., & Hampton, R. D. (2012). Gettysburg re-imagined: The role of narrative imagination in consumption experience. *Consumption, Markets and Culture, 15*, 261–286. https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2011.652823

Cohen, A. P. (1996). Personal nationalism: A scottish view of some rites, rights, and wrongs. *American Ethnologist, 23*, 802–815. https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1996.23.4.02a00070

Durie, A., Yeoman, I. S., & McMahon-Beattie, U. (2006). How the history of Scotland creates a sense of place. *Place Branding, 2*, 43–52. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990044

Durko, A. M., & Petrick, J. F. (2013). Family and relationship benefits of travel experiences: A literature review. *Journal of Travel Research, 52*, 720–730. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513496478

Edensor, T. (1997a). National identity and the politics of memory: Remembering bruce and Wallace in symbolic space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 15*, 175–194. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990044

Edensor, T. (1997b). Reading Braveheart: Representing and contesting scottish identity. *Scottish Affairs, 21*, 135–158. https://doi.org/10.3366/scot.1997.0061

Edensor, T. (2000). Staging tourism: Tourists as performers. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*, 322–344. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00082-1

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York: Basic.

Goffman, E. (1973). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London: The Overlook Press.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*, 59–82. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903

Hearn, J. (2007). National identity: Banal, personal and embedded. *Nations and Nationalism, 13*, 657–674. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2007.00303.x

Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (1983). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hughes, K., Bond, N., & Ballantyne, R. (2013). Designing and managing interpretive experiences at religious sites: Visitors' perceptions of Canterbury Cathedral. *Tourism Management, 36*, 210–220. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.11.022

Jaworski, A., & Pritchard, A. (2005). *Discourse, communication, and tourism* (Vol. 5). Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845410216

Kiely, R., Bechhofer, F., Stewart, R., & McCrone, D. (2001). The markers and rules of Scottish national identity. *The Sociological Review, 49*, 33–55. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.00243

Knox, D. (2006). The sacralised landscapes of Glencoe: From massacre to mass tourism, and back again. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 8*, 185–197. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.568

Kotler, P., & Gertner, D. (2002). Country as brand, products, and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective. *Journal of Brand Management, 9*, 249–261. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540076

Layder, D. (2006). *Understanding social theory*. London: Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446279052

Lee, K. J., & Lee, S. Y. (2021). Cognitive appraisal theory, memorable tourism experiences, and family cohesion in rural travel. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 38*, 399–412. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2021.1921094

Leith, M. S. (2012). *Political discourse and national identity in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Lloyd, K. (2014). Beyond the rhetoric of an "inclusive national identity": Understanding the potential impact of Scottish museums on public attitudes to issues of identity, citizenship and belonging in an age of migrations. *Cultural Trends, 23*, 148–158. https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2014.925279

Mair, G. (2019). *William Wallace story to be told "better than ever before" in £1m project*. Retrieved https://www.scotsman.com/regions/william-wallace-story-be-told-better-ever-ps1m-project-141538. (Accessed 12 August 2020).

Marschall, S. (2017). Transnational migrant home visits as identity practice: The case of African migrants in South Africa. *Annals of Tourism Research, 63*, 140–150. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.01.011

Martin, D. (2010). Uncovering unconscious memories and myths for understanding international tourism behavior. *Journal of Business Research, 63*, 372–383. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.04.020

Martin-Jones, D. (2014). Film tourism as heritage tourism: Scotland, diaspora and the Da Vinci code (2006). *New Review of Film and Television Studies, 12*, 156–177. https://doi.org/10.1080/17400309.2014.880301

McCabe, S., & Foster, C. (2006). The role and function of narrative in tourist interaction. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, 4*, 194–215. https://doi.org/10.2167/jtcc071.0

McCrone, D. (1992). *Understanding Scotland: The sociology of a stateless nation*. London: Routledge.

McIntosh, I., Sim, D., & Robertson, D. (2004). We hate the English, except for you, cos you're our pal' identification of the "English" in Scotland. *Sociology, 38*, 43–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038504039360

Moscardo, G. (2010). The shaping of tourist experience: The importance of stories and themes. In M. Morgan, P. Lugosi, & J. R. B. Ritchie (Eds.), *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and management perspectives* (pp. 3–26). Bristol: Channel View. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845411503-006.

Mura, P. (2015). Perceptions of authenticity in a Malaysian homestay–A narrative analysis. *Tourism Management, 51*, 225–233. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.05.023

Nimmo, D., & Combes, J. (1980). *Subliminal politics: Myth and myth makers in America*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Packer, J., Ballantyne, R., & Uzzell, D. (2019). Interpreting war heritage: Impacts of Anzac museum and battlefield visits on Australians' understanding of national identity. *Annals of Tourism Research, 76*, 105–116. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.03.012

Palmer, C. (1999). Tourism and the symbols of identity. *Tourism Management, 20*, 313–321. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00120-4

Palmer, C. (2005). An ethnography of Englishness: Experiencing identity through tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 32*, 7–27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.04.006

Park, H.-yu (2010). Heritage tourism: Emotional journeys into nationhood. *Annals of Tourism Research, 37*, 116–135.

Park, H.-yu (2011). Shared national memory as intangible heritage: Re-imagining two Koreas as one nation. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*, 520–539. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.08.001

Prayag, G., & Ryan, C. (2011). The relationship between the 'push' and 'pull' factors of a tourist destination: The role of nationality–an analytical qualitative research approach. *Current Issues in Tourism, 14*, 121–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683501003623802

Pritchard, A., & Morgan, N. J. (2000). Privileging the male gaze: Gendered tourism landscapes. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*, 884–905. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00113-9

Schanzel, H. A., & Yeoman, I. (2015). Trends in family tourism. *Journal of Tourism Futures, 1*, 141–147. https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-12-2014-0006

Simon, B. (1999). A place in the world: Self and social categorisation. In T. R. Kramer, & O. P. John (Eds.), *The psychology of the social self* (pp. 47–49). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Smith, A. (1986). *The ethnic origins of nations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Smith, A. (1991). *National identity*. London: Penguin.

Smith, A. (1998). *Nationalism and modernism*. London: Routledge.

Soule, D. P., Leith, M. S., & Steven, M. (2012). Scottish devolution and national identity. *National Identities, 14*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2012.657085

Spiggle, S. (1994). Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research, 2*, 491–503.

Verdery, K. (1996). Whither "nation" and "nationalism". In G. Balakrishnan (Ed.), *Mapping the nation* (pp. 226–234). London and New York: Verso.

Winter, C. (2009). Tourism, social memory and the Great war. *Annals of Tourism Research, 36*, 607–626. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.05.002

Woodside, A. G., Cruickshank, B. F., & Dehuang, N. (2007). Stories visitors tell about Italian cities as destination icons. *Tourism Management, 28*, 162–174. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.10.026

Woodside, A. G., & Megehee, C. M. (2009). Travel storytelling theory and practice. *Anatolia, 20*, 86–99. https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2009.10518897

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zhang, C. X., Xiao, H., Morgan, N., & Ly, T. P. (2018). Politics of memories: Identity construction in museums. *Annals of Tourism Research, 73*, 116–130. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2018.09.011

Julie Tinson is Professor of Marketing. Her research interests are in understanding individual and collective identity formation as well as how transition impacts consumption. Contexts for this work have included leisure activities, dark tourism and events.

Michael Saren is Emeritus Professor of Marketing at Leicester University, UK. His research interests are in developing marketing theory regarding market relationships, heritage and culture. He was co-editor of Rethinking Marketing (1999) and author of Marketing Graffiti (2018).