

16 The Multiple Realities of the Rural Environment. The Significance of Tourist Images for the Countryside

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Introduction

Tourism and recreation¹ have an important influence on the use and development of rural areas. In the Netherlands, this has been particularly evident since the end of the Second World War. Population increase, spectacular economic growth paralleled by increasing affluence and a growing amount of free-time, provided the impetus for a massive trek to the countryside. Elsewhere too the countryside has become important for tourism and recreation. The conclusion drawn by the *European Conference on Rural Development* (Cork 1996) emphasized that rural development is not only a matter of agricultural reform and the management of natural resources, it also involves tourism and recreation. Rural development, argued the statement, requires an integrated approach. The significance of recreation and tourism is sought primarily in the way it can contribute to the regional economy.

The Dutch choice of the countryside as a place to spend their free hours, free days and holidays coincided with certain developments that put the countryside, as a venue for leisure-time activities, under increasing pressure. With the modernization of agriculture, urbanization and the construction of new roads and waterways, the scale of the landscape changed as did its accessibility and the experiences it offered. The nature of these changes was such that the government decided to adopt a counter offensive, a policy aimed at maintaining adequate green recreation space. This policy resulted in the laying-out of large recreation areas and a network of paths for cyclists and walkers. Government involvement reached a peak in the 1970s but in subsequent years became gradually less important. Even so, in the course of twenty-five years this policy became so self-sufficient that there was little question of it becoming integrated into other areas of rural policy. With its own framework of planning, its own policy organizations and a sector of specifically tourist-recreational organizations, it formed a policy world that was largely inward looking and which was defensive in its attitude towards other policy sectors.

Now that this policy is losing significance because of developments that have taken place in both government organization (withdrawal of

government) and society itself (commodification), the concept of integrated rural development is being put forward for the first time. This can be seen most clearly in the recently initiated 'valuable cultural landscapes' policy, a basic assumption of which is the integrated development of agriculture, tourism, recreation and nature management. The minister responsible (in this case the Minister of Agriculture, Nature management and Fisheries) required the hitherto centrally directed recreation and tourism policy to decentralize as much as possible, and stipulated that interest groups at the regional level be brought together to ensure a joint approach.

Not only in the Netherlands but in other countries too, the self-sufficiency of recreation and tourism policy in relation to other rural functions was one of the reasons why the development of scientific knowledge on the subject of tourism and recreation led to few linkages with other sociological approaches to rural society (Cloke and Goodwin 1992). This resulted in an isolation that was disadvantageous to the world of recreation and tourism, and also limited insight into the significance recreation and tourism could have for rural development. In recent years a turning point seems to have been reached and this segregation is no longer so acute (Urry 1992; Dupuis and Vandergeest 1996).

Our contribution concentrates on a theoretical perspective which brings the importance of recreation and tourism for the countryside more sharply into focus. The relevance of this position will be illustrated with three brief interpretations of practices found in the rural areas: camping on the farm; the thematization of the countryside and the creation of a rural identity.

Contested Territories

The image associated with the use made of the Dutch countryside by recreation and tourism in the period 1945–1960, is one of large groups of cyclists, walkers, campers with bungalow tents, site caravans and families driving around in their cars. On sunny days recreation projects were scenes of great activity: sunbathers closely packed together, children at play in the water, wind-surfers trying to avoid swimmers, boys and girls flirting with each other and at least one child who had lost its parents. Today the countryside still provides the location and setting for the most diverse leisure activities.

The use of the countryside for these various tourist and recreational activities resulted in conflict between recreationalists (de Milliano and van Sambeek 1986) and between recreationalists and other interest groups. The latter were concerned with the menace posed by the growth of tourism to the quality of village life (Kerstens 1972), and the threat to nature (Voskens *et al.* 1987). The controversy between nature organizations, who were responsible for the management of large nature areas on the one hand, and

recreationalists on the other, became increasingly sharp during the 1980s (van de Windt 1995). Restrictions were increasingly placed on recreation and tourism in order to minimize or prevent the ecosystem from being disrupted.

Conflicts between those using the countryside do not always arise because the one actually hinders the other. The presence of a particular group of people in an area can, for some, be reason enough for feeling their experience as a whole is being negated. Crowds disturb the illusion that country places have managed to escape the frenzy of modern life. At the same time country people may find it difficult to accept that their home is being used as a backdrop for tourism and that they are left with the feeling that their living space is being taken over by others.

The physical environment, and thus the countryside as well, can be relevant to its users in a variety of different ways. The types of relevance can be linked to four different values attributable to the surroundings:

- *utility value*; instrumentally speaking these are opportunities offered by the surroundings for the pursuit of activities (for example, paths for walkers, a temperature which allows people to enjoy being able to dress more lightly, the possibility of meeting others etc);
- *experience value*; this relates to evaluations emerging from general schemes of perception and these are based on the aesthetic, a perception of contrasts and experience transmitted by the senses and described by such qualifications as ugly or beautiful; hilly or flat; open or closed; sweet smelling or foul);
- *attraction value*; the expression of a variety of interesting facts and specific information about an area, such as stories about the history or the significance of a place, references to people who have written about a particular location, background stories to things that can be found locally or that once existed (see for example MacCannell 1989);
- *appropriation value* which indicates the extent to which people get the feeling or the certainty that an area is theirs and that other visitors can be seen as intruders.

On the basis of these values, the countryside in general or one rural area in particular can acquire a number of totally different significances. Many activities are not directly related to experiential qualifications such as country, farm or nature, but concern the utility value of infrastructure or physical qualities that are the result of agrarian history: sand paths, ditches, space and views or limited accessibility. For many people the countryside is a place where one can walk or cycle relatively undisturbed. But these activities could, in principle, take place anywhere that the same possibilities for use are available.

Experience value involves a specific experience that is associated with the countryside. The experience value primarily refers to rural *space* recognizable in specific contexts. The image is evoked by the sound of farm animals, the penetrating smell of manure, the broad horizon and here

and there the silhouette of a village, old farmhouses which look as if time has stood still, the style of clothes worn by country people, confrontations with farm machinery and clay on the streets. It is difficult to accommodate the sight of a group of amateur cyclists, dressed in excessively colourful aerodynamic costumes, within the rustic image.

Attraction value is primarily associated with *place*: something that only exists 'there' and is identified by all the many special references to it in descriptions and stories. Some parts of the province of Drenthe (in the northeast of the Netherlands) are directly associated with stories about the area that have appeared in literature. The accompanying illustrations also exert their influence. As a result the province is associated with heather-covered moors and sheep. These wandering flocks can, however, only survive by being artificially maintained and have in fact, little to do with modern agricultural functions. Not fully realistic, thus. Many areas of managed agriculture are oriented to the maintenance of particular rural images. The concept of authenticity is often used in the context of tourism research because tourists often ask whether or not what they are visiting is actually what it seems to be (Ex and Lengkeek 1996). There is considerable variation in the importance attached to the authenticity of a tourist attraction (Cohen 1979). 'James Herriot country,' for example is neither a social or geographical reality but mainly a literary fiction. Since the stories associated with objects are important in stimulating tourist interest, those who develop tourist products tend to provide plenty of information about tourist attractions. This information is often very exaggerated and sometimes entirely fictitious. Tourist attractions are frequently viewed with suspicion: they are not authentic, they are (re)constructed or appear to be more than they actually are. For a number of years now all the French motorways have been equipped with boards indicating what is to be seen in the surrounding countryside: vineyards, wild horses, battlefields. The Dutch rural tourist board continues to issue maps of new routes all of which are accompanied by extensive descriptions: the cherry route; the windmill route; the route along characteristic old farms and so on.

The appropriation value of the countryside is oriented to the exclusive right of use, experience, or the attraction of unusual stories and is reflected in the enormous interest shown by Dutch town-dwellers, since the 1960s, either for moving permanently to the country or for owning a second home or holiday house there. The conflict between claims can be seen in the many protests from local people against setting up big tourist attractions, laying out large-scale nature reserves, or protection policy towards the landscape or cultural monuments. Appropriation value can be based on a feeling of connection, on a right built up more or less from repeated use, which is sometimes associated with activity, the investment of time (exercise of social control or helping to keep certain things going) and with actual legal rights and authority (such as anglers who have a license to fish or may lease or even own fishing waters and their surroundings).

On Multiple Realities

The various values attributed to socio-physical surroundings and thus to the countryside as well can give rise to widely differing concepts of rurality. An important question here is why particular values are attributed to certain areas. It would seem that those who use rural areas for recreation or tourism are precisely the ones for whom what the countryside is, is the less relevant than what it signifies for them. Research (Brouwer 1997) has shown that the image developed for the tourist, partly because of the use of visual material in promotion, gradually comes to dominate the image of the rural areas and as a result this image becomes increasingly narrow. Countryside reality becomes increasingly identified with that of touristic illusion. Is there still a countryside in reality? This question should first be posed at a more general level. What is the reality of the image of the world in which man lives? We shall therefore detach ourselves for a moment from the specific context of the countryside.

The German sociologist and philosopher Alfred Schutz (1990) concluded that individuals build up a communal notion of reality in which material and social phenomena are experienced as given and natural. In ordinary daily life people work, as it were, with unconscious theories of existence: self-evident, habits, experiences, knowledge, beliefs or common sense, which can be maintained as long as they work and are not contradicted. Individuals share these notions of the self-evident with each other. Against the background of an objective reality that can only be partly comprehended, they build up a communally shared reality which forms the reality of everyday life. Doubts about its limitations are to some extent 'bracketed.'

This intersubjective reality is constructed around certain aspects or 'parameters' of reality (Lengkeek 1996). These parameters which have, broadly speaking, been drawn from Schutz (1990) are: tension of consciousness; proprioception: a feeling of 'self' and the edges of ones own finite being; sociability; time and space.

Let us begin with the tension of consciousness. The individual in modern western society is accustomed to doing things with considerable intensity. The pattern of daily transactions is complex but the individual is supported by a fixed routine. Because of this intensity and complexity, individuals are able to assess things carefully for themselves and to anticipate what might occur. The individual is subject to considerable tension because of this. Modern society creates stress, we say. One important part of this intense existence (but certainly not the only part) is related to work. Application, involvement, competition, and perseverance are the important pillars on which the production system is based.

A second parameter assumes special significance in this fairly frenzied existence of 'being busy.' Following Olivier Sachs (1985) we call this proprioception, the self-evident experience of ourselves and our physical

boundaries. This experience involves a number of self-evidences including the way an individual more or less pushes aside the fact of his or her own end: death. Death is feared in everyday life but the daily round allows little room for this feeling. In the same way the possibility that others will die is put, as it were, into parenthesis. In the public domain sexual drives are also suppressed and kept within bounds. The sociologist Norbert Elias (1969) described the western process of civilization as an ever increasing mastery of physical drives. Violence or fear of death are overcome and pushed aside. The image of self is partly linked to the success or failure of this struggle to achieve self control.

The image of self is also related to a third parameter: a degree of sociability. An image of the self and others is developed through contact with those around one. The social community carries a world of culture and images and transmits this. We relate reality to the social world with which we are familiar. Language is the most important medium in the exchange of signals and significances. Language is an invaluable help, but at the same time limits the world which individuals talk about with each other or which they, thinking in the same words, make accessible to themselves. The language which individuals speak is bound up with the people with whom they associate. The way an individual uses language makes him or her recognizable: we, them, foreigners, the respectable, the common, insiders and intruders.

The fourth parameter is time. Time is the experience that the one moment is not the same as the other. In the modern intense world the feeling of time is dependent on the clock and not on day and night and the changing seasons. The clock, apparently, has made time objective. More and more is being written by different authors about the speeding up of our consciousness of time, the units into which the way we spend time are divided and how these follow each other in rapid succession, compartmentalizing our consciousness of time (Giddens 1991; van der Poel 1993). Within the course of an individual life, time can have a variety of meanings. As individuals become more adult and more intensely involved in the tensions of everyday events, the feeling that time flies grows. Children do not have this feeling to the same extent. Later, however, diaries and appointments drive their tempo up.

The last parameter is the space that constitutes the horizon of our everyday life. This horizon is becoming wider and wider thanks to television, the airplane and the car. Within this space individuals can now move more rapidly from one place to another. Everyday space offers trusted routines: there are smells, the colours of the landscape, the feeling of smooth tarmac, and roads that always go somewhere. Everyday space, that as 'place' contains forms and symbols well-known to us, acquires a more global uniformity in the modern context. In this way damage is done to 'a sense of place' and it seems as if the specificity of the space in which the individual finds him or herself has largely disappeared (Harvey 1989).

Whilst the – intersubjective – everyday reality in modern society is viewed primarily as experiential, there appears to be an increasing fascination for that which is outside the rationalized world. Wertheim (1977) concluded that societies, also the more traditional, have a dominant ordering and alongside this something that can be characterized as social counterpoint. Counterpoint in musical terms indicates the use of two independent melodies which are heard at the same time within the one composition. The human imagination has produced many different sorts of reality expressed in art, culture, leisure and amusement in which the social order is turned up-side-down, ignored and attacked. In western society this has led to the more or less parallel development of the rationality of the Enlightenment (with its emphasis on scientific knowledge, technology and efficiency) and the imagination of the Romantic (with the emphasis on autonomous nature, emotions and the fictive). Modern man appears to move backwards and forwards between both sides of the world.

The Quest for Otherness and the Lifeworld

What is specific to the tourist and the recreation experience is that variations are developed around the world of everyday experience along the parameters we mentioned earlier. For a brief moment people enter another reality, a reality distinct from that of daily life. The individual allows the intensity associated with the tension of consciousness to fall away. He or she 'takes time off,' 'is free.' Or they feed the tension with risk-filled activities that demand the fullest concentration. In both cases this contributes to a special feeling of self. Thus tourism can involve both relaxation and effort. Playing with death can be the basis for certain types of tourist passion. Hunting or running great risks in climbing are forms of behaviour in which the denied relationship with death is made real in a form that is far removed from that of everyday life. During holidays sexuality often acquires another dimension. The holiday romance is a very illustrative example. The hunting season for young men and women opens on the beach or in the disco. In the disco, to the accompaniment of deafening music, one is taken up in ones own body and in an overwhelming feeling of communality. One can experience ones body again on the beach: naked and sensitive under the warmth of the sun. Above all the holiday offers, for a moment, another social world. It seems as if the shopkeepers, the waiters, the people in the street are all taking part in a performance, that is being put on for us, the holiday makers (and not infrequently this is in fact the case). People often want to belong to this world. Francophiles develop a great sympathy for the French baker. What they would most like to do is embrace him and show him that they have been absorbed into his world. Or when the longing for another place overwhelms them, they

buy a second house. What is remarkable is the break with the normal feeling of time that people experience when they go on holiday. A short holiday, during which many things happen or one full of new sensations is experienced as a long period of time and people often return to it in their thoughts. But a lazy holiday of four weeks is quickly over and slips into memory. The change of surroundings puts holiday makers in another spatial context. Sometimes they do little more than what they would normally do at home but even so they are 'out' (as Urry 1992, puts it: 'Home from Home'). Sometimes the difference from the everyday is not very great but it is significant: in old-fashioned tourist spots there is the look-out tower which offers a view of the surroundings that is very different from the usual one.

The way in which the experience of other realities is 'realized' in a particular physical space or social context determines the type of value being sought in that context: strictly oriented to utility; focused on the terms of general experience; living out a story or image; or control and appropriation. In short, the four values we discussed earlier. Even so some degree of nuance is necessary in attributing values to the countryside. A theoretical consideration must be taken into account here which can in principal be applied to every valued determined by tourism and recreation. The journey or search for an unusual reality can be more or less removed from everyday life or be given varying degrees of significance. Cohen (1979) developed a typology of touristic experience which ran from the farthest extreme of superficial amusement to recognizing the existential importance in that which was other than day-to-day reality. In this case he compared existential significance with the notion of the sublime in a place of pilgrimage, where pilgrims sought to communicate with a world that is better than the one they had left behind. In this way the countryside too can assume the significance of a negotiable object, quick and easy to reach, a place of pleasure, somewhere to recover from the stress of everyday life, an object of historical interest both cultural and natural where solidarity, intimacy and a calm pace of life can still be found.

The tourist image of the countryside may be becoming more dominant but is not per se unambiguous and it also displays inconsistencies. The various kinds of significance found in the rural environment are repeatedly being reassembled or linked to each other in new ways (Dietvorst 1994), changing aspects are emphasized and new aspects are constructed. These significances do not simply appear out of the blue. In Schutz' phenomenological theory, different realities provide departure points for a better understanding of the process of changing significance. His reasoning is that people have access to a reservoir of suggestions, memories, determinants of value and significances that have been built up during the course of cultural history. Following philosophers such as Hegel and Husserl, he refers to this as the 'lifeworld.' This lifeworld encompasses all the social and cultural experiences that have been built up over time

and which are related to the reality parameters referred to earlier: both the everyday as well as all experiences and fictions that diverge from it. If the parameters form the skeleton of our awareness of reality, then the lifeworld in its totality is the fabric that encases this skeleton. The lifeworld thus creates a frame of reference from which people as human beings together experience culture and society as something external to themselves. People adopt an attitude to this and undertake action directed at the external world. In this position the internal existence of a lifeworld is accepted as implicitly present or possible (Schutz 1990, p. 116). The external world is constructed or reconstructed from this position as if this were objective reality. The lifeworld not only forms the background to the modification and adaptation that takes place in everyday reality as circumstances change. It also forms the source from which all sorts of realities that differ from those of daily life are derived. Nostalgia, future dreams and other flights away from the here and now are developed from the lifeworld. Thus touristic experiences, within the conditions of a time and space that differs from the everyday, are capable of becoming reality for shorter or longer periods of time.

This source of significance ascription is drawn on to construct 'rural resources' from landscape, traditions, buildings, paths and hedges anything which can be of service to the tourist. This can happen in many different ways: one way is the observation and interpretation made by tourists visiting the countryside, another is that businessmen or government put together a 'tourist product' in which different kinds of significance are explicitly or implicitly offered to the tourist and recreationalist. In this way the countryside, for some, becomes a place of amusement and pleasure, for others a place where they can find peace. For the one it is a place full of interesting villages, farms and the remains of agricultural traditions, for the other somewhere where those qualities missing in city life can be found and enjoyed (Bramwell and Lane 1994; Vandergeest and Dupuis 1996). The countryside can, however, also give a new interpretation to everyday life: as a place that offers a valuable life environment where living is comfortable (Hinrichs 1996).

Practices in the Rural Areas

The changing significance of the countryside and the many physical consequences this involves, including the construction of new facilities, conservation measures and the development of nature, has led to the creation of diversity in rural spaces and the overlapping of these spaces (Cloke and Goodwin 1992; Hoggart *et al.* 1995). Each space corresponds to specific everyday (local inhabitants) and unusual realities (tourists). In this context, Urry (1990) and Rojek (1993) refer to 'plural leisure landscapes' which involve a constant production of scenes and sensations. Often the

specific images of countrylife and the use made of rural space do not correspond with each other or they do at different tempos (Dietvorst and Hetsen 1996). Above all it is the dominance of groups of social actors and their images that turn the countryside into a competitive arena (Hinrichs 1996, p. 261).

In this section we will briefly give a few examples of how situations or social practices in which the differentiation of concrete forms of tourist recreative behaviour are expressed. We will look at the significance the local population attaches to its own rural living space, the background lifeworld and the values of the particular surroundings, and we will examine the way actors give validity to their lifeworld.

Different Styles of Camping on the Farm

A great deal of tourist and recreative behaviour is oriented specifically to the countryside. One way of experiencing the countryside is to stay there for a while and camping is a way of doing this, bringing the individual into contact with the land, smells and so on. There is a variety of different ways one can camp. Tourist recreative behaviour shows both regularity and differentiation. There is a relationship between practice and action and this can be differentiated according to 'styles.' Research carried out a few years ago showed that there are different styles of camping and that within the context of camping in the countryside, a variety of patterns can be identified (Zonneveld 1988). These different styles express different world images and accentuate divergent aspects of the lifeworld.

Styles of holiday making are related to more general patterns: these can be designated 'lifestyle.' Giddens has described lifestyle as routinized practices that are embedded in habits of clothing, eating and consuming, for example, and in the surroundings in which people chose to meet one another (Schuurman 1989; Schuurman and Walsh 1994). Lifestyle, according to him, can be defined as 'a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian needs but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self identity' (Giddens 1991, p. 81). Kelly (1983) pointed out the importance of leisure activities such as recreation and tourism that form identity.

According to Bourdieu (1984) what is involved here is primarily the differentiating capacity of taste – in the sense of the competency to judge – that is expressed through lifestyle. Style of behaviour is dependent on resources (money, knowledge, contacts) which individuals learn to deal with from the time they are children. Gradually they become accustomed to reacting to situations in a particular way: this Bourdieu calls 'habitus.' On the one hand Bourdieu, considers regularity in action can be explained by viewing the habitus as a central mechanism. The habitus consists of enduring, learned but 'unconscious observations and value systems'

(dispositions) which in certain areas of activity determine thought, values and ways of doing things. On the other hand, the habitus maintains a dynamic relationship with external circumstances or 'conditions of existence.' It is true that the habitus is formed under the influence of external conditions (social position of parents, family of orientation, resources available). But once formed, the habitus exerts an influence on situations because the habitus is directed by the perception of situations, the choices people make and the ambitions that people try to realize in particular surroundings.

Lifestyle is the making concrete of habitus in behaviour and consumption patterns and this is brought to full expression in certain situations. Lifestyle can change under the influence of changing situations. It is precisely here that the setting of the lifeworld provides elements and possible associations which allow style patterns to be adjusted and renewed.

We know that in general the lowest status groups are underrepresented amongst campers (Zonneveld 1988). The preference for camping is in itself a distinction in the total range of holiday possibilities. If we compare 'ordinary campers' with 'campers on the farm' then the latter is differentiated from the former not so much by structural characteristics such as income, training and profession, but by taste and preference. In a negative sense this is expressed by their rejection of large-scale tourist accommodation, which they perceive as holiday factories, in a positive sense by their preference for what they expect to be an authentic experience of the countryside or the farm and personal contact with the farm family. They imagine that during their stay on the farm they will come in contact with real farmlife such as they picture it in their imagination or as they remember it from their youth. This image appeals to the past, to the pure, the simple. Some people are looking for these qualities because the everyday lifeworld is not authentic and too complex. They believe that if there is one peaceful place left amid the tension of modern day life, this must be the farm campsite.

Our study into the different forms of small-scale camping in the Dutch countryside offers an insight into the different styles of these campers. The behaviour, motives and preferences of those camping on farms can be described along two dimensions: preference for a certain degree of comfort and the degree to which the farm campsite is chosen as a matter of principle. Four styles of campers can be identified (te Kloetze 1990): comfort-oriented farm campers; idealistic farm campers; complex farm campers; chance farm campers.

What are these different types of campers looking for in the countryside? It is theoretically relevant, in the context of this contribution, to ask whether and to what extent we can define these consumption styles in terms of the four values referred to earlier. In so doing we will consider the values associated with the surroundings: both those attributed to the

physical environment (nature, attractive landscape and the farm), and those attributed to the social (contact between the host, hostess and guest). The latter refers to one of the lifestyle fields introduced by Ganzeboom (1983): network and social contact.

The comfort-oriented campers attach much importance to comfortable accommodation and are less concerned with seeking the small-scale, peace and space. They prefer a larger terrain with extensive facilities (although in comparison with standard campsites, relatively simple farm campsites) and they look for contact with their fellow campers. Utility value is the dominant theme for them. Attraction value may also be important, particularly because their awareness of camping possibilities has been created by 'recruiting' folders and enticing images. They are sensitive to the advertising message which promises them rural surroundings and a good and dependable location.

The idealistic farm campers chose this form of camping because it offers a small-scale environment together with peace, space, natural surroundings, personal treatment and contact with farmlife. They find the standard campsite impersonal and are not looking for comfort. 'Question of principle' campers score high as far as experience and the appropriation values are concerned. It is their spot. Nature, the rural idyll, the desired and experienced hospitality, the personal contact with real farm men and women who really want to offer and do offer this (not 'staged authenticity' but 'real'), and to such a degree that they wish to return again and again to this spot; to the host and hostess; back to the land where life is good, back to nature. This is what they are doing it for. People search for these experiences in the Netherlands itself, but new and attractive destinations can also be found in Rumania or Poland, for example. Here in particular the individual has the feeling that he or she can return to a time that is the same now as it was when displayed in the picture books during the first half of this century. It is a passionate search for the smells and colours of the past, literally and figuratively taking a peep into the country kitchen.

The combination of the motives and preferences mentioned here can be found amongst the *complex* campers: comfort is important, consciously choosing this form of camping is equally important. The value of the surroundings as far as use, experience and attraction are concerned play a certain role in the process of deciding to stay on an agrarian campsite. Appropriation is less important.

Finally, for 'chance' campers neither comfort nor a conscious choice for this type of camping is of decisive importance; cheapness is, however. This type of camping is an interesting option for those on benefit or with a minimum income. The attraction value is not unimportant: it fuels the opportunistic choice for this form of camping. Whereas use value and experience value are more relevant for complex campers, the four values

have less explicit significance for chance campers. For them camping as a style is dominant: where and how will depend on price and chance.

Whilst there is no clear difference between those who camp on the farm and campers in general, something can be said about the way in which family life and life phase play a role in the preference for a specific style. Older people are mostly found amongst the 'idealistic' campers and young families amongst the 'comfort oriented.' Ganzeboom (1988) has already pointed out that the notion of life phase is an omission in Bourdieu's approach. It is an important element if we wish to emphasize the dynamic character of habitus and lifestyle: each phase of life has its own limitations and possibilities with an eye to consumption patterns and within this (apparently) also its own image forming mechanism. Campers adapt their camping choice to the conditions prescribed by the phase of family life they find themselves in. Camping styles are, therefore, life-phase specific. An initial preference for small-scale camping is temporarily abandoned when the children become teenagers. Because of the children a four or more star camping is chosen. When the 'empty nest' phase arrives there is a return to earlier preoccupations (Hout, te Kloetze and van der Voet 1993). Preferences that have been internalized by habitus at a younger age can be by-passed for a time in favour of others. As soon as external circumstances permit, preferences learned at an early age are practised again. This illustrates the stable but also the dynamic character of lifestyle (that is, camping style) and habitus.

What is particularly noticeable here is that the differences in country-camping styles corresponds to a certain extent to differences in the 'style' in which farmers² offer various camping possibilities. The concept 'style' does not necessarily have to be limited to lifestyle, as a combination of consumer practices (for example, tourists) but can also be used on the supply side as 'farm style' (Long and van der Ploeg 1994). *Professional* campsite farmers run their campsites in a professional and commercial way (good facilities, a large number of camp places, large numbers of campers). They have plans to extend their camping business, for them the commercial and financial motive is decisive, the social aspects of the business less so. Dairy farms and mixed farms are over-represented, as are sites in the attractive touristic provinces of Limburg and Zeeland. The social side of the business is important for the *idealistic* campsite farmer (desire for contact and a friendly atmosphere, a positive attitude to recreation in the countryside). Most farmers of this type have arable or mixed farms. The motives and preferences mentioned above can also be found amongst the *idealistic-professional* campsite farmers. They run their businesses in a professional and commercial way but they do not lose sight of the social aspects. They are mostly found amongst farmers whose farm is their main enterprise and they are concentrated in Zeeland. Finally, the *pragmatic* campsite farmers are less commercial and professional in their approach and the social aspect is certainly not a decisive one. The oppor-

tunity to start a campsite on their farm came by chance (this type of campsite is mostly found amongst livestock farmers and horticultural concerns).

The images that make camping on the farm a tourist experience are very much alive amongst the various 'style groups' into which campers can be divided. These images are also reflected in the supply of campsites offered by farmers. Farmers respond to the demand and in doing so take the running of their farm into consideration. This means that each farmer will react in his or her own way. Some will take up the theme of nostalgia, others will respond to the demand for peace and comfort. However, in making these choices the campsite farmer will also be constrained by the affinity he or she feels for the lifestyle and thus the camping style of the client (te Kloeze 1990).

Thematization and Scene Making

As we have seen earlier, those who supply tourist and recreational facilities in the countryside make use of the images and values in their surroundings, and actively use images that have associations with the consumers' lifeworld. Thus tourism is to an important extent a trade in experiences. The tourist can choose from a wide range of tourist destinations. Price is not decisive for this choice. For Dutch people a weekend in London or Paris is often just as expensive as spending a few days in the southern province Limburg. At least as decisive as the price and the quality of the holiday accommodation is the experience sought. We realized from recent interviews with tourist entrepreneurs in Dutch Limburg and the Voerstreek in Belgium that today they are more preoccupied with the 'attraction value' of the surroundings whereas in the past they were more concerned with the quality of accommodation. The attractiveness and diversity of the physical space and the cultural surroundings now act as a source for the development of touristic product chains (Jansen-Verbeke 1994, p. 39). The landscape, nature and architecture are brought into play in all possible ways in order to meet the demand for diversity. In addition to these consumer demands, entrepreneurs engaged in tourist product development are also confronted by developments within society itself. In the countryside this is mainly reflected in the increasing amount of attention being given to the protection of nature and the landscape. This has made it more difficult for entrepreneurs working in the context of tourism and recreation to introduce changes into the physical and spacial surroundings. They avoid the problem by thematizing the countryside. In doing so space is given a specific significance that is attractive to large groups. Urry (1992, p. 145) described this process as follows:

'There is an increasingly pervasive tendency to divide up Britain spatially. A series of place names have been invented for the tourist. In the north of England there is 'Last of the Summer Wine Country,'

'Emmadale Farm Country,' 'James Herriot Country,' 'Robin Hood Country,' 'Catherine Cookson Country,' 'Bronte Country' and so on.'

A similar sort of development is underway in the Netherlands. VVVs (Tourist Information Offices) and entrepreneurs offer a choice of theme-orientated activities such as castle tours, architecture walks, discovery trips, opulent banquets and drinking festivals in the countryside. There are even companies that specialize in setting out 'theme routes.' The promotion of certain rural areas is conducted in much the same style as that adopted for 'city marketing': with the help of posters, brochures and other forms of advertisement images are created of regions and these are linked to stories about their history or their very special character. In this way entrepreneurs create more associations with the district and in doing so are careful to take into account which specific theme appeals to which tourist target group. In this way rural space is transformed into a multiple tourist-recreative space. In a symbolic way the area is absorbed into a tourist product. This often begins with the laying out of the terrain and the architecture of the bungalow park. The tourist product is linked to the uniqueness of the natural surroundings, the culture and the history of a particular rural area. These theme-orientated activities are based on a mixture of play, education and nostalgia. In accordance with this recipe, each area can be given a touristic significance.

In addition to this thematization of the countryside, there is also the question of scene making. Those who are involved with creating attractions try to organize the countryside in such a way that it corresponds to stereotypical tourist images. Here the emphasis is placed on the quality of the picturesque, the idyllic and that which never changes. (Urry 1992). In presenting the countryside to the tourist an association is made with a specific awareness of time (Vandergeest and DuPuis 1996). The countryside is intentionally presented as a place where time seems to stand still. Tourists are introduced to old crafts and typical regional products. They receive information about the history of the area and excursions are organized that exploit the present day nostalgia for harmony and tradition. Less attractive realities or modern influences on country life are retouched as much as possible or left out altogether.

The tourist is offered these many 'faces' of the countryside through the medium of changing themes and presentations. Entrepreneurs are flexible in the way they exploit the changing demands of tourism and society. This way of presenting the countryside does not correspond to everyone's deepest expectations and fantasies. Our research in Limburg and the Voerstreek in Belgium showed that the idealized images of the countryside created by the tourist entrepreneur had considerable significance for the business of daily life. Those who live there, and especially those with a specific interest in the history of their home area, experience

this thematization as an attack on good taste and on the integrity of their own notions about the identity of their surroundings. Different views about this sort of development, in which the increase in attraction value influences the strengthening of the personalization value shows that the local population, but also tourists themselves, make demands on the surroundings to a certain degree and in doing so use their image of the area as a measure against which to evaluate change, whether good or bad. In this way some members of the local population will derive a certain pride in the interest tourists show for their village or region. Others, however, will try to distance themselves as far as possible from tourism or even agitate against it. In this context tourism is often an important factor in the process of differentiation within local communities.

Local Identity and the Transformation of the Countryside

Earlier we discussed the way in which images of the countryside are formed and how this is part of the tourist-recreational process. Logically the question now arises as to how this relates to the image held by those who live in rural areas. The time when the farmer's activity determined the rhythm of country life and the organization of rural space is past. Newcomers, such as tourists, commuters, owners of second homes and project developers have in their different ways acquired an influence on the organization of country life. (Murdoch and Marsden 1994). The countryside is becoming increasingly transformed into a new type of 'consumption space' for different income groups (see Urry 1992; Marsden *et al.* 1993; Hinrichs 1996). The construction of golf courses, walking or cycle paths and the building of (spa)hotels, theme parks and luxury holiday bungalow parks makes the rural area attractive to the urban dweller who is looking for touristic pleasure or for an attractive living space. This spatial transformation influences the orientations of the indigenous rural population. They no longer have a clear view of their own society and they lose the feeling that they are rooted in it. According to Groot (1989) this loss has far-reaching consequences for the development of local identity. At the same time this is the arena in which large-scale processes manifest themselves and where power relations appear and are given form. Processes such as globalization and cultural homogenization do not mean that there is no longer any desire amongst rural inhabitants to differentiate themselves from the outside world. Processes leading to increases in scale trigger reactions. The consequences of globalization and universalization seem to be that not only tourists but local inhabitants as well begin to look for inspiration in the past (de Haan 1996, p. 17). At the moment we see that there is a revival of old customs and uses and an increasing consciousness of and attention to one's own village or social community. Changes in the countryside which are the result of external forces do not necessarily lead to the destruction of cultural differences. On

the contrary, they result in a new sharpening of differences. The emphasis on one's own culture can be seen as a form of resistance to forces that have intruded upon and taken away part of the authority individuals had over their own lives (see Cohen 1985; Groot 1989; van Ginkel 1995). Thus tourism can seem to be a threat to local communities. Tourism can also play a positive role offering new images and significance (van Ginkel 1995).

The giving of significance refers, for example, to ideas about the development of nature and style of life, living and recreation (Mormont 1990; Marsden *et al.* 1993; Hoggart *et al.* 1995). Because each space corresponds to a specific function (Lefèbvre 1991) such as recreation area, nature reserve or a peaceful spot, there is a considerable chance that new claims to the same space will be seen as a threat. In this battle various conceptions of reality relating to nature and rural concerns are brought to the fore (Marsden and Murdoch 1994). There is a tension today between the struggle for change on the one hand, and the desire for conservation on the other, and it is a struggle that provides plenty of fuel for the various frictions (Shaw and Williams in Bramwell and Lane 1994, p. 19).

The struggle over the use of space is prompted by the struggle for control over the course of events (Mormont 1990). These goals are sought not only for political and economic reasons but are rooted in social and cultural motives (Vandergeest and Dupuis 1996). Broadly speaking it is the personalization value that is most frequently at issue. Murdoch and Marsden (1994) believe that competition has grown in recent years because rural resources have become increasingly integrated in large-scale economic and cultural circuits. The value of land and buildings in many rural areas, especially in areas close to towns, has risen sharply. There are many social and cultural factors responsible for the way prices have been driven up. Murdoch and Marsden illustrate this by referring to the strategies of project developers. By selling and renovating (country)houses or bidding for investments such as holiday apartments, project developers emphasize in various ways the idyllic aspects of the countryside. In doing so they appeal to the taste of the capital-rich middle class (Hinrichs 1996).³ The new middle class is glad to see country places developed according to its own aesthetic values and in this way a social distinction is introduced between themselves and the indigenous population. At the same time this middle class is assured of a lucrative investment for its economic capital. Encouraged by such transactions on the part of the new middle class, the commodification of the countryside proceeds apace:

'Rurality is as much a product produced for, marketed to and consumed by different class fractions. Rurality as an object for consumption rests on both material instances and symbolic understandings of landscape, tradition and place' (Hinrichs 1996, p. 261).

This quotation from Hinrichs emphasizes the countryside as an object of consumption based on a particular conception of landscape, behaviour and place. Image forming plays a particularly important role in the personalization of rural space. According to Mormont (1990), image forming is the result of divergent networks of actors. Connections in these networks are the result of shared values, and market and political relationships. Social changes result not only in other networks, they also lead to a new representation of the countryside.

The new monster association between tourist and nature management organizations such as the ANWB, the *Nederlandse Spoorwegen* (the Netherlands Railway), the *Vereniging tot behoud van Natuurmonumenten* (Association for the Conservation of Natural Monuments) and the *Wereld Natuur-fond* (World Nature Fund), together with their struggle for a 'new' nature, is an example of this. The decreasing importance of agriculture creates space for new and varied images of nature, landscape and village life. Nature organizations present the countryside predominantly as worth protecting from the forces that threaten it. Tourism entrepreneurs present an image of a healthy traditional and authentic countryside. Television programmes and advertising show us an image of the countryside where tradition and strong social integration are just as real today as in the past. In an advertisement for a Limburg-brewed beer, the principal character cycles through an idyllic landscape where farmers harvest the corn together in the old traditional way. This is intended to make us feel that some of the typical features of the countryside are also basic to the production of this beer: these include tradition (farm labourers, use of wooden beer barrels and figures chalked on a board); solidarity (as opposed to the individuality of city life) and health (no haste and pressure).

Conclusion

We have presented a theoretical view in which the social construction of reality has been given a central place. The reality in rural areas is also a social construct both in the context of the everyday lifeworld, and in the world of images that attract tourist and recreationalists. In this process, as we have shown, various 'countrysides come into being' sometimes within one and the same space. The way in which the countryside is relevant to tourists and tourist entrepreneurs, and the consequences this has for the country dwellers can be related to a variety of values: utility value; experience value; attraction value; and personalization value. These values show how the lifeworld is fitted to particular social and physical space that has clearly been dominated and is still sometimes dominated by agricultural use and agricultural interests. From a sketch of practical situations in which this perspective has been employed, it appears that a dynamic process of transformation is taking place in the countryside. Rural

communities and space have both undergone far-reaching changes and are increasingly influenced by processes of economic restructuring and new social composition. These have a very different origin from those associated with the agricultural domain (Cloke and Goodwin 1992).

The chosen theoretical perspective provides a structure for further research into the relationship between these processes of change and recreation and tourism which we have classified as unusual projections of the lifeworld on the surroundings. The theory can be applied further at three levels.

First, the level of the relationship between social, economic and political processes through which the context of the social construction of the countryside changes, especially as far as the countryside and tourist recreational context is concerned. This theory can then be related to various scientific approaches to rural society and global transformations.

Second, the level of the actors involved in this process, including those actors who together give content and form to the realization of lifeworld values in the countryside (tourist groups, associations of entrepreneurs, government organizations, interest groups and societies), and also those actors who come together to fight out claims to rural space or who enter into negotiation with each other. Insight into the social world of the actors and the confrontation between opposing interests form the basis for focused interventions to bring interest into balance and to reconcile them if possible.

Third, the level of substantive not-everyday attribution of significance from the lifeworld to the countryside, the *raison d'être* of the claims of tourism and recreation to the countryside. This level of analysis should clarify what tourists are looking for in the countryside (space for those seeking peace and quiet; dusty paths for 'real' walkers; the 'true' fishing water, the experience of agricultural nature and so on), and has implications for design and differentiation in the organization and management of space.

This differentiation is an analytical one, an attempt to get close to particular aspects of the process of transformation as a whole. These aspects all play a role within social practice and these relationships deserve research attention. In the introduction we sketched a problem of scientific integration. As Marsden *et al.* (1993, pp. 3–4) observed:

'Rural sociologists . . . must always go beyond traditional agrarian concerns which focus on the political and social position of agricultural labour. They must embrace the position and role of rural people, notions of rurality in contemporary society, and the processes and structures through which access to and use of rural resources are constructed. They are quintessentially *social science* questions.'

When the study of rural sociology becomes more systematically concerned with the way recreation and tourism develops in the countryside there will

be another task for scientific integration which can have many practical consequences for the interpretation of and intervention in processes of rural restructuring.

Notes

- 1 Recreation and tourism are both used as concepts in this chapter. We make a distinction between the two in as much as recreation is seen as a break from the routine of everyday life, that in time, space and significance lies close to the trusted everyday life. Tourism, in our view, is more removed from daily life: people travel farther afield for it, stay overnight and remain for longer periods in a place that cannot be reached during a short break in the daily routine. Recreation and tourism merge into each other and it is, therefore, difficult to make a sharp distinction between them. In some places in the text one of these concepts has been used. This choice is a little arbitrarily and more for reasons of style. We in fact mean both concepts but to be consistent and use both every time is tiring both the writers and the reader.
- 2 We refer here to the farmers who run camping sites but in fact it is usually the farmers' wives who deal with this side of the business (Oostindie and Peters 1994).
- 3 Recreation and tourism are both used as concepts in this chapter. We make a distinction between the two in as much as recreation is seen as a break from the routine of everyday life, that in time, space and significance lies close to the trusted everyday life. Tourism, in our view, is more removed from daily life: people travel farther afield for it, stay overnight and remain for longer periods in a place that cannot be reached during a short break in the daily routine. Recreation and tourism merge into each other and it is, therefore, difficult to make a sharp distinction between them. In some places in the text one of these concepts has been used. This choice is a little arbitrarily and more for reasons of style. We in fact mean both concepts but to be consistent and use both every time is tiring both the writers and the reader.