The 2010 Ryder Cup, images of Wales and tourism development

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Abstract

This research explored the image of Wales as a nation and a potential tourism destination in relation to the 2010 Ryder Cup. Despite being promoted and positioned as the third biggest sporting event in the world remarkably little academic research has focused on the Ryder Cup. As part of some ongoing research into this mega-event the study focuses upon the images of Wales and attempts to tease out the dominant narratives shaping tourism development in the country. By undertaking a survey of students at a large state university in the USA, we wanted to explore perceived images of this small nation. Results are positioned against readings of the official documentation of key stakeholders involved in the 2010 Ryder Cup, in an attempt to further explore and unpack some of the meanings surrounding image within policy narratives. This case shows that there are many challenges facing those developing tourism in Wales and that the nation struggles to promote itself as a distinct and identifiable entity. The research considers the impact of the Ryder Cup on Wales and points to some of the issues shaping tourism policy in the country.

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'Image is everything'
(Andre Agassi)

'An image is not simply a trademark, a design, a slogan or an easily remembered picture. It is a studiously crafted personality profile of an individual, institution, corporation, product or service'
(Daniel Boorstin)

Introduction

The small nation of Wales represents an interesting case to explore image and tourism in relation to a mega sporting event. As a part of the wider collectives of Great Britain, and the United Kingdom, Wales has often struggled to promote and position itself as a distinct and identifiable place (see Smith, 1984; Williams, 1985). For many years Wales has also suffered

from a very poor image where negative stereotypes appeared in many spheres, positioned alongside a narrative of postindustrial decline that saw the nation depicted in a largely negative fashion (e.g. Price, 1999; Weight, 2002). Pitchford (1995) looked at the positioning of Wales as an internal colony of England and noted the perceived 'backwardness' of the former in core-periphery relations (see also, Aaron & Williams, 2005). Certainly image plays a key role in understanding the power dynamics which influence the perceptions of any 'marginal' nation and in this paper we focus on image as an important facet of tourism promotion and look at the role of the Ryder Cup as a means of projecting a particular image of Wales.

Sport has long been an important aspect of Welsh society. As the historian Richard Holt (1989) has noted, the emergence of codified sporting forms (notably rugby) in the nation during the latter part of the nineteenth century gave a particular means for outsiders to identify the Welsh and for the Welsh to define themselves. This gave the country an identity at a time when the rapid industrialization of the south Wales valleys saw mass migration into the coalfields of the region. Here sports such as association football, rugby union and boxing have been identified as particularly important for their role in helping to shape communities and identities (Johnes, 2002; Smith & Williams, 1980; Williams & Stead, 2008).

The hosting of major sporting events has been seen as something important and desirable for a number of years. Cardiff hosted the Empire Games (now known as the Commonwealth Games) in 1958 and in more recent years the capital city has also staged international test cricket matches and FA Cup finals. These both highlight some of the complex identities present here, for in the case of the former the home team competes as England (although includes players from other parts of the Isles and beyond), and the latter is perhaps one of the most English of all sporting events (see Harris, 2008; Holden, 2011). Yet it is the sport of Rugby Union that many people most associate with Wales.

Rugby Union ascended to the position of the national game and has long served a key role

in both promoting and expressing a particular Welsh national identity (e.g. Williams, 1991). Wales also hosted Rugby World Cup (RWC) matches in 1991, 1999 and 2007. It was not the host nation on two of these occasions but testament to the politics central to international rugby governance some games still took place in the Principality (see Harris, 2010; Richards, 2007; Wyatt, 1995). The last RWC competition of the millennium was hosted by Wales (with matches also taking place in neighboring nations) and a hi-tech stadium was built with the first retractable roof for a sports stadium in Europe. The RWC has often been positioned as the third biggest sporting event in the world although this particular label is a contested one for a number of other events, such as the Ryder Cup, also frequently claim this moniker.

In October, 2010 Wales hosted the Ryder Cup for the first time when the Celtic Manor resort just outside the city of Newport provided the stage for the biggest team event in golf. As is the case it seems with all large scale sporting events in contemporary times, the rhetoric of 'legacy' and long-term benefits formed a key part of the rationale for staging the event. For almost fifty years the Ryder Cup had taken place as a match between Great Britain and the USA but the domination of the latter meant that it looked as though the event would have to stop as it was so one-sided. Ireland was added to the Great Britain team in 1973 but it was the extending of the team to represent Europe in 1979 that proved to be the key moment in the development of the event. Whilst the change made the match much more competitive it was to take a few more years before the event became something that could make a profit.

During the past two decades the event has developed markedly attracting an international television audience and is now clearly positioned as the biggest team event in the sport of golf (see Concannon, 2004). In adopting this label, interested stakeholders would argue that this was the third biggest sporting event in the world (e.g. Hudson & Hudson, 2010) and it hereby represented the biggest sporting event that Wales could ever stage. Furthermore, it was regularly stated that the match would provide significant benefits to

the host city of Newport and the nation as a whole (e.g. Visit Wales, 2007). In offering an analysis of the 2010 Ryder Cup, and its positioning within and around wider tourism policy, we focus on the area of image as being one that offers an interesting means of developing our understanding of the significance of mega sporting events to tourism policy development. Thus, this research explores the image of Wales as a nation and a potential tourism destination before and after the Ryder Cup.

Literature review

Image, imaging and imagining

Boorstin (1961) was among the first to highlight the prevalence and power of image and noted that image increasingly supersedes reality. Hall (2005: p.129) notes that image is 'a key concept of the twenty-first century' and that 'the role of image is highly important' in contemporary (re)presentations of places (see also, Chalip & McGuirly, 2004; Hallmann & Breuer, 2010; Harris, 2008). Hinch (2006) has outlined how sport is used as a form of national culture to promote tourism in Canada and notes that 'while tourism marketing of destination image can often seem to be a caricature of national identity, it can certainly be a powerful one' (p.25). Image has been one of the most studied themes in the tourism literature because of its influence on travel decisions and experiences (Pike, 2002).

Early work in this area includes the research of Hunt (1975) who defined destination image as an individual's overall perception of a place, and Crompton (1979) who extended this definition by describing destination image as a sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions about a place. As these early definitions suggest, image is subjective and depends in large part on an individual's perception. Nevertheless, individual perceptions often conform to widely accepted social constructions (Boorstin, 1961). Therefore, efforts have been made to operationalize the concept so that it might be understood in the wider social context. Towards this end, Echtner and Ritchie (1991) proposed that destination image is best understood as a combination of specific qualities attached to a destination (e.g. luxury accommodations, developed infrastructure,

agrarian countryside) and the abstract mental pictures, impressions and feelings a destination conjures (e.g. risky or safe, relaxing or exciting, progressive or conservative). Research by Baloglu and McCleary (1999) came to similar conclusions while furthering our understanding by highlighting the important role that knowledge as well as emotions and feelings play in influencing destination image. Thus, manageable components of destination image have been identified and image creation and management have become significant tasks in promoting and sustaining a destination.

Gunn (1972) suggested that images are created in two ways. The first comes from exposure to common, everyday sources of information (such as school books, television programs and similar media). The second takes place with tourism industry generated promotional materials. The former are known as organic images and the latter induced. Inducing favorable images is one important role of any destination marketer and this depends largely on the credibility of the image's source and market penetration (Gartner, 1989). There is a relative abundance of research analyzing images induced by the tourism industry's promotional materials (e.g., Gartner, 1989; Lepp, Gibson & Lane, 2011a; Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002). However, it is only recently that a connection has been drawn between sporting events and image inducement. As Chalip (2004) notes, the images produced by mega sporting events are carefully managed in cooperation with various media outlets in order to promote selected images of a country for the benefit of the tourism industry. Indeed, the relationship between image and destination choice is well documented (e.g. Chen & Tsai, 2006; Chon, 1990; Hunt, 1975; Nadeau et al., 2008; Yuksel & Akgul, 2006). Therefore, destinations increasingly compete to host mega events in the hopes of increasing tourist arrivals and stimulating the tourism sector.

Sport, tourism and mega events

Roche (2000: p.1) has described a mega-event as large-scale cultural events "which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance". These events may attract widespread media coverage and can have significant impacts on the host city/region

(see also, Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006; Weed, 2008). Yet it is also recognized that these impacts are not necessarily always positive ones and that it is also possible for mega events to have a negative impact upon a host city and/or nation (Lenskyj, 2008; Spirou, 2011). Much of this research has focused on aspects related to the two biggest sporting mega events – the Olympic Games (Summer) and the FIFA Football World Cup (e.g. Gibson et al., 2008; Heslop et al., 2010; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2004; Kim & Morrison, 2005; Preuss, 2004; Weed, 2008). Outside of these two ‘mega’ mega events numerous other large-scale sporting events have been looked at. The 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester (England), for example, formed the focus of research for a number of scholars in the field (e.g. Downward & Ralston, 2006; Preuss, Seguin & O'Reilly, 2007).

Within the research investigating impacts of mega events, a number of researchers have focused on changes to a destination's image. Ritchie and Smith (1991) measured the idea that a major sport event could simply raise the profile of a destination. Their work identified an increased awareness of Calgary as a result of hosting the 1988 Winter Olympic Games. Yet more recent research suggests that mega sporting events do more than raise awareness, they actually influence a destination's image (e.g. Chalip, Green & Hill, 2003; Gibson, Qi & Zhang, 2008; Higham & Hinch, 2009; Kim & Morrison, 2005; Ritchie, 1984; Smith, 2005; Weed & Bull, 2009). This is now known as (re)imaging a destination through sport. (Re)imaging relates to the commodification of particular aspects of place (Harris, 2008; Hinch, 2006; Smith, 2005). Smith (2005, 2006) has highlighted that a number of post-industrial cities have used sport-related initiatives to present an attractive image to potential tourists and thereby begin the process of reimagining these cities. This work capably demonstrates the importance attached to sport, and mega events, in developing tourism policies.

Indeed, many countries now use tourism as a way of reimagining the nation and a number of scholars have explored how hosting a mega event can provide a useful means to promote a desirable image. This is most recently

evidenced by the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China (Gibson et al., 2008; Heslop et al., 2010) and the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa (Lepp & Gibson, 2011a, 2011b). Kim and Morrison (2005) found that media exposure generated by the 2002 FIFA World Cup improved the image of South Korea as a tourist destination. In addition, tourists' concerns about hostile threats from North Korea diminished after the World Cup. In a study of the effects of television coverage of the 2004 Olympic Games, Hede (2005) found that the image of Greece as a tourist destination improved among Australian viewers. Most recently, a case study found the 2010 FIFA World Cup improved images of South Africa related to modernity while decreasing negative images associated with racial injustice (Lepp & Gibson, 2011a). As bonified mega events, the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup have a powerful influence on image owing to the tremendous media exposure they generate for a destination (Horne, 2007). However, an area of legitimate concern is whether the next tier of sporting “mega events” has a similar influence.

Roberts (2004) notes how the lines are blurred, and that “some megas are bigger than others” (p.109). Numerous events have claimed the title of “third biggest sporting event in the world” including the Rugby World Cup and the Ryder Cup. What seems to be clear is that there may be quite a gap between the Summer Olympics, the FIFA World Cup and the rest of the sporting event world (Horne, 2007). In looking at the major events across different sports, Roberts (2004) refers only to the four individual majors (The Open, The Masters, US Open and USPGA) in his discussion of golf. In noting the marked development of research in mega events it is important to note that few scholars have considered the Ryder Cup when assessing the role of mega-events in sport. Such an omission seems strange given the unique format of the match, the fact that unlike most other mega events it is staged in a semi-rural environment, and its promotion as the third biggest sporting event of all.

This research considers the Ryder Cup as a key-focusing event for developing broader tourism initiatives across Wales through an

improved destination image. The official documentation described the match as a the third biggest sporting event in the world (Ryder Cup Wales, 2008; Visit Wales, 2007) and estimated that a billion (or many hundred million at the least) viewers from around the world would watch the event and Wales would be able to use the exposure gained from this as the catalyst for broader tourism development. In relation to our individual and collaborative (ongoing) research into the social significance of sport in Wales (Harris, 2007, 2008), travel behaviors of college students (Lepp & Gibson, 2011a, 2011b; Lepp, Gibson & Lane, 2011), and the Ryder Cup as a key focusing event (Harris & Lepp, 2011; Lee, Harris & Lyberger, 2011), a survey was administered to a sample of US college students in an attempt to further unpack the image(s) of Wales. The research posed five questions to this sample: 1) what is the pre-Ryder Cup image of Wales; 2) what is the perceived level of pre-Ryder Cup knowledge of Wales; 3) what is level of awareness of Wales as host of the Ryder Cup; 4) what is the perceived level of post-Ryder Cup knowledge of Wales; and 5) what is the post-Ryder Cup image of Wales. Before moving on to look at the results of the present study the section below outlines the methods used in this research.

Method

This study utilized a repeated measures design whereby a paired sample was surveyed before and after the Ryder Cup. The intent was to investigate the potential effect of the Ryder Cup on Wales' destination image. Thus pre-event and post-event surveys were administered using a questionnaire adapted from two separate studies which investigated images of Uganda and South Africa as tourist destinations (Lepp & Gibson, 2011a, 2011b; Lepp et al., 2011). The pre-event survey was administered, in two concurrent sessions of an Introduction to Recreation course, to eighty undergraduate students enrolled on a Recreation, Park and Tourism Management (RPTM) degree at a large state university in the Midwest region of the USA. Most students were freshmen and sophomores in the RPTM major, although some other majors are also represented. The average age of respondents was 21.1. Ninety percent of those surveyed

were white and just over half of all respondents (n=42) were female. Although a convenience sample, homogenous undergraduate samples have the advantage of controlling for unwanted variables such as level of education, age, and nationality which have all been shown to influence destination image (e.g., Beerli & Martin, 2004; Kim & Morrison, 2005; Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007).

On the day of the pre-event survey a brief in class test was scheduled so all students enrolled on the course were present. One of the authors of this paper read aloud an oral consent form and all students agreed to participate in the study. This occurred during September of 2010 two weeks before the start of the Ryder Cup. The pre-event survey was self-administered and asked about travel related perceptions of Wales. Image was measured using free elicitation (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). Quite simply, participants were asked to "list two things that pop into your head when you think of Wales." When a destination is unfamiliar, as may be the case with Wales (e.g. Pritchard & Morgan, 1996), qualitative methods are likely to produce a more accurate and valid measure of a destination's image (Prebensen, 2007). In addition, an attempt was made to quantify specific qualities as well as abstract impressions (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991) of images of Wales using a method developed by one of the authors in a previous paper. Towards this end, the questionnaire presented 25 items, each identifying a potential aspect of Wales' image. Using a seven point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly agree, 4 = neutral, 7 = strongly disagree) respondents were asked to identify the degree to which they associated each item with Wales. As Baloglu and McCleary (1999) noted, knowledge of a destination has a powerful influence on image. For this reason, participants' perceived knowledge of Wales was also measured. This was accomplished with a single item which read "Would you say that you know: a) a lot about Wales, b) a little bit about Wales, c) nothing about Wales." Finally, basic demographics were collected.

Two weeks after the Ryder Cup had taken place the post-event questionnaire was administered to the same group in a similar

fashion to that identified above. On this occasion, around three quarters of students (n=62) were present. The post-event survey contained the same items as the pre-test with the addition of several items measuring interest in the Ryder Cup, such as the number of days watched, and the hours spent following the tournament. This allowed for the comparison of pre and post-test results and an assessment of whether the Ryder Cup had any influence on Wales' destination image. For the analysis, quantitative data were analyzed with SPSS using frequencies, chi-square and multivariate analysis of variance. Open-ended responses were analyzed by categorizing similar responses into single themes. After all the data had been categorized, the frequencies of pre and post-event themes were compared. Responses were simple phrases and thus were clear in meaning. For example, the theme "Royalty" included the responses "Diana," "Prince Charles" and "Queen." The categorization strategies and themes developed during the pre-event analysis were applied to the post-event analysis ensuring internal reliability and consistency.

Results

The image of Wales was assessed two weeks prior to the start of the Ryder Cup and two weeks after the conclusion of the event with the open-ended question "list two things that pop into your head when thinking of Wales." Interestingly, students found it difficult to identify specific things that they would most associate with the country. When asked to list the two things that first come to mind the most frequent responses in the pre-test were "England" (n=13), "Whales" (n=7) and "Diana" (n=6). To try and learn more about the types of images most associated with Wales we then set about grouping all response items. Each researcher independently coded the responses and put these into groups. In trying to identify and explore emergent themes we identified four primary categories that seem to offer an interesting point of departure for teasing out some of the key findings of the study. We label these England/Britain, Place, Royalty, and Climate/Landscape. Of course it is recognized that these are not necessarily exclusive categories. Two other single word items appeared frequently although "whales" (n=13;

pre-7 and post-6) and "castles" (n=10; pre-7 and post-3) are not included as part of the four categories identified above but are important to recognize and will be discussed further later on in the paper.

Significantly, not a single pretest response mentioned golf however there were a few mentions of soccer. The most frequent pre-event responses actually seemed to be referring to England or Britain (n=34) with the above category also accounting for 18 responses in the post-event survey and a sum total of 52 overall. In this case, respondents wrote words or phrases like "England," "Scotland," "bagpipes," "Great Britain," "British" and "British culture." For these respondents, the word Wales may actually cause them to imagine another country.

The second most frequent responses were categorized under the ambiguous label "Place" (n=44; pre-25 and post-19). This is because the responses all had an air of ambiguity to them suggesting a difficulty in conjuring an image for Wales other than "it's a place maybe" as one respondent wrote. Words or phrases in this category include "foreign place," "a different country," "Europe" and "far away." This uncertainty surrounding the image of Wales became vividly clear with the seven pre-test responses that simply read "whales" (as in the large seafaring mammal). Royalty was also a frequent category of responses (n=27; pre-15 and post-12) and perhaps serves to further connect perceived images of Wales to England and/or Britain. Responses in this category included "Princess Diana," "Prince Charles," "Prince William" and "The Queen." Lastly, a significant number of pre-event responses highlighted weather (mostly lousy weather) or landscape features (n=31; pre-13 and post-18). Responses in this category include "rainy," "cold," "cold and rainy," "minimal summer," "green hills," "rolling hills" and "green fields."

While Wales' potentially indistinct image may be problematic for tourism promotion, theory suggests that an increase in knowledge of Wales would lead to a more readily identifiable image (Lepp et al., 2011). Sport mega events have been shown to increase both awareness and perceived knowledge of a destination

(Ritchie & Smith, 1991). This study measured awareness of Wales' hosting of the Ryder Cup as well as perceived knowledge of Wales and whether they changed from pre to post test. Awareness of Wales as host country of the 2010 Ryder Cup was quite low. In the post-event survey, participants were asked "Before taking this survey, were you aware that the 2010 Ryder Cup was held in Wales?" In response, only eight participants (12.9%) answered yes and 54 (87.1%) answered no. Likewise, interest in the Ryder Cup was found to be quite low. In response to the question, "How would you rate your overall interest in the 2010 Ryder Cup?" only four participants (6.4%) reported any interest at all. Ten (16.1%) reported being neither interested nor disinterested, 12 (19.4%) were "not interested" and 34 (54.8%) were "really not interested." Thus, a strong indifference towards the event is apparent among this sample. Interestingly, a sample of very similar students from the same university was asked the exact same questions after the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. In that case, 88.6% of those surveyed were aware that South Africa was the host and 58.2% were interested in the event (Lepp & Gibson, 2011b). Considering the Ryder Cup data, it is not surprising that 53 (85.5%) did not follow the tournament and consequently did not watch even a part of it on television.

Concerning perceived knowledge of Wales, the majority of respondents reported knowing nothing about Wales in the pre-test (76%) while a few reported knowing a little bit (22.5%). In this case, there was actually a noticeable change between pre and post-test results (Table 1). In the post-test, a smaller majority of

respondents (59.7%) reported knowing nothing about Wales while slightly more reported knowing at least a little bit (40.3%). The Chi-squared test was not significant at the 0.05 level however, it was extremely close. These post-test results are a bit surprising considering the majority of respondents had little interest in the Ryder Cup. Thus, it may be that the slight but potential change in perceived knowledge of Wales among this sample (from "know nothing" to "know a little") may be a result of simply retaking the survey. In other words, the survey itself rather than the Ryder Cup caused the differences seen in Table 1. This hypothesis can be tested to some extent by analyzing the post test results for image. If the influence of the Ryder Cup was weak then there should be little change in image.

As would be expected with such low interest in the Ryder Cup among this group, there was very little difference between the pre and post-event image among this sample. Notably, only a single post-event response mentioned golf. As only three-quarters of those surveyed in the pre-event questionnaire completed the post-event questionnaire then there is a small drop in the total number of responses for most categories. For the categories of "Royalty" and "Place" this difference relates closely to the percentage of respondents. Responses categorized as "England/Britain" decreased quite a bit but there was no obvious rise in specific Wales/Welsh related imagery. Indeed, we could only identify a couple of responses that clearly referred to Wales as opposed to England, Britain and/or Europe. However, there was an increase in responses related to the climate/landscape category.

Table 1. *Perceived knowledge of Wales*

Variable	Pre test		Post test				
Category	Freq	%	Freq	%	df	Chi- sq	sig.
Perceived knowledge of Wales					2	5.83	0.054
A lot	1	1.3	0	0			
A little bit	18	22.5	25	40.3			
Nothing	61	76.3	37	59.7			
Total	80	100.0	62	100.0			

As this was the first Ryder Cup in the history of the event to be extended to a fourth day because of rain delays, this does suggest that media coverage of the event may have had a small effect on image - albeit, not the hoped for effect as rain was more frequently mentioned in the post-event survey. These results are interesting in that they may suggest Wales has an image problem that may be hampering efforts to develop tourism there. The Ryder Cup seems to have done little to induce a favorable image for the destination amongst the group surveyed here.

Turning to the quantitative data (see Table 2), results appear to support the ambiguity of the open ended responses. Twenty-five items,

each identifying a potential aspect of Wales' image, were presented to students. Respondents agreed or disagreed about the extent to which they associate each item with Wales. Since a seven point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly agree, 4 = neutral, 7 = strongly disagree) was used, a mean of 4 indicates neither agreement nor disagreement - in other words, ambiguity. In the pre-event survey the mean response for 23 of 25 items fell between 3 and 5. This suggests there is not a strong feeling either way about them. Not surprisingly, post-event mean responses were statistically similar. Indeed, an ANOVA comparing pre and post-event means found no significant difference.

Table 2. *Perceptions of Wales*

	Pre (n=80)		Post (n=62)		Total (n=142)		ANOVA F-value (Sig.)
	Me an	S. D.	Me an	S. D.	Me an	S. D.	
Unique culture	3.12	1.173	3.39	1.285	3.24	1.226	1.604(0.207)
Modern cities	2.56	1.234	2.69	1.139	2.62	1.190	0.407(0.525)
Cool and trendy	3.27	1.258	3.32	1.021	3.29	1.156	0.083(0.773)
Crime is a problem	4.34	0.946	4.34	1.023	4.34	0.977	0.000(0.985)
Rural settings abundant	3.58	1.093	3.68	1.170	3.62	1.125	0.247(0.620)
Vulnerable to terrorism	3.86	1.517	4.11	1.294	3.97	1.424	1.090(0.298)
Strange food	3.71	1.416	3.87	1.337	3.78	1.379	0.478(0.490)
Healthy people	3.27	0.943	3.39	0.954	3.32	0.947	0.624(0.431)
Easy to travel around	3.75	1.409	3.67	1.207	3.71	1.321	0.109(0.741)
Friendly people	3.43	1.031	3.23	0.982	3.34	1.011	1.385(0.241)
Difficult to communicate	3.58	1.420	3.76	1.501	3.66	1.453	0.506(0.478)
Different to England	3.56	1.227	3.48	1.400	3.52	1.302	0.109(0.742)
Well governed	3.56	0.828	3.53	0.953	3.55	0.882	0.027(0.870)
Kidnapping a problem	3.87	0.822	3.81	0.955	3.84	0.881	0.200(0.656)
Well educated people	3.19	0.981	3.25	0.925	3.22	0.954	0.107(0.744)
Foreigners treated badly	3.48	0.972	3.65	0.993	3.55	0.981	0.972(0.326)
Risk of disease	3.39	1.002	3.48	1.184	3.43	1.084	0.258(0.612)
Chaotic and unpredictable	3.24	0.969	3.27	1.089	3.26	1.020	0.031(0.861)
Good health care facilities	3.76	0.900	3.74	1.007	3.75	0.945	0.008(0.929)
Farms	3.69	1.272	3.52	1.376	3.61	1.317	0.616(0.434)
Welsh are not clever	2.79	1.049	2.79	1.147	2.79	1.089	0.001(0.981)
Stable economy	3.54	0.878	3.29	1.030	3.43	0.953	2.364(0.126)
Accept different lifestyles	3.58	0.876	3.52	1.004	3.55	0.932	0.146(0.703)
Muggings and robberies	3.97	0.960	3.92	1.013	3.95	0.981	0.110(0.741)
Very poor country	3.34	1.131	3.19	1.069	3.28	1.103	0.626(0.430)

What can clearly be seen from the results presented above is that for this particular group the Ryder Cup was of little interest. In itself this, albeit in a very small way, further supports previous critiques concerning the size and status of the event as put forward in policy rhetoric (Harris & Lepp, 2011; Lee et al., 2011). Yet despite the limited interest expressed in the event, the case-study does offer an interesting site to better explore the images of Wales and the ways in which a small nation is positioned and perceived. All of this makes for interesting discussion, which is where the paper now turns. We highlight some of the responses as a means of further exploring the complexities of this particular case and develop an analysis of the four identified dominant themes. This then aims to extend the work on image in tourism with specific reference to a distinct mega event.

Discussion

A number of findings from this research provide interesting food for thought when considering mega events and destination image. In the discussion that follows we will refer to the data from the case-study and attempt to position this in and around the official documentation of organizations such as Ryder Cup Wales and Visit Wales. This affords us the opportunity to tease out some of the key issues shaping tourism policy development and a mega sporting event. It is important to emphasize that the survey responses need to be read and understood within and around the much broader (and ongoing) research here. The case-study is presented vis-à-vis the policy documentation as a means of further exploring key issues concerning the images of Wales.

England/Britain

The multiple layers of identities are clearly visible by the positioning of Wales as either a part of England or a wider collective of Britain. Whilst Wales is indeed a part of Britain (and moreover can lay claim to being the first Britons) the words England and Britain are used interchangeably to mean the same thing. When we compare the survey results to the official policy documentation that promoted (golf) tourism in Wales there are a number of interesting dichotomies. Although reference is made to the geographical closeness of England, and the convenient road and rail links

between the two nations (Ryder Cup Wales, 2008; Visit Wales, 2010), the literature also tries to highlight that Wales is different to England. The Official Ambassador to Ryder Cup Wales, Ian Woosnam (a former Welsh professional golfer and once ranked the number one player in the world), reflects on how annoyed he used to get when people would ask him what part of England Wales was in. The rhetoric underpinning of the 'Golf as it should be' strategy is to position Welsh golf as something removed from the corporateness of England (see Pride, 2004). Survey respondents felt that Wales was not really that different to England with comments such as "it is next to England?", "Near England?" and "English" clearly demonstrating the perceived 'Englishness' of Wales.

Although Newport was the host city for the event it was the larger and more glamorous capital city of Cardiff that got to stage the 'Welcome to Wales' gala. This was not really a surprise as researchers have previously commented on the increasing primacy of Cardiff in the promotion of Wales as a tourist destination (Harris, 2008; Pritchard & Morgan, 2003). In commenting on the position of Cardiff, Harris (2008) pointed towards the confusion of having the most English of all Welsh cities as the symbol of Wales. For it is often difficult to talk of Wales without reference to England as clearly identified by the responses to this survey. This 'othering' of Wales has been a central concern of tourism scholars who have previously considered some of the challenges faced in developing tourism in Wales (e.g. Pitchford, 1995; Pritchard & Morgan, 1996)

Scotland has undoubtedly forged a stronger and more separate (from England) identity than Wales and it was interesting to note that a few respondents would identify Scotland as something they would most associate with Wales. Of course Scotland is a well-established brand in the area of golf tourism and is promoted as the 'home of golf'. Ceron-Anaya (2010) notes the important role that this nation plays in the international golf world and the strong links between golf and business. The next Ryder Cup to take place on European soil in 2014 is scheduled for the Gleneagles course in Perthshire and is positioned as 'golf's

homecoming' (Morrow & Wheatley, 2003). A great challenge for those looking to develop tourism in Wales, through focusing on the Ryder Cup, was that they were going to be competing against such well-established and recognized 'brands' in the golf tourism market. Woosnam, official ambassador to Ryder Cup Wales, notes in the 'Golf as it should be' guide that Scotland and Ireland had a hundred years head start in promoting golf tourism (Visit Wales, 2007). Moreover such is the positioning and status of golf tourism in Scotland and Ireland that they enjoy a certain amount of 'golfing capital' in the industry (Humphreys, 2011) and are positioned as very strong brands (see also, Pride, 2004).

A number of researchers in the field of tourism have previously looked at the marketing and promotion of Wales (e.g. Pitchford, 1995; Pritchard & Morgan, 1996, 2003). These works have capably shown the place of Wales within and around the tourism industries of England and Britain. Little research has considered sport and mega events in this analysis, yet as was outlined earlier in the paper, sport has long assumed an important place in the Welsh nation. When we move beyond responses explicitly identifying England and/or Britain we begin to see further interesting perceptions concerning the image of Wales. These are explored further below.

Place

Although many respondents used the words England and/or Britain to describe Wales it was also interesting to note the many other responses that did not refer specifically to the above but pointed to the idea of a particular place. We have labeled this category Place and anything that does not explicitly relate to England and/or Britain is included in this group. The struggle to reassert and promote itself as a distinct and identifiable country for tourism is further evidenced by responses such as "a place maybe", "where is it?" and "a city".

The limited knowledge and awareness of Wales was highlighted through responses such as "located in Europe?" and "a country that no one knows about in Europe". It is of course as part of the collective of Team Europe that Wales hosted the event. Other respondents

used words like "Europe" or "European" although of course we do not know from these responses whether they clearly understand Wales as part of this wider group or whether these responses are placing England and/or Britain within this collective. Whilst it was not acknowledged in any of the policy documentation leading up to the event it is also important to note that the 2010 Ryder Cup was the first time in the history of the competition that the host nation did not have a single player in the home team (Harris & Lepp, 2011). Whilst there were no Welsh players in the team the nation does have an individual who carries the name of the nation in his title and it is to the category of royalty that we now turn.

Royalty

That images surrounding royalty should feature so prominently in the minds of survey respondents also offers up some interesting and topical points to consider further. Here again it is through the title of Prince of Wales and/or Princess of Wales that at least some awareness of Wales is demonstrated by survey respondents. In both of these cases of course it must be noted that it is English people who are associated with these titles. That the investiture of Charles, as Prince of Wales in 1969, would be the biggest international event to be staged in the country to date (see Ellis, 2008) highlights the significance of the Royal family to promoting images of Wales to an international audience. It was his marriage to Lady Diana Spencer in 1981 that further propelled Prince Charles into an even more famous international figure. Although no longer carrying the title of Princess of Wales at the time of her death in a car accident in 1997, Diana was one of the most famous people in the world. In 2011 the wedding of their son Prince William attracted massive media attention and was a huge event in the USA. Whilst the media build-up to the event frequently referred to an international television audience of one billion people, a good ballpark figure for major events it seems, this was then doubled to estimates of two billion viewers as the event drew closer. The fact that Prince William and his wife have lived in a remote part of northern Wales for some time helped place Wales in the many news stories leading up to the wedding. News of their engagement saw various US media outlets

decamp to Wales although many of them seemed somewhat preoccupied with the wet and windy weather conditions and used the terms England and Britain interchangeably with little or no recognition of their differences.

The tourist policy documentation surrounding the Ryder Cup steered clear of imagery surrounding royalty. This may have been influenced, in part, by the desire to (re)position golf in Wales as more accessible and less stuffy than golf in England (Harris & Lepp, 2011; Pride, 2004). A number of survey respondents used terms such as “rich people, high class”, “snobby” and “snobby rich aristocrats with fancy accents” when asked what they most identified with Wales. This of course stands in stark contrast to the strategies identified above of promoting golf tourism in Wales as a more classless activity than can be found in nearby nations. It may well be though that the images being referred to above are actually images of England/Britain and that these respondents have no clearly identifiable view of Wales as a distinct country.

Castles were identified by a number of respondents and are something that could quite conceivably be placed in a number of the dominant categories we identified in the analysis of responses. The Prince of Wales did support the event and attended a gala dinner in Cardiff immediately prior to the match. Space does not permit a detailed discussion of the complex interplay here of the many layers of identities that make up this area. It could be that some survey respondents are referring to Charles and/or Diana in their responses given that they recognize their association with the word Wales yet if it is their only reference point then this may explain the perceived images of Wales as being “rich” or “snobby”.

Landscape/climate

For the purpose of this study we have grouped these two areas but also recognize and acknowledge the differences between them. Both surveys clearly showed that most images relating to landscape were generally positive ones with responses such as “green hills” and “green grass” indicating some awareness of the area. Conversely, all responses that related to the weather could be construed as being

negative ones. The rain-soaked event saw countless images of umbrellas and rain gear. The much commented upon malfunction of Team USA’s waterproof suits accentuated this emphasis and a whole host of media focused on this as *the* main story of the event. It was most unfortunate that a decade of planning would succumb to the elements and the event would have to be played over four days for the first time in its eighty-three year history.

Pre-event surveys identified that the weather in Wales was largely viewed somewhat negatively with comments such as “rain” and “rainy weather/minimal summer”. The post-event survey data also saw a number of references to the weather with words such as “cold”, “rain” and “rainy weather”. Indeed, of the four categories identified this was the only one that saw an increase in responses in the post-event survey. A large percentage of these were weather-related ones and so perhaps demonstrated that even if respondents were not really interested in the Ryder Cup they still had some awareness of the event and may have been exposed to some images of the match from a variety of media. From the point of view of attracting golf tourists though it is clear that such atrocious weather can surely have a marked impact upon future development and highlights some of the dangers in using a focusing-event as a primary driver of wider tourism development.

Concluding remarks

Using a mega-event as a focusing event for developing tourism in the country and raising the image of the nation has attracted considerable scholarly attention. This paper has aimed to develop and extend this analysis by focusing on a nation, a sport and an event that has attracted little attention to date. The unique case discussed here has also highlighted some of the complexities involved in promoting a nation and pointed towards the many layers of identities shaping particular images. The business studies underpinning of sport, tourism and event management scholarship means that scholars are often pushed towards offering generalizations or comments on what such case studies tell us about sporting events in a wider context. This is not our intention here and we clearly recognize

the situated limits of the survey and the analysis presented herein. Whilst we may continue to see the impacts of previous events (e.g. economic impact studies) used as the basis and rationale for future bids to host events it is clear that no two sporting events are the same. Here we are not only acknowledging the differences between the (Summer) Olympic Games and the Ryder Cup, but are also highlighting the marked differences between any two Ryder Cup matches. The 2008 Ryder Cup in Louisville, Kentucky was not promoted and/or positioned anything like the 2010 Ryder Cup in Wales. Which other nation would have a sea-faring mammal identified as being the thing that a number of respondents would most associate with the country? Is this purely the similar wording, the fact that there are so few (if any) other recognizable markers associated with the nation or a problem identifying Wales as a country?

The very small number of survey respondents who watched any of the Ryder Cup action may indicate that the event is not as 'mega' as often suggested. No claims are made to arrive at such definitive conclusions from a small sample of students but it is also worth noting that a survey of 200 recreational golfers at the time of the 2008 Ryder Cup also showed that the event was ranked lower than a range of other sporting events (Lee et al., 2011). The widely used claim that the Ryder Cup is the third biggest sporting event in the world with a television audience of one billion people (e.g. Hudson & Hudson, 2010) seems hard to comprehend. Much of the tourism policy and associated developments often referred to these claims as a means of promoting and positioning the event to garner support in a range of arenas (Ryder Cup Wales, 2008; Visit Wales, 2007) but as is the case with other mega sporting events, the policy rhetoric is not always supported by external analysis (Harris, 2010).

The fact that not one Welsh player appeared for Team Europe represented the first time in the history of the match that the host nation did not have a player on the home team. In this sense it has been argued that the event lacked a distinctly Welsh identity (Harris & Lepp, 2011)

although the inclusion of the red dragon on the base of all Team Europe golf bags provided a nice symbol of the nation's involvement in the match. We have highlighted elsewhere that for a promotion of a particular (albeit often imagined) national image sport can play an important role and the marginal status of Wales in such narratives renders their location and positioning to bid for hosting other mega events as somewhat problematic (Harris & Lepp, 2011).

The language of 'legacy' loomed large in the official documentation surrounding Ryder Cup Wales and Visit Wales. As identified in the call for papers for this special issue, few mega events live up to their full potential and deliver their long-term promises. It is too soon yet to know just what the long-term impacts of Ryder Cup Wales will be. Recently released figures claimed that the economic impact was 82.4 million GBP although as numerous scholars have highlighted there is often some confusion surrounding how these impacts are measured. This observation is not meant as a criticism of those involved in bringing the Ryder Cup to Wales, for the event was a successful one. What we have tried to show is some of the grey areas between the rhetoric of policy makers and any other type of independent analysis. The Ryder Cup is the case-study discussed here but studies relating to numerous other events may well also identify issues like those identified above.

The results of the study presented here shows that developing a distinct and identifiable image remains a real challenge for those involved in promoting tourism in Wales to potential visitors from overseas and that there is still some confusion as to what Wales really means. Whilst this is simply a case study of one group at a particular time, it does offer interesting areas for further work into mega events, small nations and contested identities. Future research will attempt to further unpack some of the dominant images surrounding the 2010 Ryder Cup and to look at the long-term impacts of the event in relation to the continued development of golf tourism and the promotion of Wales.

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