

## Repeat visitation and place attachment: an accidental approach

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### **Abstract**

While surveying visitors in a remote area in the North Island of New Zealand, we observed striking levels of repeat visitation – over 10 per cent of visitors had been to the same place at least 20 times before. We also observed some stark differences in respondents' attachment to the destination.

In this paper we explain how a survey designed for a different purpose has yielded interesting insights into the relationship between repeat visitation and place attachment.

We consider two commonly discussed aspects of place attachment (place identity and place dependence) and introduce a discussion around the evolution of functional motivations for visiting a destination.

We find that place identity was more commonly expressed amongst our respondents than place dependence. Respondents who had made higher numbers of repeat visits more often showed place identity than did newer visitors suggesting that place identity is developed through successive visits. In contrast, while many visitors talked about functional motivations for visiting the destination, there was little evidence of the development of place dependence. In some cases, functional motivations for visiting appeared to blur into place identity and habit as the number of visits increased.

Finally, we set out hypotheses for a strategic investigation of something which we found by accident!