

## Enriching social media data allows a more robust representation of cultural ecosystem services

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# 1 **Enriching social media data allows a more robust representation of cultural ecosystem services**

## 2 **Abstract**

3 Images and textual metadata from social media sites such as Flickr have been used to understand  
4 the drivers and distributions of cultural ecosystem services (CES). However, using all available data  
5 from social media sites may not provide an accurate representation of individual services. For  
6 example, an image of nature might be described negatively in the image's description. Here, we  
7 present a novel approach to refining social media data to represent CES better, including filtering by  
8 keywords, photograph content and enriching the data by including a measure of the sentiment  
9 expressed in the textual metadata. We demonstrate that the distribution of an enriched dataset of  
10 Flickr images representing hiking in the USA can contribute to different results and conclusions than  
11 the full dataset. Furthermore, we classified the contents of these hiking images and, using latent  
12 semantic analysis, clustered the images into ten groups based on the similarity of their content. The  
13 groups provide rich information, such as the importance of geodiversity and biodiversity in  
14 supporting a positive hiking experience. The application of this method can help to enrich social  
15 media data for CES studies, allowing researchers to further untangle the complex socio-ecological  
16 interactions that drive CES distributions, benefits and values.

17 **Keywords:** Cultural ecosystem services, geosystem services, social media, Flickr, hiking

## 18 **1 Introduction**

19 Cultural ecosystem services (CES) are non-material benefits obtained from human-nature  
20 interactions including through recreation, cognitive development, aesthetic views and spiritual  
21 enrichment (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005; Milcu et al. 2013). Though there are many  
22 different definitions and classifications used for CES, most literature focuses on the links between  
23 the biophysical environment and human wellbeing, while recognising that CES are intangible (Fish et  
24 al. 2016; Dickinson and Hobbs 2017). Here, we classify CES following Milcu et al., (2013), who divided  
25 CES into 11 subcategories; recreation and tourism, aesthetic values, spiritual and religious values,  
26 educational values, cultural heritage values, bequest, intrinsic and existence, inspiration, sense of  
27 place, knowledge systems, social relations, and cultural diversity. Furthermore, we note that CES  
28 benefits can be delivered through multiple pathways. King et al. (2017) identified six pathways to  
29 CES benefits that reoccur across CES literature: cognitive (benefits from the development of  
30 knowledge), creative (benefits from influences on aesthetic appreciation and artistic expression),  
31 intuitive (benefits from the influence on instincts and senses), retrospective (benefits from reflecting  
32 on past experiences), regenerative (benefits from opportunities for recreation, leisure and tourism)  
33 and communicative (benefits from social relations, cultural identity, and sense of place). However,  
34 for these pathways to be actualised, there is a need for people to first recognise the potential  
35 benefits of biophysical features and then utilise these potential benefits (Spangenberg et al. 2014).  
36 Therefore, CES, as with other ecosystem services (ES), are not provided by ecosystems  
37 independently of humans but are co-produced through our interactions with them (Fischer and  
38 Eastwood 2016).

39 Though the value of ES is generally provided by an economic metric, ES values can also be measured  
40 by its societal and cultural values and therefore the value of CES is often non-monetary (Haines-  
41 Young and Potschin, 2018; Reynaud and Lanzanova, 2017; Small, Munday and Durance, 2017). There  
42 are multiple methods of assessing CES value both, monetary (e.g. travel cost or willingness to pay)  
43 and non-monetary (photograph analysis or ranking methods) (Hirons et al. 2016). However,  
44 quantifying the benefits and values of CES are more difficult due to the perceptions of CES benefits

45 being unique to individuals based on their social and cultural norms (Daniel et al. 2012; Havinga et  
46 al. 2020). Therefore, CES have been comparably under-researched compared to other ES and we,  
47 therefore, need to develop our understanding of the human-nature interactions that provide these  
48 services (Milcu et al. 2013; Dickinson and Hobbs 2017).

49 Previous literature assessing CES relationships, as well as wider ES relationships, tend to focus on the  
50 role of nature on CES production (Fischer and Eastwood 2016). Because people, culture and nature  
51 are so inherently interlinked, it can be difficult to disentangle what constitutes nature in the context  
52 of ES (Plumwood 2006; Hirons et al. 2016). Here, we view nature as the biophysical features of an  
53 ecosystem (Haines-Young and Potschin 2018), comprised of the interactions of biodiversity and  
54 geodiversity (Gray 2012; Gordon and Barron 2013; Fox et al. 2020a). There has been a particular  
55 focus on the role of biodiversity in CES production, with the role of geodiversity often omitted from  
56 studies (Fox et al. 2020a). Geodiversity can be viewed as the abiotic equivalent to biodiversity,  
57 representing the diversity of geological structures and processes, including rocks and minerals;  
58 geomorphology, including landforms and topography; sediments and soils, including formation  
59 processes; and hydrology, including marine, surface and subsurface waters (Gray 2004; Hjort et al.  
60 2015; Fox et al. 2020a). Geodiversity can also provide CES in the absence of biodiversity. These  
61 “geosystem services” include CES such as recreational activities (e.g. water-based sports, rock  
62 climbing and caving), spiritual sites (e.g. Uluru, Australia and the Torres del Paine, Chile ), as well as  
63 providing opportunities for advancing scientific knowledge (e.g. the record of past climates and  
64 ecosystems contained in sediment, rock and ice cores) (Gray 2012; Kiernan 2014; Fox et al. 2020a).  
65 Often geodiversity is only assessed through landscapes types which are prescribed a general CES  
66 value, however, CES are not distributed randomly within a landscape, but are concentrated in  
67 hotspots that have specific features of biodiversity (e.g. forests and hedgerows) and geodiversity  
68 (waterbodies and geological formations) (Plieninger et al. 2013; van Berkel and Verburg 2014). It is  
69 therefore important that the relationship of the individual features of biodiversity and geodiversity  
70 to CES be assessed.

71 There is also a need to recognise that CES are co-produced and co-created by people and therefore  
72 only arise from the interaction of people with the biophysical environment (Chan et al. 2011; Fish et  
73 al. 2016). Though CES are inherently co-produced through human-nature interactions, these  
74 relationships are often omitted from studies in favour of assessing the links between biophysical  
75 nature and ES (Fischer and Eastwood 2016). CES are co-produced through a variety of different  
76 pathways including human, financial and manufactured capital (Raymond et al. 2018). For example,  
77 CES can be co-produced through the influences of culturally important buildings (e.g. places of  
78 worships), managed landscape (e.g. agricultural land), organisations (e.g. museums, parks and  
79 gardens), or purpose-built infrastructure (e.g. hiking trails) (Plieninger et al. 2013; van Berkel and  
80 Verburg 2014; Fischer and Eastwood 2016; Minkiewicz et al. 2016). There is a need to acknowledge  
81 the implications of the co-production for quantifying ES, and CES in particular, as a holistic approach  
82 to an understanding of these complex human-nature interactions can help to better shape their  
83 sustainable management (Bennet et al. 2015; Palomo et al. 2016).

84 To understand CES there is a need to for suitable datasets that can assess the complex relationship  
85 between biodiversity, geodiversity and society. However, globally, datasets on ES are sparse,  
86 meaning services are often mapped through proxies (Stephens et al. 2015), with the primary sources  
87 of data for CES mostly coming from either monetary assessments, social surveys such as stated  
88 preferences, or onsite surveys (Tenerelli et al. 2016; Figueroa-Alfaro and Tang 2017; Mayer &  
89 Woltering, 2018). Due to labour-intensive methods and high financial costs, implementing these  
90 over large spatial and time scales is not always feasible (Wood et al. 2013; Kim et al. 2019).

91 Furthermore, management decisions need to be better informed through methods that reliably  
92 understand, identify, quantify and map CES (Tenerelli et al. 2016; Byczek et al. 2018). As CES are  
93 dynamic, methods also need to be able to reliably investigate changes over time (Figieroa-Alfaro and  
94 Tang 2017).

95 The potential of social media sites such as Flickr, Twitter and Facebook as a source of data for CES  
96 questions is starting to be realised (Kim et al. 2019). In contrast to social surveys, social media data is  
97 inexpensive, quick to gather and provides a means of mapping the distribution of CES and assessing  
98 changes over space and time (Fox et al. 2020b). Social media data has been used for CES studies,  
99 such as wildlife watching (Mancini et al. 2019), recreational services (Graham and Eigenbrod 2019;  
100 Sinclair et al. 2020a), aesthetic views (Van Berkel et al. 2018) and visitation rates in protected areas  
101 (Tenkanen et al. 2017, Kim et al. 2019; Sinclair et al. 2020b), providing key information for both  
102 tourism and conservation. However, social media data is often messy (Ghermandi and Sinclair 2019;  
103 Chen et al. 2020). Issues such as unknown or inaccurate spatial references (Figieroa-Alfaro and Tang  
104 2017), unreliable image contents due to mistagged images or a mismatch between the content of a  
105 photograph and the location it was taken (Oteros-Rozas et al. 2018), and biases introduced by user  
106 groups (Langemeyer et al. 2018; Chen et al. 2020) therefore need to be accounted for.

107 To address the issues introduced by the vast volume of data on social media sites, CES studies tend  
108 to filter the returned results through several different approaches. For example, some studies filter  
109 results based on the geographic location the images were taken in - e.g. studies using the InVEST  
110 recreational model (Sharp et al. 2020). Searching for images within a given study site alone may  
111 return a large number of images not relevant to the specific ES of interest, or even to any ES at all.  
112 Other studies filter out images based on land cover types. For example, Tenerelli et al. (2019)  
113 excluded images of photographs found in urban areas. This method overlooks the fact that a  
114 photograph's location does not always represent the subject of the image (Yan et al. 2019). A  
115 photograph taken within an urban area may be a long-distance image of a CES such as an aesthetic  
116 natural view, whilst photographs taken in a natural land cover may not be of a CES - e.g.  
117 photographs of a car's interior. Furthermore, CES are not confined to specific land cover types and  
118 so excluding on this basis may exclude relevant services such as those provided by urban green  
119 spaces and trees (Kondo et al. 2018).

120 Another approach to deciding which images to include is to search for photographs based on a set of  
121 criteria - e.g. a study looking for photographs of hiking may limit returned photographs to those  
122 containing the word "hiking" in the textual metadata (Graham and Eigenbrod 2019). However,  
123 limiting images based on text alone does not guarantee that the image itself represents an ES. For  
124 instance, a search for photographs of "biking" may return photographs of equipment such as bikes  
125 and helmets. It therefore cannot be assumed that an image containing textual metadata related to  
126 the use of an ES is relevant for assessing CES.

127 Some authors are starting to acknowledge this, for example, Havinga et al. (2020), who used the  
128 distribution of photographs from Flickr to assess the aesthetic quality of landscapes, suggest that not  
129 all photographs may have relevance to the study. They therefore recommended assessing  
130 photograph contents. To ensure that photographs are suitable for their studies, researchers have  
131 analysed the contents of images and refined them to those that meet relevant criteria. Image  
132 classification can be either manual (subjective) or automatic through machine learning techniques  
133 (objective). For example, Oteros-Rozas et al. (2018), manually classified the contents of images,  
134 labelling them with landscape features and CES. These labels were then used to identify bundles of  
135 landscape features and CES. One method of automatic tagging is the Google Cloud Vision API, a  
136 machine learning algorithm that can identify the contents of images. Richards and Tunçer (2018)

137 used the Google Cloud Vision API to label the contents of Flickr images and subsequently used this  
138 information to map the distribution of plants and animals, whilst Gosal et al. (2019) labelled  
139 photograph contents using the Google Cloud Vision API to find groups of recreational beneficiaries.

140 However, we argue that a combination of textual metadata confirming the presence of a targeted  
141 service (for example, an image tagged “hiking”), and an image containing features of the natural  
142 environment (for example, an image of a mountain), still does not confirm that the service user  
143 experienced a positive benefit indicating a CES. Indeed, it may have been a negative experience - e.g.  
144 a user could caption the image with a complaint about a boring walk. Furthermore, as sharing  
145 photographs is influenced by societal pressures, photographs shared may not show the user’s  
146 preferred features of nature (Moreno-Llorca et al. 2020). The textual metadata can contain “text-  
147 private” information that can convey emotions and opinions which could not be elicited from the  
148 image contents. By contrast, the image contents will often contain “image-private” information,  
149 such as features of the image and colours not mentioned in the text (Huang et al. 2019). In  
150 particular, a dichotomy between the textual metadata and image contents can exist as the textual  
151 metadata tends to be more heterogeneous and contain non-descriptive terms and phrases, whereas  
152 the classification methods used to label the content of images provides more homogenous single  
153 descriptive terms (Yan et al. 2019). Here, we suggest that by assessing the sentiment expressed in  
154 the textual metadata we can get additional information about the quality of the experience,  
155 meaning one can enrich the CES data. As the different types of data from Flickr contain different  
156 information (image content, spatial, temporal and textual metadata), studies could combine all  
157 these data sources to obtain more information about the benefits received.

158 We suggest that social media data can be enriched to better understand user experience, elicited  
159 through sentiment analysis of the textual metadata, and may provide a more robust dataset for CES  
160 assessments. Lexicon-based sentiment analysis is a natural language processing technique used to  
161 calculate the semantics, opinions or emotions of words or phrases from text (Wilson et al. 2019).  
162 One form of analysis is polarity classification, which classifies text as either positive or negative and  
163 can be used to assess social media datasets (Koto and Adriani 2015). Sentiment analysis for ES  
164 assessment has been broadly applied to social media datasets from Twitter (e.g. Becken et al. 2017;  
165 Wilson et al. 2019) and Instagram (e.g. Do 2019). There has also been some limited application of  
166 sentiment analysis to Flickr textual metadata. For example, Brindley et al. (2019) used sentiment  
167 analysis on Flickr textual data to assess the perception of green space.

168 Though the position of recreation as a final service has been questioned (Haines-Young and  
169 Potschin, 2018), recreational activities provide restorative benefits (e.g. increased physical  
170 wellbeing) and are therefore generally considered a CES (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005;  
171 Milcu et al. 2012; Plieninger et al. 2013; King et al. 2017; Balzan and Debono 2018). In this article we  
172 will focus on hiking, a recreational activity that involves walking over an extended period, typically  
173 through natural or rural areas (Mitten et al. 2016). We consider hiking a CES here as it can directly  
174 provide restorative benefits, however, as the benefits from recreation may also be indirect (Balzan  
175 and Debono 2018), we recognize hiking could also be considered as a pathway to other CES (King et  
176 al. 2017) through co-production between human-nature interactions (Fischer and Eastwood 2016).  
177 For example, hiking may be undertaken for spiritual and religious motivations such as a pilgrimage,  
178 to experience aesthetic qualities of nature, or as a social activity with a sense of belonging (Collins-  
179 Kreiner and Klot 2017; Wilcer et al. 2019). From this viewpoint, hiking can also provide multiple  
180 pathways to other CES benefits, for example, providing a means of access to aesthetic views  
181 (creative pathway) or providing a sense of place (communicative pathway) (King et al. 2017). Hiking  
182 is one of the most popular recreational activities, both in the USA and worldwide, with participants

183 from all age categories (Wilcer et al. 2019). Despite its popularity, research on the drivers of hiking  
184 remains limited (Wilcer et al. 2019). Hiking, as with other ES, is driven by co-production between  
185 ecosystems and people, such as the influences of cultural landmarks and landscapes or through the  
186 provision of infrastructure such as signposted trails (Plieninger et al. 2013; Fischer and Eastwood  
187 2016).

188 In this article, we present an analysis that refines social media data from Flickr using content analysis  
189 and enriches the data using a measure of sentiment value expressed in the textual metadata,  
190 particularly for mapping the distribution and understanding the drivers of CES. We then  
191 demonstrate the use of our method for a more differentiated analysis of hiking as a CES, focusing on  
192 understanding which of geodiversity, biodiversity and human features contribute to a positive hiking  
193 experience.

## 194 **2 Methods**

### 195 *2.1 Data collection*

196 *A reproducible R file for the data collection methods has been included in the supplementary material*  
197 *(S1). To comply with API terms and privacy policies all data sets were anonymised, stored with*  
198 *multiple layers of security and any unnecessary metadata was deleted.*

199 We queried the Flickr API for photographs containing the text “hiking” in a photograph's title,  
200 description or tag metadata, in the contiguous 48 states of the USA, between 2015-01-01 and 2020-  
201 01-01. To ensure consistency and reproducibility in the study we used the photosearcher package  
202 (Fox et al. 2020b) within the R environment (R Core Team 2020). The photosearcher package allows  
203 searches of Flickr to be constrained by a shapefile. Here the search was limited to photographs taken  
204 and geotagged in the contiguous 48 states using a modified shapefile from the USAboundaries R  
205 package (Mullen and Bratt 2018). As the number of posts meeting these criteria can change over  
206 time (e.g. new photographs were taken during the study period but uploaded at a later date), we  
207 limited photographs to those uploaded before 2020-06-01 to increase the reproducibility of the  
208 search.

### 209 *2.2 Content analysis*

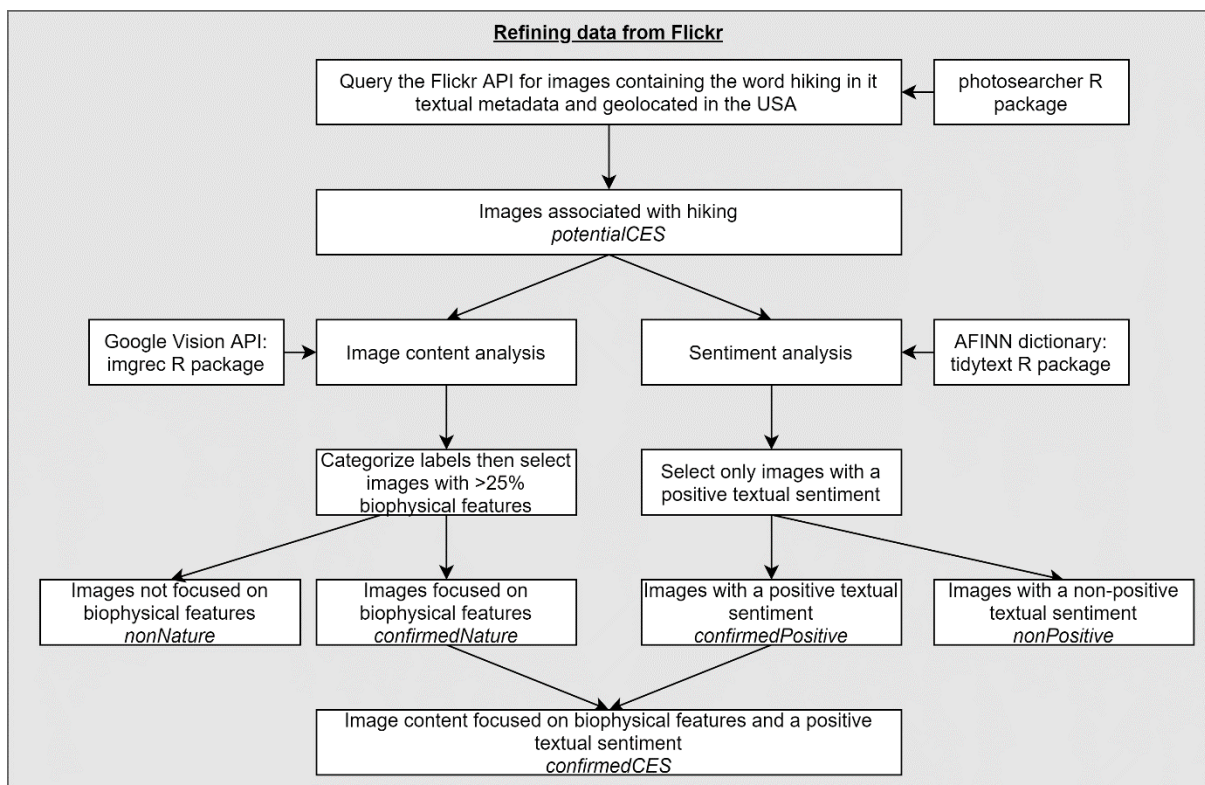
210 To ensure an image captures human-nature interactions, we categorized the contents of images to  
211 help filter out images that do not contain any biophysical features in their contents (e.g. indoor  
212 images). Here, the features within each image were automatically labelled using the Google Cloud  
213 Vision API (Google Cloud Vision 2020), accessed through the imgrec R package (Schwemmer 2019).  
214 The Google Cloud Vision API is a pre-trained machine learning model that can detect image contents  
215 including objects, faces and text. For each image, we requested the API to identify and label the 10  
216 most dominant features of the image. The generated labels had an associated confidence score  
217 between 0 and 1. Here we only kept labels with a confidence score of >0.6 (Gosal et al. 2019). We  
218 assessed each unique label identified by the Google Cloud Vision API and categorized them as either  
219 biophysical nature or not. Here, we identified non-biophysical nature words as synthetic objects (e.g.  
220 buildings and cars), relating to people (e.g. a person), and descriptive terms (e.g. black, text), as well  
221 as non-biophysical aspects of nature such as weather phenomenon (e.g. sky and sun). Biophysical  
222 nature labels were any label that was a feature of biodiversity (e.g. tree or bird of prey), geodiversity  
223 (e.g. lake or geology), or an ecosystem (e.g. rainforest or grassland). Furthermore, we included  
224 generic descriptions of landscapes (e.g. wilderness and natural landscape) as biophysical nature.  
225 Supporting Information (Tables S2.1, S2.2) provides a full list of how each word was categorized. For  
226 each image, we calculated the percentage of labels categorized as a biophysical feature of nature.

227 **2.3 Sentiment analysis**

228 To ensure an image captures a positive human-nature interaction, and therefore a CES, we calculate  
 229 the sentiment value expressed in the textual metadata. Here, we used the AFINN dictionary (Nielsen  
 230 2011) to summarise the sentiment of the textual metadata. The dictionary ranks words on a scale of  
 231 -5 (the most negative words) to +5, (the most positive words), and can be an effective method for  
 232 assessing social media datasets (Koto and Adriani 2015). For each image, the associated textual  
 233 metadata was analysed using the AFINN dictionary and the overall sentiment value was calculated as  
 234 the sum of all the positive and negative sentiment scores for that image. Each image was then  
 235 categorized into two groups, (1) positive images - those with an overall positive sentiment score, (2)  
 236 non-positive images - those with an overall negative sentiment score, an overall neutral sentiment  
 237 score or where no sentiment was expressed in the textual metadata.

238 **2.4 Impacts of refining the data**

239 To understand the ramifications of refining data by contents and sentiment, we carried out two  
 240 filtering processes: first selecting all images where the percentage of labels classified as biophysical  
 241 nature exceeded a given threshold (e.g. 25% of the Google Vision Cloud API labels were of  
 242 biophysical nature features), and second filtering only images with positive sentiment to ensure  
 243 images were associated with a positive experience (Fig. 1). The final part of the analysis applied both  
 244 filters, resulting in a final dataset representing images of human-natural interactions *AND* reflecting  
 245 a positive experience. We extracted a random sample of 100 images from each category  
 246 (*confirmedNature*, *nonNature*, *confirmedPositive*, *nonPositive*) to manually validate the automated  
 247 process.



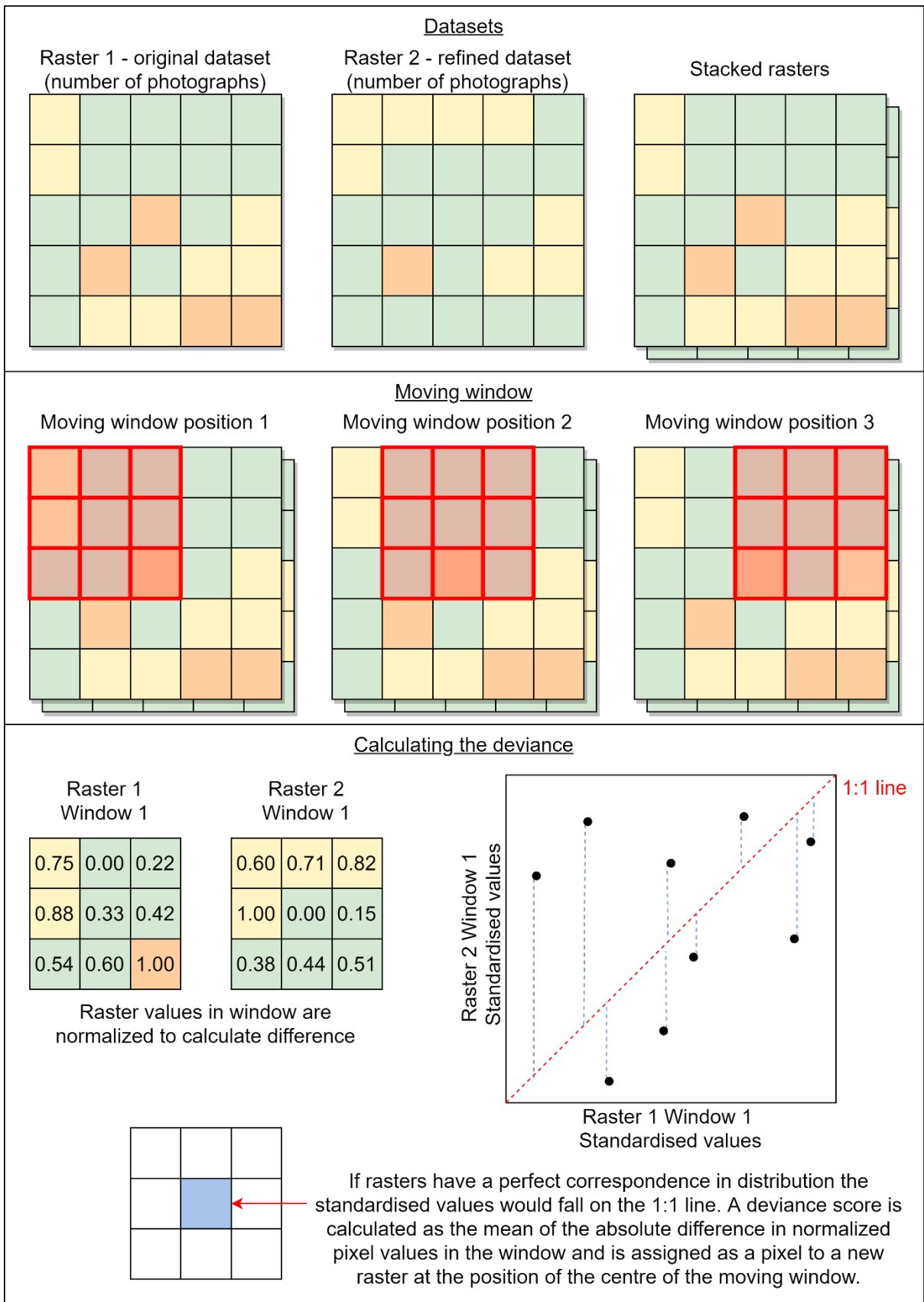
248  
 249 Figure 1. Processes applied to refining the Flickr dataset.

250 First, the full Flickr dataset was refined to images that were *confirmedNature* (thus removing any  
 251 images that, whilst including the relevant activity in the associated textual data, were not taken

252 within a natural or semi-natural setting and therefore did not represent an ES, for example, an image  
253 of somebody indoors with the caption "I wish I were hiking"). Two rasters were generated  
254 representing the number of uploads per pixel, one raster from the full dataset and one from the  
255 refined dataset. A moving window was used to assess localised differences in the two rasters (Figure  
256 2). The moving window assesses a square of pixels (3 x 3 pixels) and calculates the deviance of their  
257 values from a 1:1 line. To do this, the values of two rasters within the window are normalized  
258 between 0 and 1 and the absolute difference between the two pixels at the same location within the  
259 window was calculated. If the two sets of images have a perfect correspondence in the distribution  
260 within the window, the standardised upload values would fall along a 1:1 line. The deviance score is  
261 calculated as the mean of the absolute values of these differences (to account for negative  
262 deviations from the 1:1 line, following Willcock et al. (2019)). The moving window approach allowed  
263 us to represent spatial differences in deviance by calculating the deviance value for the number of  
264 uploads within the window and creating a new raster in which the deviance value was assigned to  
265 the central pixel of the window (e.g. the pixel in the middle of the 3 x 3 moving window). If the full  
266 dataset is a good proxy for images of nature, we expect the local deviance (defined by the window  
267 size) value to be less than 0.3 (Willcock et al. 2019); indicating that the refined and full datasets  
268 share similar distributions and that the filtering is not necessary. Where the deviance value is greater  
269 than 0.3 there is not a good fit between the two datasets (Willcock et al. 2019).

270 As landscape characteristics can drive recreational activities at a range of scales, and Flickr is a good  
271 proxy for recreation at a range of scales up to 50km (Graham and Eigenbrod 2019), here we map the  
272 difference in distribution when the number of uploads is aggregated to 25km<sup>2</sup>. We also map the  
273 differences in distribution using a 3 x 3-pixel window (where a pixel is the size of one pixel of the  
274 underlying raster as determined by the spatial resolution), a standard size for aggregating fine-scale  
275 data (Graham et al., 2019). Furthermore, we map the differences based on refining by a threshold of  
276 25% biophysical labels. This threshold was chosen to ensure that the refined set of images captured  
277 human-nature interactions, without completely excluding images containing human features as  
278 these could help to provide insight into the co-production of CES. However, as any changes in  
279 distribution may be a facet of the filtering method, or the method of mapping and calculating the  
280 deviance, we conducted a sensitivity analysis using all possible combinations of three thresholds for  
281 considering an image to be of nature (images with 25%, 50% and 75% labels classed as biophysical  
282 nature), three different spatial resolutions (5km<sup>2</sup>, 10km<sup>2</sup> and 25km<sup>2</sup>), and three sizes of moving  
283 window (3 x 3 pixels, 5 x 5 pixels and 7 x 7 pixels). This resulted in 27 datasets.





284

285 Figure 2. Methods for calculating the difference in distributions between the unrefined and refined  
286 datasets.

287 If there is a spatial pattern to the data (e.g. if all pixels that have high deviance values are spatially  
288 clustered such as in urban areas), the full data may be an applicable proxy if areas of anomalous data  
289 are accounted for in any analysis. However, if the distribution of deviance values is random the full  
290 dataset may not be a suitable proxy. We calculated the Moran's I for the local deviance maps.  
291 Moran's I can have a value of -1 to 1, with values closer to -1 showing a uniform distribution, values  
292 closer to 0 a random distribution and values closer to 1 a clustered distribution (Sankey 2017).

293 Second, we followed a similar process, filtering by the sentiment expressed in the textual metadata  
294 (thus removing any images that were not about a positive experience and therefore did not  
295 represent an ES, for example, an image with the caption "boring view"). In this case, we compared  
296 the number of images with positive sentiment, *confirmedPositive*, against the full dataset. In this  
297 case, we tested the sensitivity of the results to the chosen parameters by considering all  
298 combinations of the same three different pixel resolutions and three sizes of moving window (9  
299 datasets in total). In this example, if the full dataset is a good representation of a positive  
300 experience, the local deviance values should be close to 0. We also tested for spatial patterns in local  
301 deviance using the Moran's I.

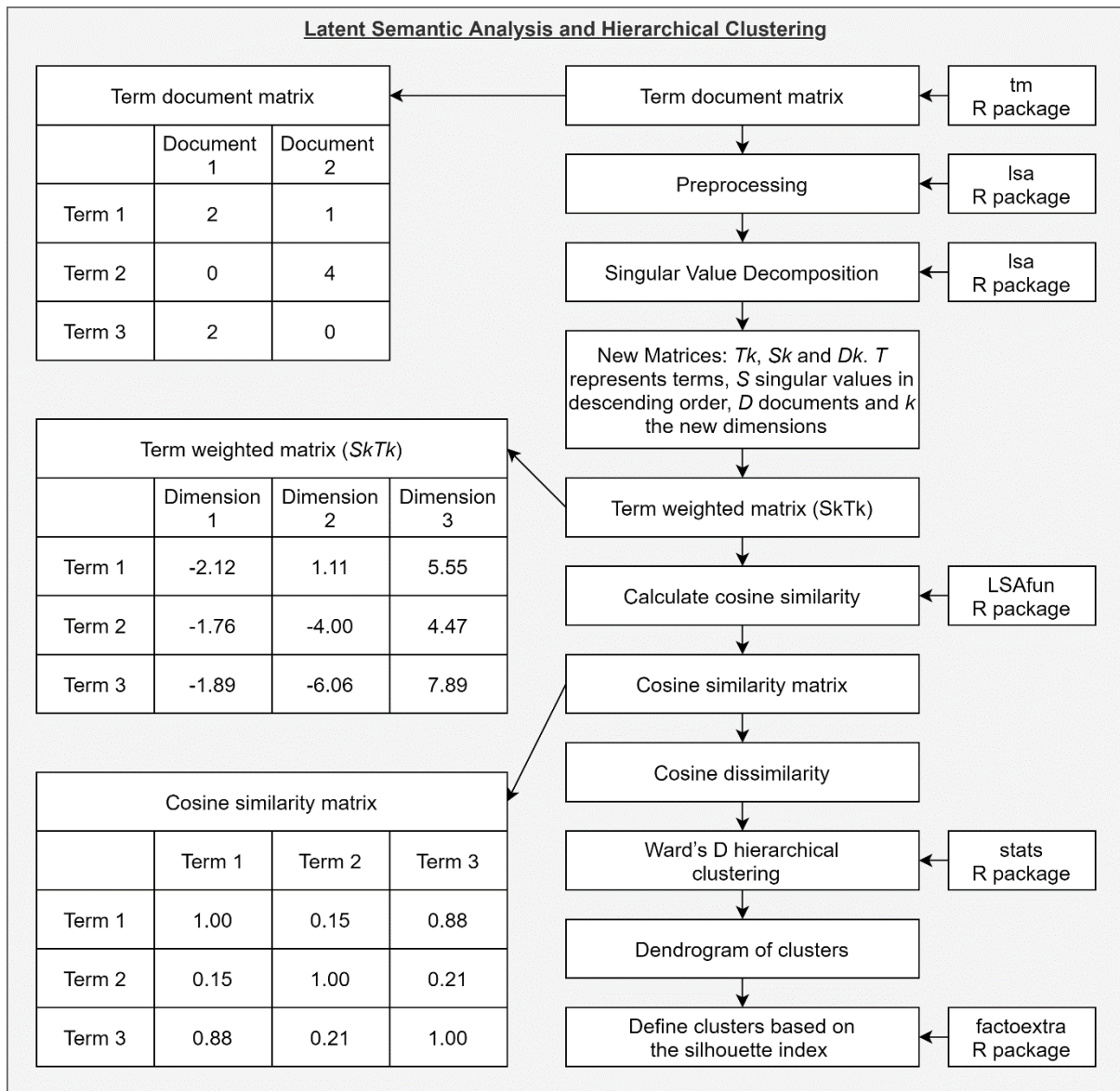
302 Finally, we refined the original dataset to images containing biophysical features and positive textual  
303 sentiment (thus capturing CES as images of positive experiences occurring within a natural, or semi-  
304 natural setting). Here, we mapped the distribution of these *confirmedCES* images versus the full  
305 number of images and calculated the local deviance values of the two datasets, again using all the 27  
306 possible combinations of three thresholds for considering an image to be of nature (images with  
307 25%, 50% and 75% labels classed as nature), three different spatial resolutions (5km<sup>2</sup>, 10km<sup>2</sup> and  
308 25km<sup>2</sup>), and three sizes of moving window (3 x 3 pixels, 5 x 5 pixels and 7 x 7 pixels). Here, if the  
309 original full dataset was a good proxy for CES we would expect deviance values to be closer to 0  
310 between the *confirmedCES* images versus all the images. We also tested the spatial uniformity of the  
311 local deviance values using Moran's I.

## 312 *2.5 Mapping distributions and sentiment*

313 The point locations of the *confirmedCES* images were aggregated to a raster layer using a pixel size  
314 of 25km<sup>2</sup>, a suitable size for assessing spatial relationships based on Flickr data (Graham and  
315 Eigenbrod 2019). We also mapped the mean sentiment score of images falling within each pixel. To  
316 test the relationship between the number of uploads of *confirmedCES* images and the mean  
317 sentiment score of *confirmedCES* images in an area we calculated Pearson's correlation between the  
318 two raster maps. If a high number of uploads is related to a high sentiment value, we would expect a  
319 Pearson's correlation value to be closer to one.

## 320 *2.6 Assessing human-nature interaction in images*

321 To assess the relationship between biodiversity and geodiversity we carried out latent semantic  
322 analysis (LSA) on the content labels (Fig. 3). LSA was carried out in the R environment, primarily  
323 using the *lsa* R package (Wild 2015). LSA is a natural language processing technique that is used to  
324 assess the relationship between a collection of documents (in this case a user's photographs from  
325 one day) and the terms used in them (in this case Google Vision Cloud API labels) as a term-  
326 document matrix (TDM) and can be used to examine how closely terms are related in use (Gefen et  
327 al. 2017). LSA on a TDM has been previously used to help describe recreational activities (Monkman  
328 et al. 2018; Gosal et al. 2019). Here, where the LSA shows terms are more closely related, this  
329 indicates that those Google Vision Cloud API labels are more commonly photographed together, for  
330 example, one might expect the labels "forest" and "tree" to be frequently photographed together.



331

332 Figure 3. Example workflow for the methods of clustering photographs.

333 As LSA can be used to assess individual CES preference, we grouped all the labels from all images  
 334 from a single user of a single day into a single document, building upon the photograph user-days  
 335 (PUD) metric introduced by Wood et al. (2013). These new groupings were transformed into a term-  
 336 document matrix (TDM) (Gosal et al. 2019). The TDM,  $M$ , contains the grouped photograph by a  
 337 single user on a single day as the columns and the Google Vision Cloud API labels as the rows, with  
 338 cells representing the frequency of the label appearing in that users photographs for that day.  
 339 During the creation of the TDM we carried out several common LSA pre-processing procedures to  
 340 ensure that only relevant words were kept (Evangelopoulos 2013; Gefen et al. 2017). First, we  
 341 removed stop words, a list of around 400 common English words such as “the”, “of” and “them”.  
 342 Second, to assess which features are most commonly photographed in association with hiking, we  
 343 only selected labels that appear in at least 5% of the documents (the labels from each image,  
 344 including non-nature labels). Third, we applied the “Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency”  
 345 (TF-IDF) weighting to the TDM. The TF-IDF is one of the most commonly used weightings for LSA,  
 346 where locally more weighting is given to terms that appear frequently in one document and globally  
 347 less weighting is given to common terms and is necessary to control for the fact that some words

348 appear far more frequently than others (Evangelopoulos 2013; Christian et al. 2016; Gefen et al.  
349 2017).

350 After pre-processing the LSA was carried out on the weighted TDM. The LSA procedure carries out a  
351 singular value decomposition (SVD), a linear algebra method for the factorization of a matrix into a  
352 product of matrices. Here, the SVD takes our matrix  $M$  (an  $m \times n$  matrix with  $m$  representing all  
353 images a user took in a day and  $n$  terms that the Google Vision Cloud API labelled in those images)  
354 and transforms this into three new matrices:  $T_k$ ,  $S_k$  and  $D_k$ .  $T$  represents a term vector matrix,  $S$   
355 represent a diagonal matrix containing singular values in descending order,  $D$  represents a  
356 document vector matrix and  $k$  the number of new dimensions (Gosal et al. 2019). The LSA process  
357 represents the data in  $k$ -dimensional semantic space, by reducing the original dimensions whilst  
358 preserving the most information. This method allows for the original space vector to be represented  
359 in the lower-dimensional term and document vectors. Here the dimensionality reduction ( $k$ ) was  
360 automatically calculated using the standard “fraction of the sum of the selected singular values to  
361 the sum of all singular values” method (Gosal et al. 2019). This method selects the points on the  
362 diagonal matrix of descending singular values where the sum of the  $S$  singular values divided by the  
363 sum of all the  $S$  singular values are equal or greater than 0.5 (Gefen et al. 2017). From the new  
364 matrices, we calculated a term weighted matrix ( $S_k T_k$ ). The term weighted matrix represents each  
365 term as a row and each dimension (or latent semantic factor) as a column (Evangelopoulos 2013).

366 By carrying out the SVD, the terms can now be projected in multidimensional space and the  
367 similarity between Google Vision Cloud API labels can be calculated using cosine similarity  
368 (Evangelopoulos 2013). Cosine similarity measures the angle between vectors in multi-dimensional  
369 space, with the resulting values ranging from 0 to 1, with 1 representing total similarity. The diagonal  
370 in the matrix will always be 1 as a word is always the same as itself. Here we calculated the cosine  
371 similarity between all terms. Cosine similarity of 1 means that the labels always appear together and  
372 0 means they never appear together.

373 To understand what features (including biophysical and non-biophysical nature as well as human  
374 features) are most often taken in the same images, we used hierarchical clustering to group the  
375 Google Vision Cloud API labels based on their cosine similarity. As hierarchical clustering uses a  
376 distance measure, we calculated cosine *dissimilarity* ( $1 - \text{cosine similarity}$ ). We then carried out  
377 hierarchical clustering using Ward’s D method, which has previously been shown to create  
378 unambiguous clusters for labels generated by the Google Cloud Vision API (Gosal et al. 2019). The  
379 Ward’s D method builds a dendrogram through a bottom-up approach to clustering. Each element in  
380 the tree starts as an individual cluster, two clusters are then merged so that variance within clusters  
381 is minimized. This process is repeated until all elements are clustered on the tree.

382 A dendrogram can then be cut at a chosen height to provide the final clusters, with the choice of  
383 height resulting in the selection of different final clusters. Though studies can choose an arbitrary  
384 height to cut the dendrogram and select the clusters, indices such as the silhouette index can be  
385 used to find the optimal number of clusters based on the given dendrogram (Wang and Xu 2019).  
386 Here, the dendrogram was cut into  $x$  clusters, based on the silhouette index, where each element is  
387 assigned a value between -1 and 1. Elements with higher numbers are closer to the other elements  
388 in their cluster than elements in other clusters (Pagnuco et al. 2016). The value of  $x$  with the highest  
389 silhouette index was chosen to be the number of clusters.

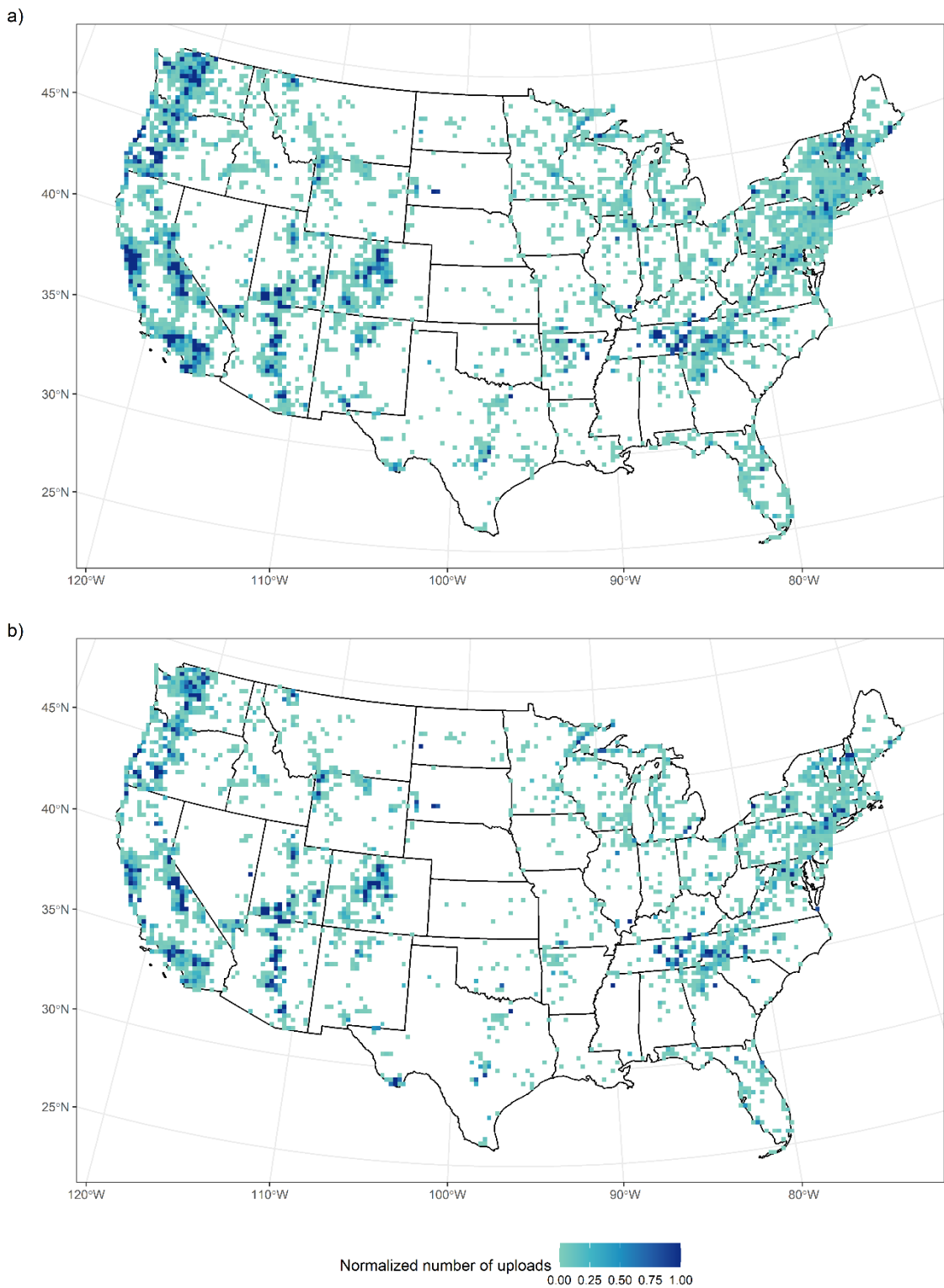
390 We summarised the types of images photographed when hiking based on the clusters. For each  
391 user's daily images, we calculated the number of Google Vision Cloud API labels belonging to each  
392 cluster then categorised the users daily images as which cluster was the most dominant (where

393 labels of two or more clusters appear equally dominant in an image, that image was classified as a  
394 combination of those clusters). The mean sentiment of the images belonging to each cluster or  
395 combination of clusters was calculated.

### 396 **3 Results**

#### 397 *3.1 Full and enriched datasets*

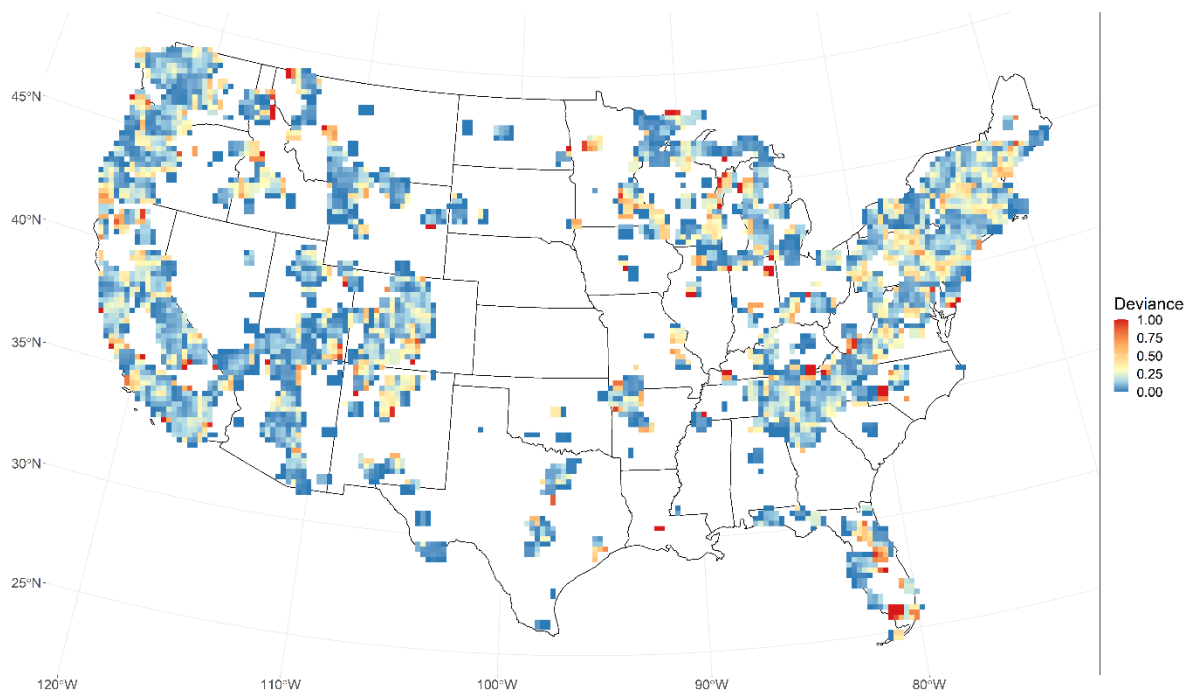
398 There were 179,700 geotagged photographs containing the text “hiking” in a photograph's title,  
399 description or tag metadata for the years 2015-2020 in the USA. The distribution of hiking images  
400 was largely concentrated in the west, the northeast, and some southern states (Fig. 4a). Here, the  
401 final refined dataset chosen to represent *confirmedCES* were images containing more than 25% of  
402 the image content labels being classified as nature and a positive sentiment expressed in textual  
403 metadata. There were 43,427 images that met these selection criteria, 24.17% of the full hiking  
404 dataset. The distribution of these *confirmedCES* images follows some similar patterns to the full  
405 dataset with the largest concentration of uploads along the west coast of the US in states such as  
406 Washington, southwest states, such as Arizona and Utah, northeastern states around the Great  
407 Lakes and along the Appalachians (Fig. 4b). Though there are similarities in the distribution of the  
408 *confirmedCES* images and the full dataset images, there are also areas where the distributions have  
409 different patterns for example, particularly with many regions having fewer uploads, such as  
410 southern California, Arkansas and the west coast of Florida.



412

413 Figure 4. Number of images from Flickr in the USA between 2015-2020 with the term “hiking” in the  
414 images title, tag or description, results were normalized (spatial resolution 25km<sup>2</sup>). a) the full Flickr  
415 dataset, b) images categorized as *confirmedCES* (images where the percentage of content labels  
416 classified as nature were >25% and a positive sentiment was expressed in textual metadata).

417 The similarities in some of the large-scale distributions may be misinterpreted to mean that overall  
418 the distribution of uploads from *confirmedCES* and the full dataset images are similar. However, the  
419 local variation in the deviance from a 1:1 line differs spatially, with high and low deviance distributed  
420 across the whole of the United States (Fig. 5). Here, 20.81% of pixels had a deviance value of > 0.3  
421 indicating that these regions did not have a strong relationship between the number of uploads that  
422 were *confirmedCES* and from the full dataset images. As the Moran's I value for the local deviance  
423 distribution was 0.27, this indicates that the distribution is close to random, and therefore not  
424 spatially uniform. It may therefore not be possible to use the full dataset alone to select areas that  
425 represent a good proxy for a positive CES experience. The non-conformity between the full and  
426 filtered datasets is distributed across the US including in the northwestern states, around the Great  
427 Lakes, areas of California and throughout Florida.



428

429 Figure 5. The local deviance in the scaled number of images from the full Flickr and *confirmedCES*  
430 images dataset (images where the percentage of content labels classified as nature were >25% and a  
431 positive sentiment was expressed in textural metadata) from the 1:1 line. Pixel size 25km<sup>2</sup>; window  
432 size 3 x 3; a break point of 0.3 was applied to indicate areas of high deviance.

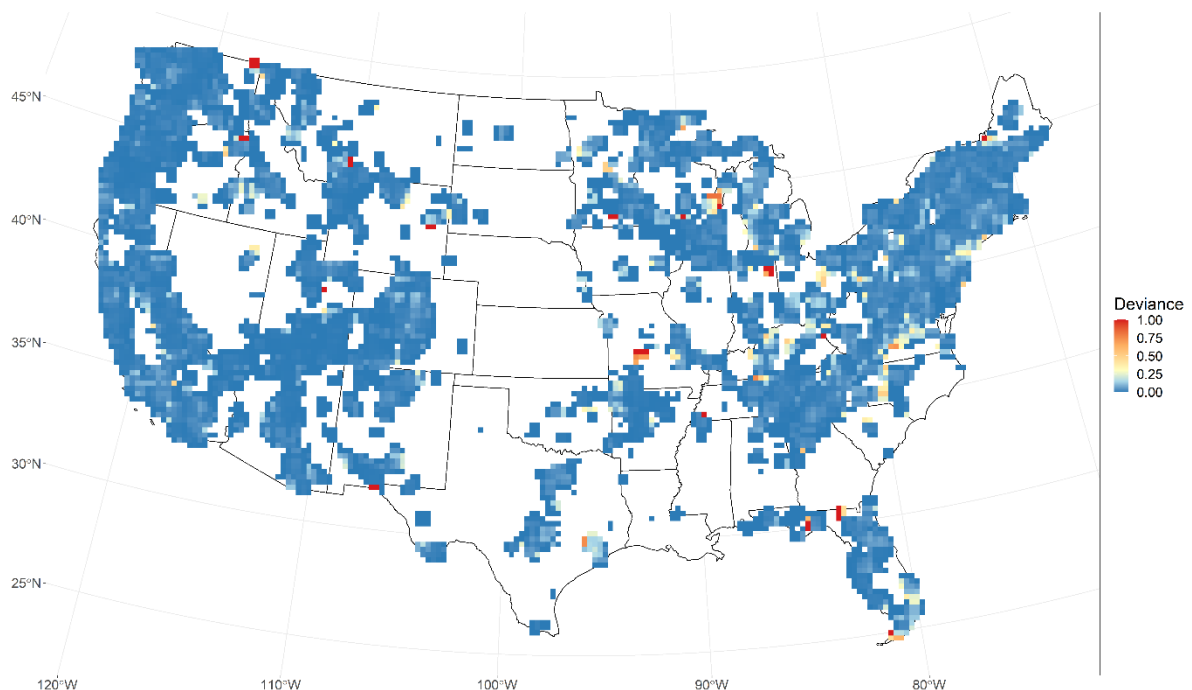
433 The differences in the distribution of these local deviance values do not appear to be a facet of the  
434 chosen mapping techniques as the deviance scores are similar across the full range of spatial  
435 resolution, window size and nature threshold combinations (see supplementary material SI.3). When  
436 two variables are held the same (e.g. the same nature threshold and window size) and the other  
437 varies (e.g. differing pixel size), the deviance scores remain similar. We do note that there are some  
438 small changes based on the selection of each, for example, the larger the pixel size the smaller the  
439 overall deviance. However, this change is minimal and the overall deviance score remains similar,  
440 suggesting that the selection of mapping technique has had limited influence on the results drawn  
441 from the choices of aggregating to 25km<sup>2</sup>, refining based on nature threshold of 25% and calculating  
442 deviance using a window size of 3 x 3. Therefore, although the absolute values of the deviance vary  
443 based on the threshold, window size and pixel size values chosen, the conclusions which are drawn  
444 are qualitatively the same.



445

### 446 3.2 Individual influence of filtering by content only

447 When filtering photographs by the percentage of nature labels based on a threshold of 25%, 160,873  
448 images of nature remained, compared with 179,700 images before filtering. The deviance values  
449 vary depending on the threshold, window size and spatial resolution, but again here the conclusions  
450 drawn are the same. From the moving window analysis, the distribution of the *confirmedNature*  
451 images does not deviate greatly from the full dataset (Fig. 6). The deviance values are again not  
452 spatially uniform with a Moran's I value of 0.26, indicating a random spatial pattern. Here, only  
453 2.11% of the pixels are above a deviance value of 0.3 - indicating that images of hiking from Flickr  
454 may generally be a good proxy for images of human-nature interactions. The patterns of positive  
455 and negative local deviance values are similar overall for all combinations of the varied nature  
456 threshold, spatial resolution and window size, indicating that these choices did not influence the  
457 results when filtering by content alone (see supplementary material SI.4).



458

459 Figure 6. The local deviance in the scaled number of images from the full Flickr and *confirmedNature*  
460 images dataset (images where the percentage of content labels classified as nature were >25%) from  
461 the 1:1 line. Pixel size 25km<sup>2</sup>; window size 3 x 3; a break point of 0.3 was applied to indicate areas of  
462 high deviance.

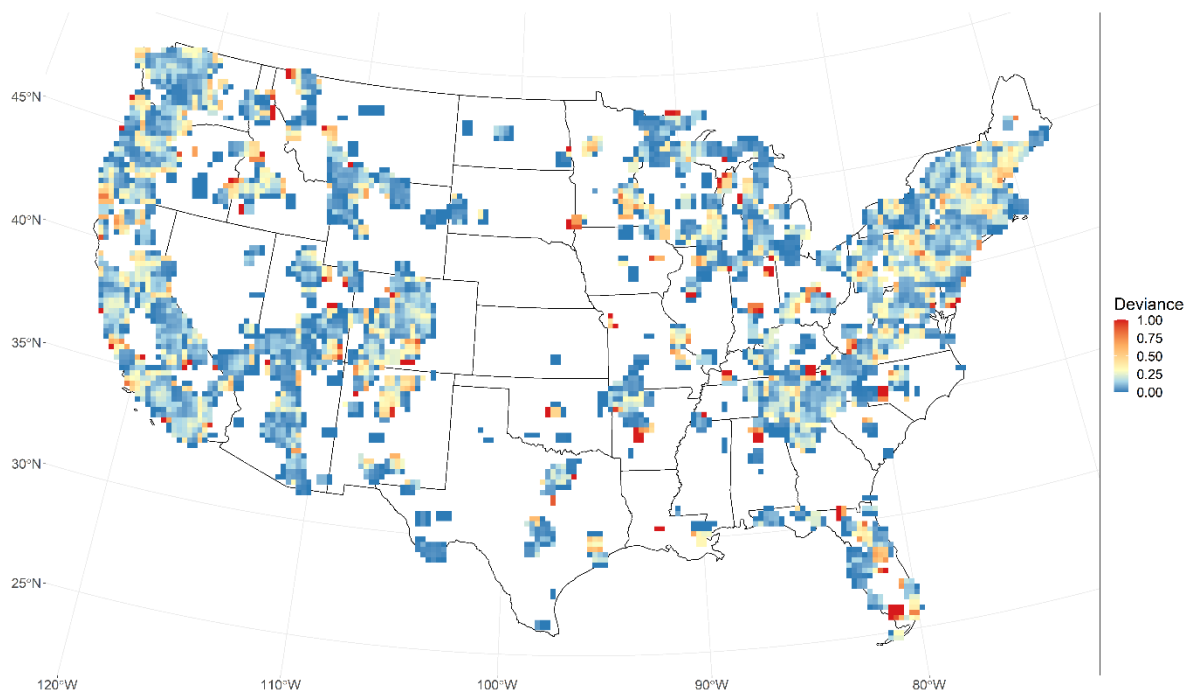
463

### 464 3.3 Individual influence of filtering by sentiment only

465 Filtering out images with a non-positive sentiment removed a greater number of images than  
466 filtering by image contents. From the 179,700 images in the full dataset, 61,091 (34.00%) contained  
467 a non-null sentiment score, with 48,607 (27.05%) having a positive and 12,484 (6.95%) having a  
468 negative associated sentiment value. There was some difference in the local deviance values  
469 between the spatial distribution of the refined *confirmedPositive* and full dataset depending on the  
470 window size and pixel size.



471 Here, 19.08% of the pixels have a deviance value of greater than 0.3, indicating that in these  
472 locations, photographs of hiking on Flickr may not be a good proxy for positive images of hiking.  
473 Furthermore, the deviation of uploads from the *confirmedPositive* and full dataset is not uniform  
474 (Fig. 7), so it may not be possible to differentiate between areas where Flickr photographs are a  
475 good proxy for a positive experience and those where they are not. The random structure to the  
476 distribution (Moran's I = 0.27) suggests that there is no spatial structure to the distribution of the  
477 locations which deviate between the full and filtered dataset. As with the previous examples, the  
478 patterns of local deviance are similar across spatial resolution and window size and therefore the  
479 choices in mapping the distribution have not impacted the results (see supplementary material  
480 SI.5). As there was little to no difference in spatial distribution when refining by nature threshold  
481 alone, but a larger difference when refining by sentiment alone, this indicates that differences  
482 observed in the analysis of the *confirmedCES* versus full dataset are primarily driven by the inclusion  
483 of refining by sentiment.



484

485 Figure 7. The local deviance in the scaled number of images from the full Flickr and  
486 *confirmedPositive* images dataset (images where a positive sentiment was expressed in textual  
487 metadata) from the 1:1 line. Pixel size 25km<sup>2</sup>; window size 3 x 3; a break point of 0.3 was applied to  
488 indicate areas of high deviance.

### 489 3.4 Validation of methods

490 The manual validation of the image content and textual sentiment analysis indicates that the  
491 automated methods have high accuracy. When assessing images classified as presenting human-  
492 nature interactions we agreed with 98% of the images categorised this way at the 25% biophysical  
493 nature label thresholds (*confirmedNature*): and 100% at 50% and 75% threshold (Table 1). However,  
494 when assessing images deemed not to be focused on human-nature interactions (*nonNature*) the  
495 method incorrectly included some images containing human-nature interactions, particularly when  
496 using a threshold of 50% and 75% biophysical labels. When using a 25% threshold, the images that  
497 were incorrectly labelled as *confirmedNature* were of artwork or indoors artificial water features.  
498 For the images that were incorrectly included as *nonNature*, the images tended to be where the

499 biophysical nature features were out of focus (e.g. a photograph focused on a person in the  
 500 foreground, with a small amount of scenery in the background) or where the image had been edited  
 501 (e.g. in black and white or with text over the image). A threshold smaller than 25% would start to  
 502 include more images, that though contain biophysical nature labels, do not relate to human-nature  
 503 interactions as *confirmedNature* (e.g. images of pets, indoor plants or artificial water features).  
 504 There was a range of correctly identified *nonNature* images including indoor images (e.g. furniture),  
 505 non-hiking activities (e.g. indoor music events or an American football game inside a stadium), food  
 506 and drink (e.g. packets of food), photographs of an object (e.g. a photograph of another photograph)  
 507 or art (e.g. generated images), all having a biophysical nature label percentage of between 0 to 25%.  
 508 In general, using a threshold of 25% therefore provides a good balance of excluding most images not  
 509 related to human-nature interactions whilst not incorrectly excluding the large number of human-  
 510 nature images that using thresholds of 50% and 75% did.

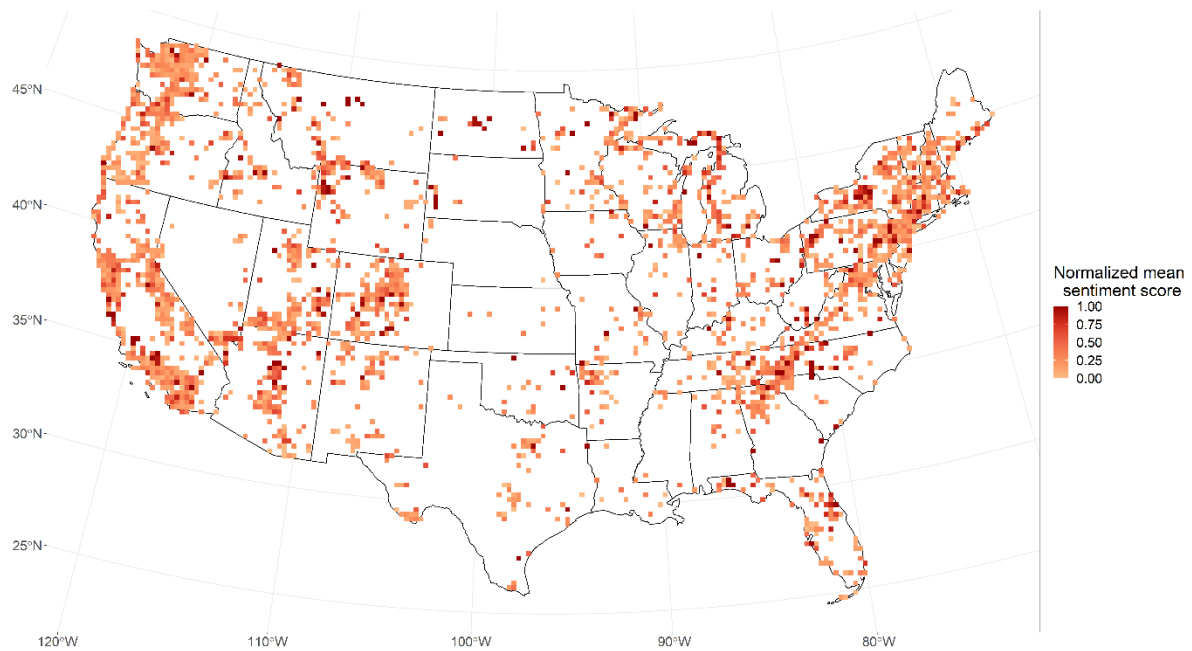
511 Table 1: Validation of automated filtering methods

Threshold	confirmedNature		nonNature		Both
	True- positive	False- positive	True- negative	False- negative	Overall accuracy
25% biophysical nature labels	98.00%	2.00%	70.00%	30.00%	84.00%
50% biophysical nature labels	100.00%	0.00%	39.00%	61.00%	69.50%
75% biophysical nature labels	100.00%	0.00%	26.00%	74.00%	63.00%

512  
 513 For the positive expressed sentiment there was a 96% agreement between the automated process  
 514 and manual interpretation. Many posts contained positive sentiments (e.g. “beautiful”, “exciting” or  
 515 “wonderful”). Where there were differences in our manual validation and the automated method,  
 516 the posts tended to include a location name that was inherently expressing a positive sentiment but  
 517 no indication of experience was given (e.g. “walk at Lucky Boy Vista”) or a mixed sentiment  
 518 expressed in the text (positive and negative experience e.g. “nice view but overall the hike was  
 519 terrible”). For the non-positive textual sentiments, the automated process was 92% accurate. Many  
 520 posts contained no indication of sentiment, just simple descriptive phrases (e.g. “hiking along the  
 521 river”), though some positive post were incorrectly included as the place or feature has an inherently  
 522 non-positive connotation though the user expressed a positive view of it (e.g. “fun at Lost Creek  
 523 Lake” or “beautiful poison oak”), or where users used a double negative (e.g. “this view is not bad”).  
 524 Overall, the automated sentiment value provides a good indication of whether a positive sentiment  
 525 expressed in the text.

526 *3.5 Enriching spatial distribution*

527 Through enriching the social media data with the inclusion of textual sentiments, we were not only  
 528 able to plot the distribution of the number of uploads but assess which locations have the highest  
 529 associated sentiment value (Fig. 8). The Pearson's correlation between the *confirmedCES* uploads  
 530 and *confirmedCES* mean sentiment raster maps indicates a weak to no correlation ( $R = -0.004$ ,  $t = -$   
 531  $0.21$ ,  $df = 2349$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.83$ ). This suggests that there is no correlation between areas with a high  
 532 number of uploads and areas that have a high associated sentiment value.



533

534 Figure 8. Mean sentiment value of *confirmedCES* images (images where the percentage of content  
 535 labels classified as nature were >25% and a positive sentiment was expressed in textural metadata),  
 536 results were normalized (pixel size 25km<sup>2</sup>)

537 *3.6 Enriching content analysis*

538 When grouping images by a single user in a single day, 67 labels appeared in at least 5% of these  
 539 *confirmedCES* images. From the cosine dissimilarity coefficient of the labels, the silhouette index  
 540 indicated that when using Ward’s D clustering, ten categories for the labels are suitable (Table 2).  
 541 The ten classes can be summarized as: “mountains and hills”, “forests”, “views of lakes”, “snow  
 542 covered mountains”, “vegetated trails and parks”, “hydrological features”, “geological or arid  
 543 landscapes”, “human-geology interactions”, “grasses” and “flowers”. The individual clusters tend to  
 544 only contain either biodiversity labels (e.g. “flowers”) or geodiversity labels (e.g. “mountains and  
 545 hills”), indicating that the focus of images may only capture one aspect of biophysical nature.

546 Table 2. Google Vision Cloud API labels clustered into ten classes using Ward’s D clustering method.

Cluster	Google Vision Cloud API labels
Mountains and hills	Cloud, highland, hill, hill station, mountain, mountainous landforms, sky, wilderness
Forests	Biome, branch, forest, green, leaf, nature reserve, natural environment, northern hardwood forest, old-growth forest, tree, tropical and subtropical coniferous forests, woodland, woody plant, trunk
Views of lakes	Lake, Canidae, natural landscape, nature, reflection
Snow covered mountains	Alps, mountain range, ridge, snow, winter
Vegetated trails and parks	Adaptation, botany, landscape, plant, plant community, shrubland, soil, state park, trail, vegetation, wildlife
Hydrological features	Body of water, river, stream, water, watercourse, waterfall, water resources
Geological or arid landscapes	Badlands, canyon, formation, geological phenomenon, geology, national park, rock wadi

Human-geology interactions	Adventure, atmospheric phenomenon, bedrock, outcrop, recreation
Grasses	Grass, grassland
Flowers	Flower, flowering plant

547 When categorising images based on which cluster’s labels were most dominant in the photograph,  
548 there were 165 different combinations of the most dominant cluster (Figure 8). The clusters that  
549 were most frequently photographed were “mountains and hills”, “forests”, “geological or arid  
550 landscapes” and “hydrological features”. Many of the cluster combinations have large standard  
551 deviations, though some combination of clusters (e.g. “views of lake/human-geology interactions”)  
552 have relatively low standard deviation values.

553 Though the most photographed cluster was “mountains and hills”, this cluster has a relatively low  
554 sentiment score when the sole dominant class in the photograph. However, there is a high relative  
555 sentiment associated with images containing both geomorphological and hydrological features (e.g.  
556 “mountains and hills/views of lakes” and “mountains and hills/hydrological features”), indicating  
557 that interactions between these features may be important at driving a positive hiking experience.  
558 The cluster of images containing “forests/vegetated trails and parks/geological or arid landscapes”  
559 had the highest mean sentiment, suggesting that a combination of geodiversity, biodiversity and  
560 human features can interact to provide a highly positive hiking experience. There is a relatively low  
561 sentiment value associated with “forests” when on their own, however, there is a higher sentiment  
562 in images containing both forests in combination with other clusters (e.g “mountains and  
563 hills/forests/hydrological features” and “mountains and hills/forests/vegetated trails or parks”),  
564 indicating that forests alone may not provide a relatively positive hiking experience, but forests in  
565 combination with a trail or park, or with geomorphological features (such as mountains) may help to  
566 increase a positive hiking experience. Other aspects of biophysical nature, such as “geological or arid  
567 landscapes” and “hydrological features”, are both highly photographed with a relatively high mean  
568 sentiment score. Many of the cluster combinations have large standard deviations, though some  
569 combination of clusters (e.g. “views of lakes/human-geology interactions”) have relatively low  
570 standard deviation values.



571  
 572 Figure 8. Count of images, their mean sentiment value and standard deviation of sentiment value for  
 573 the 25 most frequently photographed clusters, where a user's images from a single day were  
 574 categorised based on which cluster most of their assigned Google Vision Cloud API labels belonged  
 575 to.

576 **4 Discussion**

577 Metadata from social media websites such as Flickr provide a source of big data for many CES  
 578 applications. Being able to use the full dataset as a proxy for images of human-nature interactions  
 579 may benefit researchers looking at general patterns by removing the need to manually or  
 580 automatically tag image contents, which can be time-intensive or financially expensive (Richards and  
 581 Tunçer 2018). However, this data may not accurately represent the CES and studies therefore need  
 582 to refine data from social media and remove posts that are inappropriate for CES analysis (e.g.  
 583 Oteros-Rozas et al. 2018). These studies assume that the content of the image is representative of a  
 584 user's interactions with CES (Langemeyer et al. 2018). Therefore, content analysis alone provides  
 585 incomplete information and does not allow one to fully untangle the human-nature relationship that  
 586 drives CES. Furthermore, filtering based on textual analysis can be useful to subset CES images  
 587 (Ghermandi et al. 2020), but refining based on sentiment alone results in a dataset that includes  
 588 non-CES images. Refining social media datasets by text alone also does not provide a complete and  
 589 valid CES dataset (Chen et al. 2020). Through enriching the filtered images of nature with their  
 590 associated textual sentiment value, we can start to provide a more robust understanding of CES  
 591 distributions, and the aspects of nature that provide a positive experience.

592 For the content analysis, we aimed to refine our dataset to represent images of human-nature  
593 interactions, we therefore included images containing any aspects of biophysical nature. Studies  
594 with different aims should filter their images accordingly, for example, Oteros-Rozas et al. (2018)  
595 chose to include only images of landscapes in their study and removed images that featured animals.  
596 Some CES studies have stated a preference for using images from Panoramio as it prevents uploads  
597 of images of people and synthetic objects and therefore did not need to be refined (Casalegno et al.  
598 2013; Pastur et al. 2016). However, as of 2016 Panoramio is no longer available. Here, we found little  
599 difference in the distribution of the *confirmedNature* and full datasets, with low deviance between  
600 the two groups for most of the US. This suggests that Flickr may therefore be a good proxy for  
601 images of biophysical features across a range of spatial scales. However, studies that use Flickr, or  
602 other social media sources, need to acknowledge that the returned dataset may contain images that  
603 are unsuitable for their specific CES assessment and should ensure these images are refined out  
604 accordingly. Overall, we found that a threshold of 25% of biophysical nature labels has provided a  
605 suitable set of images representing human-nature interactions, while generally excluding images  
606 that are not of CES. By not omitting all human features (e.g. Panoramio), a threshold of 25%  
607 biophysical nature labels can provide results that allow for more robust recommendations for  
608 improving the sustainable management of these complex human-nature interactions (Bennet et al.  
609 2015; Palomo et al. 2016).

610 Overall, refining by sentiment value has a larger impact on the spatial distribution and size of the  
611 dataset than refining by image content. This suggests that the full Flickr dataset, at least for hiking,  
612 may be sufficient to show overall patterns of the distribution of images of human-nature  
613 interactions, but not necessarily a positive CES experience. Though there are some areas of low  
614 deviance between the number of uploads between the full Flickr and *confirmedCES* datasets, there  
615 are many areas of disagreement. Furthermore, as the spatial distribution of these areas is random it  
616 means that it may be difficult to account for the areas of high disagreement without refining the  
617 dataset. For example, if the distribution of high deviances were clustered, it may be appropriate to  
618 use the full dataset but filter out only the areas of high disagreement. The results for the  
619 *confirmedPositive* set of images were parallel to the *confirmedCES* images, with areas of high  
620 deviance randomly distributed across the US. The inclusion of sentiment therefore has implications  
621 for the number and distribution of images, (e.g. in the north western states where there was high  
622 deviance between the number of confirmedCES and the full number of images). To better  
623 understand positive human-nature interactions, we recommend that social media data be refined in  
624 a two-step process, filtering by content and enriching with sentiment value.

625 A more robust method of mapping CES occurrences, such as the one presented here, could help to  
626 inform policy and decision-makers (Clemente et al. 2019). For example, when the number of uploads  
627 is aggregated to a given location to understand visitation rates (e.g. national park, land cover or state  
628 level), it could be interpreted that these regions provide the largest supply of CES and are therefore  
629 the most important for future management strategies (e.g. Figueroa-Alfaro and Tang 2017). Here,  
630 we have highlighted a discrepancy between the number of images uploaded and the mean  
631 sentiment value expressed by textual metadata of the images in the area. Higher uploads of images  
632 taken in each area may indirectly be influenced by accessibility (Richards and Tunçer 2018), and  
633 therefore may not necessarily represent the sites with the highest sentiment value. By enriching the  
634 data with sentiment value, we can evaluate the distribution of CES in ways other than purely  
635 measuring the number of visitors. For example, as areas with a higher number of uploads are  
636 potentially more vulnerable to damage (Hausmann et al. 2019), mapping areas of high sentiment in  
637 combination with visitation rates means management decisions can be better targeted to alleviate  
638 pressure from overused locations (Clemente et al. 2019). Furthermore, the textual sentiment value

639 could be used in conjunction with the temporal metadata to assess changes in visitor opinions over  
640 time (Becken et al. 2017).

641 Some of the clusters of image contents identified as being frequently photographed or having a high  
642 associated sentiment have already been widely explored in CES literature. For example, Van Zanten  
643 et al., (2016) found that some of the best predictors of recreational value at a landscape scale were  
644 geomorphological features such as hills and mountains and Oteros-Rozas et al. (2018) found that  
645 mountains are particularly associated with hiking. Furthermore, the impact of being close to water  
646 and vegetation on hiking has also been widely explored (e.g. Pastorella et al. 2017; Schirpke et al.  
647 2018; Aiba et al. 2019). Photographs that contain a combination of clusters can provide information  
648 on the interactions between different biophysical features which give rise to CES. For instance, some  
649 hikers may prefer natural mountainous areas with forest cover and others may prefer natural  
650 mountainous areas closer to water (Pastorella et al. 2017; Schirpke et al. 2018).

651 By including a measure of sentiment we can start to understand how the interactions between  
652 biophysical and human features influence the hiking experience. For example, the high sentiment  
653 value associated with the cluster “forests/vegetated trails and parks/geological or arid landscapes”  
654 further demonstrates that a positive experience of CES may be enhanced through its co-production  
655 with people (Fischer and Eastwood 2016). The high standard deviations in sentiment value between  
656 images classified as different combination of clusters are unsurprising as CES experience is unique  
657 and varies between individuals (Daniel et al. 2012; Havinga et al. 2020). For example, the  
658 relationship between geomorphological features and hiking is complex, often with factors such as  
659 elevation, slope and landforms having site-specific influences on hiking experiences depending on  
660 people motivations for hiking (Chhetri 2015; Wilcer et al. 2016).

661 Some of the clusters identified here, particularly those relating to geodiversity features such as the  
662 geological features class, are not as well explored in CES literature, (Fox et al. 2020a). For example,  
663 the labels in the clusters associated with “geological or arid landscapes” resemble those of  
664 landscapes in southwestern states, such as Arizona and New Mexico, where there is a high number  
665 of *confirmedCES* images. For example, the Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona is dominated by  
666 iconic geodiversity landscapes and is one of the most visited tourist attractions, not just in the USA,  
667 but worldwide (Gray 2008). These landscapes are often dominated by canyons with exposed strata,  
668 a variety of slope morphologies and talus and scree on the canyon floor and are popular hiking  
669 destinations (Gray 2008). By enriching the social media data with the textual sentiment value we can  
670 start to understand the relative importance of these features to a positive hiking experience. Here,  
671 “geological or arid landscapes” were frequently photographed, they were less frequent than  
672 “forests”. It does however provide a relatively more positive hiking experience than “forest” when  
673 either was the sole dominant cluster. This suggests that within the USA, though hiking in vegetated  
674 areas may be more common than through geological landscapes, they both can provide a positive  
675 recreational experience. In other countries where geological or arid landscapes are the prevailing  
676 ecosystem, the relationship between geodiversity and biodiversity on the hiking experience may be  
677 different. Future work should therefore aim to quantify the relationship of these underrepresented  
678 landscape features to CES experience across different study sites.

679 Here, our analysis has shown that the grouped images (based on a single user’s photographs on a  
680 single day) can contain multiple different content label clusters. We note that here the individual  
681 clusters of labels focus on biodiversity and geodiversity features separately, though this may be a  
682 facet of the clustering procedure or the method in which the machine learning classifier labels  
683 images. As with other studies which clustered photograph content (e.g. Lee et al. 2019) photographs  
684 were frequently assigned multiple equally dominant clusters, indicating an interaction between

685 geodiversity, biodiversity and human features. It may not always be possible to include features of  
686 the multiple clusters in a single image. For example, a hiker may be interested in photographing  
687 large scale vegetation such as a forest from the top of a mountain (Aiba et al. 2019), but these  
688 images may omit the mountain itself. We suggest that these relationships may not be properly  
689 captured by assessing single photographs and therefore, recommend that future studies assess each  
690 Flickr user's images from a single day, such as used here, or by grouping all photographs from a  
691 smaller study site as a collective.

692 Refining by different nature thresholds, spatial resolution and window size all had some impact on  
693 the deviance between the refined dataset and the remaining dataset. However, across all  
694 combinations of refined datasets, there were no major changes in the spatial distribution and range  
695 of values expressed by the local deviance values. The smaller deviance associated with decreasing  
696 resolution (increasing pixel size) is down to the aggregation of data – aggregation of data at the  
697 coarser resolution loses the spatial structure of the distribution and the pixel values become more  
698 homogenised (Bian and Butler 1999). This relationship is also true for larger moving windows  
699 producing lower deviances (Graham et al. 2019). We recommend that researchers be aware of the  
700 impacts of their mapping decision – if data aggregation is to be carried out researchers need to  
701 choose a suitable scale for the study (Graham and Eigenbrod 2019).

702 This study further demonstrates that social media data can easily provide large spatial-temporal  
703 dataset compared to traditional methods (Fox et al. 2020b), however, future work could implement  
704 this over small spatial scales to assess regional or local trends. One limitation of social media data is  
705 that not all demographics are well represented (Oteros-Rozas et al. 2018) and management and  
706 policy decisions should acknowledge this. Studies could therefore combine results of social media  
707 studies with other datasets such as survey data (Graham and Eigenbrod 2019; Moreno-Llorca et al.  
708 2020; Sinclair et al. 2020). A further potential limitation of this multi-faceted filtering process is that  
709 although we can be more confident that the images we are assessing represent CES, there are  
710 substantially fewer suitable images in the refined dataset compared to the original dataset  
711 downloaded from Flickr. However, we still had a large sample size of 43,427 images for one activity  
712 over 5 years. Other studies have found success when using smaller subsamples of the full dataset  
713 (e.g. Langemeyer et al. 2018; Chen et al. 2020). We recommend that social media data can best  
714 capture CES when researchers refine their dataset by the content of the images and enrich the data  
715 with a measure of sentiment, which can provide a reliable representation of CES.

## 716 **5 Conclusion**

717 The method tested combining the analysis of the contents of social media (Flickr) images and the  
718 sentiment value expressed in their textual metadata reduces the amount of available data but  
719 provides a robust measure of CES for large scale spatio-temporal studies. Through the application of  
720 the refined dataset, images of hiking in the USA were clustered into groups representing the  
721 interactions between people and biophysical nature. Hiking as a CES is driven and maintained by  
722 complex interactions between biodiversity and, geodiversity and people, and by refining data on two  
723 levels, our methods allow us to start to unpack which feature contribute to a positive experience.  
724 The results of this study encourage future social media and CES studies to acknowledge that the full  
725 social media dataset may not be suitable for their chosen study, as though it may be a good proxy  
726 for images of nature it may not be a good proxy for a positive experience. It is suggested that future  
727 work enrich their social media datasets with a measure of textual sentiments to provide a more  
728 robust representation of positive human-nature interactions.

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