

Home away from home: A longitudinal study of the holiday appropriation process

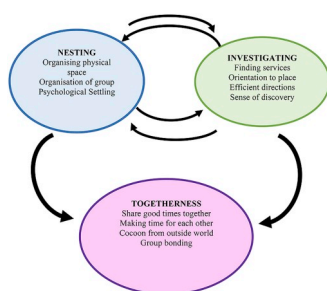


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ABSTRACT

Tourism is an area of consumption that uniquely mixes both mundane and extraordinary components. However, mundane routines have been less investigated despite their role in the tourist experience. Routines can be analysed by using the concept of appropriation that investigates precisely how consumers anchor themselves in a new experience setting. To date, this concept has not been applied to tourism but it is particularly pertinent for this context since it provides a conceptual framework to understand how tourists establish a new temporary home and settle in a new location. A longitudinal study, conducted by in-depth interviews everyday of a one-week tourist stay at a ski resort, details the appropriation process day after day. The results point to the importance and interplay of the appropriation steps (nesting, investigating and togetherness) and how they collectively contribute to the experience. The study provides a revised appropriation model specific to the holiday context.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of tourism has been viewed primarily as a consumer's fundamental need to get away from everyday life; to escape the burdens and stresses of contemporary living, the pressures of the work environment, and to get away from society in general. By this definition, tourism consumption is always an extraordinary occasion, precisely because it is set outside the ordinary life of individuals. Beyond

daily life, travel can also evoke an escape from social norms and a temporary disconnectivity, captured by the notion of liminality and the liminoid state (Pritchard & Morgan, 2006; Van Gennep, 1909; Turner & Turner, 1978). Within liminality, Urry (1990) suggests that consumers cast aside their obligations, move away from rational decisions and behaviours, and develop a new and temporal identity that is different from their everyday identity, both socially and work-wise.

Despite the extraordinary dimensions of tourism consumption, like

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the need to get away from home, mundane routines still take place on a daily basis within the liminoid state of the holiday. These routines can be analysed by studying the dialectic of consumer practices between social structure and human agency. Social practices are defined as routines: “routines of moving the body, of understanding and wanting, of using things, interconnected in a practice” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 255). De Certeau’s (1984) work entitled *The Practice of Everyday Life* demonstrates the ways in which individuals re-appropriate the dimensions of social life (traditions, language, symbols, and articles of exchange) in everyday life situations.

Among these practices, some are totally mundane, reflective of a tourist’s daily life. These daily routines, far from the most exciting side of tourism consumption are, understandably, less researched: “tourism is frequently construed as unusual and extraordinary in contrast to the routines and predictability of work and home life. However, the tourism spaces are co-created through practices that are simultaneously mundane and unusual. Yet everyday touristic practices are seldom researched” (Kaaristo & Rhoden, 2016, p. 1). Tourism practices cannot be understood in isolation from non-tourism practices (De Souza Bispo, 2016), and Larsen (2008) invites researchers to consider the everydayness of tourism, and how tourists recreate an alternative home while on holiday.

The authors of this paper conceive mundane routines not as a secondary side of tourism consumption but rather as a set of practices that are part of a holiday, and in fact, play a crucial role in allowing tourists to anchor themselves at their destination. Since holidays are necessarily set in a new and often unknown universe, tourists arrive at destinations lacking references, needing to find their way and wanting to settle into their temporary home. The appropriation concept is particularly relevant to the study of tourists’ practices as it brings an understanding of the processes involved to anchor oneself and to feel comfortable in a new setting. To date, very few researchers have studied how tourists make sense and organise their new temporary home; this study aims to identify this process by adapting the appropriation concept to a holiday context.

2. The appropriation process

The concept of appropriation has a foundation in anthropological research, often applied in studies of goods’ consumption in different cultures, for example, to understand the process by which material objects change from commodities to personal goods (Miller, 1985). Hahn (2004) identified four phases: (1) material appropriation, whereby a commodity becomes a good with personal value; (2) objectification, as a good becomes categorized; (3) incorporation, as the interaction with the good; and, (4) transformation, as a good becomes subject to societal norms. Hahn (2004) illustrates this process with the appropriation of a bicycle over time: personalized with decorations, used for personal transportation, powered by one’s own body, and predominantly used by men in some cultures.

Building from anthropology, Fischer (1992) developed the concept of appropriation in a work context, then Carù and Cova (2006) adapted appropriation to study classical music concerts to understand how individuals adapt to a new context and give meaning to the event. The appropriation concept is tied to the notion of immersion: “the immersion concept literally implies becoming one with the experience and therefore conveys the idea of a total elimination of the distance between consumers and the situation” (Carù & Cova, 2003, p. 5). Immersion equates to a plunge into the consumption universe and the feeling of being in the place (Sherry, 1998). This plunge, however, is not automatic as many experiences fail to immerse consumers.

The distance between the experience and the consumer is reduced through appropriation, rendering the experience more personal. The process can be summarised as the consumer’s development of a multi-dimensional *chez soi* (Carù & Cova, 2006) and the generation of competencies to co-create their experience with the providers (Holt, 1995).

In tourism, the notion of reducing distances echoes Jafari’s tourist model (1987) where tourists’ emancipation involves two stages: to distance oneself from daily life (the home context), and to reduce the distance from what is non-ordinary (the holiday context).

Despite its pertinence to tourism, the appropriation model has not been applied in a tourism context to date. However, relevant models have been identified. First, Carù and Cova (2006) conducted an analysis of consumers experiencing a classical music concert in Milano. To begin, the maestro, dressed casually, interacted with the public, explained the music’s story and described specific instruments. After the interval, the maestro returned, dressed formally, turned his back to the public and engaged his orchestra with no explanation. Carù and Cova (2006) investigated how consumers reacted to these experiences and what encouraged or deterred their appropriation process. As a result, they identified three appropriation steps: (i) nesting (recreating home); (ii) investigating (exploring surrounding space); and, (iii) stamping (assigning personal meaning to the experience).

The second model, by Jansson (2007), identified three realms through which the tourist experience is produced: scripting, navigation, and representation. Scripting is described as a “referential framework for the planning of a trip” and a “script for how to perform and perhaps reconfigure their own identities within the desired setting” (p11). Navigation represents the need for tourists to appropriate their new space in order to find sites and connect with social gatherings. Representation translates how tourists immediately share their multi-sensorial holiday experience through digital media.

Finally, in an investigation of the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market, Shani (2013) identified three dimensions: (i) familiarity with place, encompassing local norms and access to inside information about the destination; (ii) privacy and situational control, often a difficult side of VFR tourism; and, (iii) sociability in associations, referring to the pleasure of being in each other’s company. These approaches have common ground that will be explored by adapting the concepts of nesting, investigating, stamping and socialising, using the Carù and Cova model (2006) as a general framework.

2.1. Nesting

Nesting refers to the human need to feel at home in new situations: “the individual feels at home because part of the experience being faced has been isolated, a part that is already familiar because of one’s accumulated experience and existing foothold in it” (Carù & Cova, 2006, p. 6). Nesting represents a search for and identification of anchorage points and can be experienced through physical and mental sensations. For example, the referents given by a maestro in his introduction to a classical music concert helped consumers identify points of anchorage (Carù & Cova, 2006).

Essential to nesting is a feeling of home: “integral to the average everyday life is awareness of a fixed point in space, a firm position from which we “proceed” (whether every day or over larger periods of time) and to which we return in due course. This firm position is what we call home” (Larsen, 2008, p. 24). Home is a liberating place where one feels a friendly atmosphere, freedom to be, restored, and is a space that one controls, and where privacy can exist (Seamon, 1979). Dupuis and Thorns (1998) argue that ontological security (the need to be protected from the insecurities of the contemporary world) is essential in the home: “home is a site of constancy in the social and material environment; home is a spatial context in which the day to day routines of humane existence are performed; home is a site where people feel most in control of their lives because they feel free from surveillance ...; home is a secure base around which identities are constructed” (p29). This step is also present in Shani’s study on VFR (2013) within the dimension of “privacy and situational control”. VFR tourism necessarily brings a loss of privacy, and the felt obligations can preclude tourists from feeling relaxed in their temporary home (unlike in commercial accommodation).

The notion of hominess also reflects Pearce and Caltabiano's (1983) and Maslow's (1943) primary need for safety and security. Tourists, in a new holiday universe, are brought back to the basic necessities of life, verging on survival skills. Thus, the notion of a safe environment for family and friends is essential: shelter, food, water and security are likely to come forward as prime necessities of a tourist stay, representing the basic elements to recreate a safe, private and comfortable home environment. No matter how modern and well equipped a resort might be, tourists are likely to experience these feelings. Within their new home, grounded routines such as the daily activities of sleeping, eating and cleaning will help to make space "homey" (Edensor, 2007, p. 206).

2.2. Investigating

Investigating refers to actions that, from the nest, will see consumers physically exploring and identifying other products/services to create points of anchorage and control called signposts (Carù & Cova, 2006). This process involves observing, describing and exploring, and by doing so, consumers feel more comfortable because they have extended their territory. In Carù and Cova (2006), the maestro's directions given before the concert helped consumers find their way through the concert by understanding the music storyline.

Investigating is referenced under the concept of navigation by Jansson (2007), who stresses the need for tourists to appropriate a new space and to establish "routinized patterns of mobility" (p12). For Jansson (2007), this step helps tourists connect with social gatherings, aided by guides, maps, or mobile applications. In 2000, Ingold and Kurtilla conceptualised a taskscape as: a space that is familiar and reproduces everyday life and unreflexive habits, reproduced through mobilities. Mobilities are conceived as behavioural elements influenced by cognitive and subjective decisions and motivations (Tussyadyah & Zach, 2012). Spatiotemporal behaviour has been studied by various researchers, notably geographers and planners, whereby both space and time are considered resources (Grinderberg, Shoval, & McKercher, 2014). Investigating also echoes Shani's work (2013) which identifies familiarity with place as a key component of the VFR experience. In his study, staying with friends or relatives is seen as a clear advantage, giving privileged access to local norms of behaviour, a feeling of belonging, and inside knowledge about a destination.

2.3. Stamping

The third appropriation step refers to the necessity for consumers to assign personal meaning to their experience, or part thereof. In Carù and Cova (2006), stamping refers to the personal and imaginative meaning that consumers attribute to the concert, based on their pre-conceived image and personal experience with similar products.

The stamping phase can facilitate the alignment of fantasy and reality (Schouten & Mc Alexander, 1995), the merging of one's inside and outside worlds, and shape personal experiences through creation of memorable moments. While stamping was fairly identifiable in Carù and Cova's (2006) limited field studied (a classical music concert), in a tourism context, this step is open to a vast array of influences associated with tourists' motivations and goals. Typically, high level experiences have been studied in adventure/wilderness settings (Faullant, Matzlerk, & Mouradian, 2011; Pomfret, 2006), such as mountain tourism, demonstrating a large range of motivations and expectations. Shani (2013) identified a variable associated with personal meaning of a holiday but it pertained only to the notion of sociability (spending time with each other). Further, this third step is not echoed by Jansson (2007) who identified, as a third component, the notion of representation, referring to the will to communicate the experience specifically through social-media postings. In sum, to adapt stamping in a tourism context is complex because of its potential vastness.

2.4. The interrelations between appropriation steps

Carù and Cova (2006) indicate that nesting actions are most important, followed by investigation and lastly, and less necessarily, by stamping. The absence of points of anchorage precludes nesting. Marketing can contribute significantly to the investigation phase, where consumers can gain from accompanying information. In contrast, stamping may be the most difficult phase for marketing to influence because it involves the imaginative process that is individually developed by consumers. Among the three steps, relationships exist and if nesting comes first, consumers will move back and forward between the steps, particularly if facilitated by the provider (Carù & Cova, 2006). Jansson (2007) also notes that the three steps (scripting, navigation and representation) are not necessarily sequential but interrelated. Shani (2013) envisages the three dimensions as multi-dimensional yet does not investigate the possible links between them.

The present study aims to adapt an appropriation framework to a multi-day holiday stay, extending appropriation from its past applications in leisure settings (Carù & Cova, 2006; Jansson, 2007; Shani, 2013).

The objective of this study is to investigate and understand how tourists adapt to their holiday setting by:

- Identifying the pattern of daily routines that permeate the holiday experience;
- Analysing the applicability of an appropriation model to the context of a multi-day holiday;
- Identifying the role of mundane habits in the overall appropriation process; and,
- Considering the extent to which appropriation evolves throughout a multi-day holiday.

3. Methodology

In order to investigate the applicability of an appropriation model to the context of a holiday, the researchers sought a data collection method that would allow them to understand if the conceptualised steps are representative of a holiday appropriation process based on the tourist's experience.

3.1. The hermeneutic interpretative approach

This research was inspired by Thompson's hermeneutic interpretative framework: "hermeneutic research emphasizes that an understanding of a text always reflects a fusion of horizons between the interpreter's frame of reference and the texts being interpreted (...). The implication is that the researcher's interpretative orientation (i.e. background knowledge, underlying assumptions, and questions of interest) enables him or her to become attuned to special characteristics and patterns afforded by the textual data" (Thompson, 1997, p. 441). Thompson advocates researchers to let the data drive them in their conceptualization and revision of conceptual models rather than "projecting a predetermined system of meaning upon the data" (Thompson, 1997, p. 441).

The hermeneutic orientation is useful here since it aims to move beyond a descriptive account of tourists' experiences, to explore the meanings they assign to those experiences (Reiners, 2012). Its interpretative dimension refers to the process of investigating lived experiences and the consciousness of these experiences (Laverty, 2003).

At the data analysis stage, the interpretative process followed a "hermeneutic circle" whereby the researcher's understanding of the study phenomenon necessarily entails an initiating frame of reference (Thompson, 1997, p. 441). In this sense, the approach used is both deductive and inductive: using an appropriation framework as a very general guide and then re-identifying its steps from the narrative data collected in a tourism context.

3.2. Data collection

To investigate the evolution and interplay between appropriation steps throughout a holiday, interviews were conducted every day of the tourists' stay. Longitudinal research is rare in tourism, yet a very rich approach to understanding how experiences develop and evolve over a multi-day stay (Ingram, Caruana, & McCabe, 2017; Nawijn, 2010; Pearce, 1981; Tussyadyah, 2014). The narrative data generated by long interviews, with few pre-planned questions, is well suited to hermeneutic analysis (Thompson, 1997). Since the concepts involved were touching mundane and yet personal elements, the narrative interview technique was seen as the most appropriate instrument to collect data within the intimacy of the groups investigated. The interviews aimed to let tourists express themselves and describe their actions in their own words to understand the applicability of the appropriation steps. The research objective is therefore twofold: to understand actions undertaken in a praxeological approach and, to explore the meanings attached to them. The narrative interviews produced storied data, capturing not only the 'whats', but the 'whys' and 'hows' of participants' experiences, and allowing participants to describe detailed and authentic accounts of their daily experiences (Riessman, 1993).

Importantly, the interviews took place during the experience: "an analysis of what tourists are doing when they are being tourists or talking about their behaviour can provide a unique insight into the everyday lifeworlds of members of society" (McCabe, 2002, p. 63). It was virtually impossible and inconvenient to interview respondents during their main skiing activity. The best time when they were both available and willing to talk was towards the end of the afternoon when they were back at their accommodation. During interviews, the participants were questioned about both their holiday activities and routine practices. Furthermore, because the study was investigating the mundane actions undertaken by tourists, it was unlikely that tourists would remember them in detail unless captured on the day they occurred. Fortunately, practices that may be performed unconsciously appear to be easily identifiable when integrated in the daily routines of a holiday.

3.3. Interview guide

Considering that our understanding of the appropriation concept is still developing and that the study context is new, the researchers used the appropriation model as a broad framework to orient the interviews, letting the tourists express their stories via very open questions.

The semi-structured interview guide included questions to deeply probe the concepts of nesting, investigating and stamping. After a description of their day, participants were encouraged to detail how they organised themselves in and around their rented accommodation, probing for: how group dynamics unfolded, the organisation of tasks, how they perceived this organisation, the timings of practices, etc. Investigating was first addressed through a description of their arrival, probing for: how they reached the resort, how they orientated themselves upon arrival, how they found their accommodation, etc. Subsequent interviews were undertaken every day to probe two levels: the degree of resort and slope exploration; and, the extent of willingness to investigate. For both, it was essential to identify contributors and inhibitors in order to understand theoretical and managerial implications. Lastly, the meanings associated with stamping, if experienced, were probed by encouraging participants to elaborate on their personal meanings related to all their daily activities, from the mundane to the extraordinary.

3.4. Study context

The study was executed in a ski resort, an appropriate setting for this research as tourists typically spend a full week and stay at the resort the entire time, allowing for the appropriation process to unfold within a delineated time and physical setting. The ski resort selected, Val

Thorens, was built in 1971 and is located in the Savoie region of France at 2300 m high, with access to the largest ski area in the world. The resort itself is concentrated, making it possible to explore on foot. This study was funded and supported by the Val Thorens Tourist Information Centre whose manager, Grégory Guzzo, provided the researchers with all the necessary information to execute the study.

The study participants were recruited via the resort's Facebook website by inviting tourists to take part in the study in exchange for unspecified rewards. Among the 31 positive replies received, the first 18 replies were selected to match the interviewing capacity of the team (any more than 18 groups would have been unrealistic). Flat owners were excluded as it was felt that they had a different relationship with the resort than temporary visitors. In the end, 16 groups of tourists participated (2 groups voluntarily withdrew on the first day). The interviews took place daily, Sunday to Thursday, in February 2015. Participants were not interviewed on their arrival day, Saturday, as many reached the resort late in the day; thus, Day 1 was described the following day when the first interviews took place (on Day 2 - Sunday). The subsequent interviews took place each day up to and including Day 6 (Thursday). Participants were not interviewed on their last day (Friday) as they were busy packing. Eight trained interviewers collected the data as participants could only be interviewed after their day activity, creating a rather small interviewing window from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. maximum. Each of the 80 interviews lasted between 40 min to 1 h, for a total of 68 h of recorded interview data analysed for this study. For participants' profiles, see Table 1.

3.5. Data analysis

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Making sense of such a vast amount of data was challenging and required a strategy. Thematic analysis provided a flexible and useful method, following Braun and Clarke's (2006, page 87) five steps:

- (i) Familiarisation: the researchers read the complete data corpus of the 16 interviews in order to gain familiarisation with the data. In this process, the researchers noted ideas about the appropriation steps as well as questions that emerged from their reading.
- (ii) Generating initial codes: each researcher individually coded 5 to 6 interviewee data sets and identified initial codes across the corpus studied. Then, each developed a list of codes relating to elements describing the nesting, investigating and stamping steps.
- (iii) Searching for themes: researchers shared and discussed their results to identify the key elements that were characteristic of each step. This phase was time consuming but necessary to identify the elements comprising the appropriation steps of a multi-day holiday. It was also the most difficult phase since the context studied was very different from the original study. While both nesting and investigation were fairly easily identifiable themes, stamping proved to be more complex. Researchers made the choice to limit stamping to the analysis of all verbatim concerned with the notion of togetherness since this element surfaced as a key component of the holiday experience. Because the interview engaged participants to elaborate on their temporary home and how they organised their stay (nesting and investigating), this likely stimulated them to concentrate on togetherness and their group dynamic.
- (iv) Reviewing themes: once the coded elements were assigned to a theme (i.e. an appropriation step), the researchers reviewed the original model in order to determine if the three original steps were pertinent in the study setting. The design of a thematic map (Fig. 1) proved particularly useful (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step also allowed researchers to count the occurrence of mentions within each appropriation step.
- (v) Naming themes: based on the analysis, researchers kept the first two original step names but renamed step three, stamping, as togetherness (Fig. 1).

Table 1
Profile of study participants*.

Name of interviewee(s)	Age	Country of origin	Profession	Status of the interviewee in the group/Group composition/Life cycle	Size of the group
Dave & Natacha	30 & 40	Canada & UK	School teacher/IT	Couple, DINKS (Double Income No Kids)	2
John & David	38	UK	School teachers	Male friends	2
Béatrice & Nathan	60	France	Teachers	As a couple with their 30 years' old son, empty nest and single	3
John	40's	UK	Executive	Father/On his own with his two sons, full nest	3
Julia	44	Ireland	Language teacher	One of the mothers/Couple + 2 sons, full nests	4
Monique	55 ans	France	Executive	With a friend couple and their grand-daughter, middle-aged single, empty nest with grand-child	5
Dominique	36	France	Military Officer	Father/A couple with 3 children, full nest	5
Marité	72 ans	France	Retired	Grand Mother/Couple with their eldest son (40) and two grand-children, empty nest and full nest	5
Bernard	43	France	Executive	Father/family with three children, full nest	5
Laurent	44	France	Executive	Father/family with three children, full nest	5
Helen	42	France	Executive in the food sector	One of the mothers/Two families with four children/full nests	8
Robert	46 & 48	Belgium	Manager	One of the fathers/Two couples with their children, full nests	8
Nathalie	36	France	IT analyst	Mother of two with another family-group of friends, single parent and full nests	8
Sandrine & Sophie	47 & 45	France	Nurses	Mothers/Two families, full nests	9
Angus	46	Ireland	Executive	One of the fathers/Four dads and their 9 children, full nests	13
Hen & Ralph	56 & 28	Holland	Optician/Marketing manager	Father and adult son/Three generations of the same family/young couples, full nests & empty nest	15

*The real names of participants were modified.

4. Results

4.1. Nesting

4.1.1. Organising the new home

Upon arrival, nesting immediately surfaces as a very strong element. The first step after finding the accommodation location is to physically settle: take note of the apartment facilities, allocate rooms, make the beds, unpack suitcases, fill the fridge and cook the first meal. This step requires condensed and intense organisation, and most participants that came by car had already prepared for a smooth arrival in terms of food preparation. Almost all had purchased groceries in the valley, and a third of the French tourists had brought dishes they had prepared at home to save time at the resort (even allocating different dishes between members by day of the week). This part of nesting calls for organisational skills (often gained through previous travel experiences), and reflects the need to set a convenient routine early on so that the rest of the week runs smoothly. Allocating responsibilities between group members is also a way to reinforce group cohesion and transfer competencies, especially to younger ones: *"It is important that they (the children) learn that they have to do things as well and they have to keep the place clean and they go and carry, share the work"* (Angus, Day 3).

Nesting also involves allocating roles among members and finding the group's rhythm. This rhythm is not instantaneous and takes two to three days to really settle as a group dynamic: *"On the first morning, it was difficult, we were all together, bathroom, breakfast, now it is fine, we got the rhythm, we have got ourselves organised, then we will leave soon but such is life"* (Sandrine & Sophie, Day 3).

This step is not necessarily seen as a burden: it is very much part of the holiday and if correctly mastered, it allows the group to be fully available for what matters most - a week's stay together in a mountain resort.

Once the basic elements of nesting have been mastered, from day 2 or 3, the groups enter a form of organisational routine perpetuated throughout the holiday without much thought: buying croissants and fresh bread in the morning, going to the market, preparing food, taking turns in the bathroom, cleaning, etc. This pattern shows how tourists can quickly acquire a new routine; then move away from nesting activities early on in their stay.

Notably, holiday routines are more simplified than what they would entail in daily life. Looking after one's place is perceived differently in a

holiday context, and tourists simplify their daily routines: *"Usually I am quite a maniac type of person, but here I don't get worked up about things, I do the minimum. Since this is not my house from a cleaning point of view, I do the minimum. I don't sweep the floor, morning, lunch and evening, and because I am on holidays I don't cook as intensely as when I am at home, I don't get worked up about things"* (Nathalie, Day 2).

4.1.2. Inhibitors to organising the new home

Several elements were identified that could be detrimental to the notion of feeling at home. A good home is perceived as an environment where one can enjoy quality time and quality rest. As a result, noise is negatively perceived if it disrupts restful sleep: *"We were woken up three or four times last night with singing and shouting in the street. Then in the morning a truck delivered food under our window in the first hours, then the snow cannons took over. As a result, everyone in the family felt very tired and grumpy, and the following day we only skied for a half-day"* (Julia, Day 4). In fact, noise was a problem for most participants; the buildings are on a central heating system that overheats the accommodations, necessitating tourists to sleep with their windows open, unfortunately letting outside noise in.

Most rented flats have only basic cooking facilities and most groups felt that they could not cook properly, especially the larger groups (small ovens, under-heating cookers, etc.).

The other identified disruptive aspect was associated with the bathroom. Two groups experienced either a lack of hot water or a broken shower. After a day skiing, not being able to take a shower is simply inconceivable: *"The low moment - the shower! That was a low moment"* (John & David, Day 5). -These tourists had a broken shower for three days: they arrived on Saturday morning after having travelled overnight from the UK, and could not shower until Monday evening.

4.2. Investigating

Interestingly, investigating requires skills to be solicited upon arrival (Day 1) - finding the apartment, parking the car to unload, locating the underground car park - are the first necessary steps. Road signage proves quite useful especially when tourists arrive late in the day after a long trip. Once tourists have settled into their accommodation, they gradually venture from their nesting base to discover the resort and the slopes from Day 1 onward.

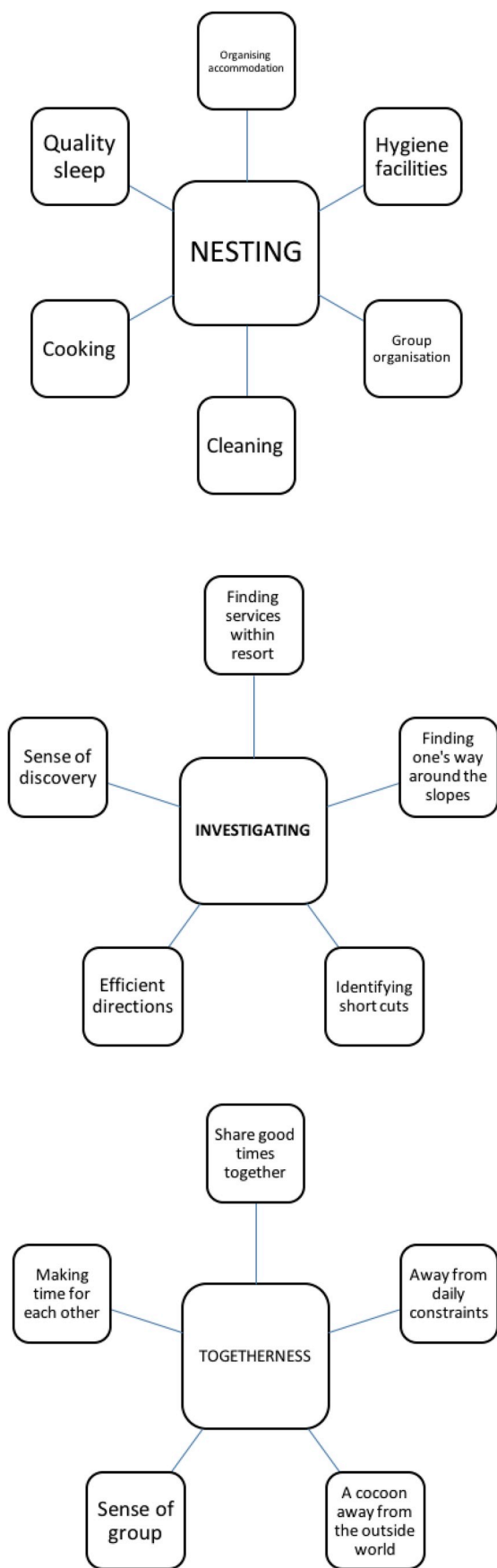


Fig. 1. Thematic maps produced in step 4 of the data analysis.

4.2.1. Investigating the resort

For a third of participants, once they found their accommodation, there was an urgent need to explore the resort: “I need to locate the scene, I start walking, see the shops, understand where are the slopes access, the restaurants, the parking ... it is there, to the North. I need this recognition straight away. I am used to do it every time I arrive in a resort, so I tend to do it quickly” (Laurent & Géraldine, Day 2).

Investigating the resort usually begins on Day 1, then it takes tourists about three days to find their way around (though it took one participant more than three days to locate a handy bus-stop). Most identify shortcuts only towards the end of their stay, hence losing a lot of time during the week. Tourists tend to look for facilities close to their apartment, and typically do not venture very far: once they have found what they need, they do not explore further. Since the main focus of the holiday is skiing, the necessities within the resort are fairly limited to the most basic functional services: a supermarket, a baker, a rental ski shop, a bar/restaurant, and an information centre (randomly, rather than systematically investigated). A gender difference can be clearly identified: women tend to orientate themselves quickly by going to the tourist information centre to get maps, whereas men are more relaxed about finding their own way. Tourists appreciate having all the amenities at hand: it is more convenient and creates an atmosphere: “Shops, bars, supermarket. Everything. In fact, I like being in the centre of a town. It’s more atmospheric” (John & David, Day 3).

4.2.2. Investigating the slopes

The Val Thorens setting eases skiers’ lives because it is shaped like a cuvette: “In Val Thorens, all roads lead to Rome. You can let yourself go; you won’t loose your day because you made a mistake” (Christiane’s husband). However, exploring the Trois Vallées domain is more complex as it is the largest ski area in the world, with 600 km of slopes unifying the three valleys of Méribel, Les Ménuires and Courchevel. Within this vast domain, it can take a long time for skiers to go from one valley to the next, and find their way back before the lifts close.

It gets more complicated as skiers start to venture to other valleys, because they get lost or take longer routes to return. Using maps tends to be tricky - the hands get cold, one needs to put on glasses - so skiers mostly use the directional signs on the slopes. Skiers tend to explore in a haphazard way; they follow signs as they go, not always identifying the most efficient routes. Thus, “inside” information from other tourists can be useful: “Well, when we were coming back from Méribel yesterday, it took us a long time; it took us nearly an hour and a half. Today it took us 30–40 min because we got directions from a friend we were visiting and who is living in Courchevel and he knew, so he gave us exact directions and it was much easier” (Angus, Day 4).

Because the skiing domain is so vast, the need for exploring beyond is not vital at first (also, most participants had not skied for a year and were keen to just get on the slopes). From Day 4 however, some groups were keen to see more and started venturing to new slopes: “We started to get bored with the slopes we had been doing, so we forced ourselves to go down different slopes, and in the end when you do such nice rides, every time it is sheer pleasure. We could vary our skiing” (Robert, Day 4).

4.2.3. Investigating inhibitors

It was surprising to note the haphazard way in which participants discovered the resort: they venture, sometimes ask for information, struggle to find local people with inside knowledge, and in the end they learn through their mistakes (or, also likely, they do not find services at all). They often get help from other tourists, which interestingly, creates social connections.

In regard to the investigation of the slopes, the perception of being free to investigate is tempered by the level of the skier. For inexperienced skiers, there is always the fear of ending up on a difficult slope that one might not manage well. Generally speaking, participants did not feel that the slopes were well signed and they tended to get lost: “Yeah, it’s not as easy to follow where you’re trying to go. There are lots of

runs that change into another run and it's like you have to remember sort of your sequence" (Dave & Natacha, Day 5).

Not being able to locate oneself properly on the slopes is a real source of stress if parents need to be back at a specific time to pick up their children from the ski school (the school did not have an indoor space to drop the children). This stress diminishes their enjoyment of the ski experience and the scope of their investigations (they do not venture as far as they could). The same stress emerges towards the end of the day when the lifts are about to close and tourists could ski down the wrong valley: "I'm not good at orienteering! A map in the gondola would be nice, it would make it easier to find one's way. My husband is guiding us but he doesn't like it, with the idea of getting stuck. And clocks everywhere! Putting clocks at the top of ski lifts. After 4pm I'm worried not to have enough time to come back" (Helen, Day 3).

4.3. Stamping/togetherness

Stamping refers to the personal meaning consumers attach to their experience. Togetherness is the element that stood out most in all participants' testimonies. The holiday is a refresher course in what families and friendship is all about: making time to be together, sharing conversations and sharing good times together. This communion can take place within the home or outside, through activities. As a result, the authors renamed "stamping" as "togetherness".

4.3.1. Togetherness "at home"

Even though the whole group longs for togetherness, it is only achieved at certain times of the day. For example, groups have breakfast together and usually meet at lunchtime either on the slopes or at their flat. They might split the day (children taking lessons in the morning then skiing with their parents in the afternoon), and skiers and non-skiers involved in different activities throughout the day will meet at night. Skiers with different levels may ski together for a while and then split for the rest of the day. Whatever the case, once the ski day is over, there is an important time to get back together and share stories. The home becomes a communion place where quality bonding and sharing takes place.

In the evening, the home setting becomes the ultimate sanctuary for family ties. Strategies are developed to encourage these intense, yet relaxed moments. For instance, families will play card games rather than each member being hooked to their own screen. The majority of tourists interviewed did not turn on the TV, consciously allowing for quality bonding time to take place. The time spent together in the evening is also very precious because of availability (i.e. no homework for the children, parents "are home" early, skiers/non-skiers meet again): "During the day we do meet some people, but it is only punctual. In the evening it's only us, it's our thing, the cocoon, this is where the five of us get together, and in this sense this is why those holidays are so privileged" (Laurent & Géraldine, Day 4).

An interesting point was the incapacity that one group felt to be "at home" because the owner of the flat had left personal pictures of his children on the walls: the group felt that they were clearly in someone else's flat (and life) and it was unsettling. Another important element for groups travelling together is to be accommodated close to each other. For instance, having flats on the same level or, at least, in the same building is important since it facilitates the ability to be together for the whole group.

4.3.2. Togetherness through activities

Togetherness is highly valued and priceless in a world where day-to-day life seems to leave limited time for meaningful interactions, and even more so when children grow up: "Children grow fast unfortunately, and they become adolescents. They become more introvert, speak less, sometimes 4 to 5 months happen without knowing what is happening in their lives. (...) So, that's been nice to just catch up and understand what's going on in his life and what are the things that interest him" (John – talking

about his son, Day 4). Skiing is clearly identified as one of the few activities that parents can share with their children. While they cannot share hip-hop or skateboard sessions, parents have often learnt to ski in their youth and can be at an equal level of competence with their children, and even teach them. These special moments during skiing and on the chairlift become strong bonding times: "I feel that I have talked more with my son in the 2 h we did skiing together yesterday than in the whole previous year" (Angus, Day 4). Or, a busy dad who feels that he does not have much time to see his sons: "It is a great opportunity for us to bond. We talk about things we don't normally talk about" (John, Day 5).

4.4. Interplay between nesting, investigating and togetherness

The results of this study indicate that there are two appropriation steps that exist in parallel throughout the holiday with decreasing strength (nesting and investigating the resort), and recurring strength (investigating the slopes). Additionally, the togetherness step is the driving force behind it all, the utmost goal, strengthening day-by-day. Both nesting and investigating foster togetherness and it would be impossible to fully understand their role without this third element (Fig. 2).

The passing of time throughout the week is notable. Both nesting and investigating steps are intense on the first three days and become a holiday routine by Day 3: "We have now achieved a total disconnection, we are away from the real world. For the first three days we were still involved in the organisation of the holiday, we discovered gradually the resort, and today we are more settled, more stable" (Bernard, Day 4). The more these steps are mastered, the more tourists can fully devote their time and attention to the core-goal of their holiday, and togetherness becomes the main focus. Both nesting and investigating are prerequisite conditions to be able to feel relaxed and settled on holiday. However, once nesting is integrated as a holiday routine most participants will not pay attention to it anymore, whereas investigating is more problematic. Investigating practices ebb and flow through the week, with many tourists not accessing new experiences nor discovering more of the resort and slopes. Then, from Day 4, there is some renewed investigating, particularly for the slopes, motivated by a slight appearance of boredom.

5. Discussion and managerial recommendations

The longitudinal method effectively identified how processes of appropriation fall into place and how tourists approach their new temporary home. The daily interviews were essential to grasp the infinite and small details that construct tourists' routines. As such, this type of qualitative data collection is extremely rich and reveals what would be seen as minor practices but which, ultimately, contribute to the whole holiday experience.

The study presents an exploration of tourists' practices guided by existing appropriation models (Carù & Cova, 2006; Jansson, 2007; Shani, 2013). Firstly, results show that mundane routines are very present when tourists arrive at a resort, settle in their new accommodation and make it homey. Inhibitors to setting up the home pertain to individuals' basic needs: issues of security and comfort emerged, highlighting that problems encountered with noise, cooking facilities and hygiene disrupt feelings of relaxation and comfort in their new home. Notably, mundane routines are recreated in a positive spirit, echoing Larsen: "tourism is bound up with performing social life and building an alternative "home", a utopian performance where everyday routines, doings and roles hopefully become extraordinary: relaxed, jointed and joyful" (2008, p28).

Mundane routines are accepted as long as they foster the bigger aim of a pleasant, welcoming and warm home where togetherness takes precedence. This echoes Löfgren's statement that: "getting away from it all might be an attempt to get it all back together again" (1999, p269 - in Larsen, 2007, p. 28). Tourists are not only seeking authentic places

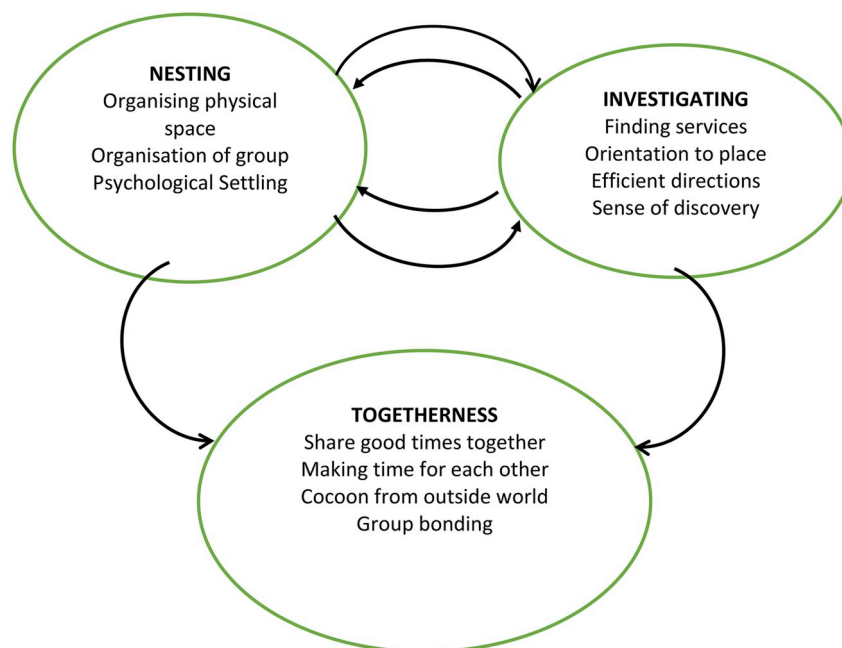


Fig. 2. Appropriation steps across the tourist experience.

and objects; they also search for authentic sociability between themselves (Wang, 1999). As a result, beyond the functional home, it is also a place where deep connections and proximity can develop within the family/friends unit. This resonates with Larsen and Kirkegaard's (2013) identification of family flow that can occur as much through activities as through the simple action of being together. Togetherness can involve consumer agency such as changing habits to make sure the time spent together is valuable (turning off the TV, playing games, etc.). Also, different degrees of intimacy exist between what takes place within the home (in group) and what takes place during activities outside the home.

Wang's vision (1999) that the alternative home is reconceptualised in a more relaxed manner was evident in this study as tourists clearly showed willingness to be less rigid about practices. Hence, routines are simplified to the most basic level and tourists slow their pace to a different rhythm of life away from work (Edensor, 2007). To an extent, the holiday home is identified in opposition to the daily home: elements pertaining to negative routines are removed, and those necessary to nest are maintained. For instance, basic cleaning and cooking are part of daily routines perpetuated on holidays but elements such as do-it-yourself activities, ironing clothes, or in-depth cleaning of the house, are absent. There are subtle differences between mundane routines that are fun and part of the holiday, and those that are a reminder of daily and temporarily unwanted lives.

Secondly, the results indicate that it takes several days for tourists to unwind; it is only from Day 3 onwards that tourists show clear signs of detaching themselves from everyday life and also from the functional activities associated with nesting and investigating. This detachment process strengthens through the course of the week, echoing past research. In a study of nine Canadian visitors to Hong-Kong, McKercher and Lui (2014) identified that detachment took five days. Pearce (1981), in a study of cultural shock on island tourists in Australia, identified that negative moods decreased after the third day, hastened by self-initiated activities. While cultural shock was not an issue in our study, it can be argued that self-initiated activities contributed greatly to the sense of togetherness and fulfilment, and the positive emotions that resulted.

Carr (2002) suggests that the detachment process will manifest differently depending on the nature and duration of the trip and the degree of psychological separation. Clearly in this study, the highly active ski setting conducive to flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991), along with the short duration of the holiday, contributed to tourists distancing

themselves quite rapidly. Moreover, tourists maximise their time since they only come for one week and it is often the only ski trip they will take in the year.

In relation to the models investigated, the results corroborate the nesting step, also named "scripting" by Jansson (2007), and "familiarity with place" by Shani (2013). Investigating is also very much present and echoes Jansson's notion of navigation and Shani's notion of "privacy and situational control". However, this study distinguishes investigating actions associated with the resort from those linked to the slope, as they fulfil different objectives, at different periods.

However, for the stamping step, the definition from Carù and Cova (2006) is perhaps too vague and while Shani's notion of "sociability in associations" is more appropriate, the term togetherness best reflects the third appropriation step in this study. Jansson's (2007) third notion of representation is perhaps less relevant to this study because diffusion via social networks was not specifically investigated, nor evident.

Most importantly, in the original appropriation model the three steps are conceived as separate, even if they interact with each other. In this study, both nesting and investigating foster togetherness (Fig. 2). For instance, some functional elements of the nesting process (physical elements that allow individuals to feel at home) and elements that allow for groups to bond (size and location of accommodation) contribute to togetherness. Equally, while investigating might appear as a more basic and functional step to the holiday appropriation, it is necessary because orientation supports familiarisation with a new territory and efficiency to maximise time for valuable experiences. Wasting time getting lost means less time for more pleasant activities. Minimizing the investigation step is also detrimental to the holiday simply because tourists fail to identify services, events, and ski areas that could have heightened their experience. Therefore, investigation, as much as nesting, are means to an end, boosting visitors' experiences and feelings of togetherness.

5.1. Managerial implications

This study provides the first adaptation of the appropriation concept to a holiday context. It demonstrates that this concept is extremely rich and pertinent to understand tourists' anchoring process, and identifies how different practices conjugate to create a sense of togetherness. While time spent on nesting and investigating is unavoidable, there are some innovations that resorts could develop to ease this process. Table 2 presents

Table 2
Managerial implications to improve each appropriation step.

Problem identified	Improvements suggested	Outcome/objective	Timing
Providing for basic needs	Pack of basic groceries & pre-rented skis directly delivered to the accommodation Conciergerie service App or tap for basic needs: “where to find ...”	Facilitate, accelerate and simplify the nesting process Ease access to basic services	Day 1 Day 1 and after
Very limited investigating of the resort	Resort App with several taps: (e.g. <i>basic needs, find your way, seen everything yet? shortcuts, getting around, ready for more</i>) and push notifications starting on day 3 (with exciting information about events, new shops, etc.)	Reducing the time for practical aspects, turning functional investigation into a discovery of new experiences	Day 1 and after
Fear to get lost on the slopes	Interactive phone application indicating usual connecting skiing times and closing times per lift, and the most efficient way to reach the resort. Panels indicating real-time connections on the slopes Maps suggesting itineraries on ski lifts lines Itinerary suggestions according to one's skills or wish, landscape, steep slopes, on a foggy day, technical challenges ... Information (mobile phone push mails/text messages) to induce more exploration to new areas.	Reduce skiers' stress of not being back on time at the resort; hence improve their enjoyment of skiing to the most	Day 2 onwards
	Identify large flats within resorts. Identify flats on the same landing.	Encourage tourists to venture further away or to areas they would not have thought of investigating	Permanent Day 1 onwards Day 3 or 4 (not before)
Incapacity for big groups to find large-size accommodation	Identify large flats within resorts. Identify flats on the same landing.	Allow groups to be together by either staying in the same accommodation or identifying flats very close to each other	Several months before the holiday, when booking
Problems encountered within flats	Making sure that the facilities are of a good quality level: proper cooking appliances, hygiene facilities, etc. Conciergerie or dedicated person who can be contacted indicated on the rental contract.	Allow groups to feel “at home”	Part of the quality resort scheme
Too personal decorations (e.g. personal pictures)	Neutral decoration suggested in rental flats, general decoration tips provided to owners renting their flats.	Feeling at home, not at somebody's place.	Ongoing

some of the implications that were drawn from the results, detailing the difficulty encountered, the managerial improvements suggested, the respective timing and the outcome expected. While some of the elements relate to seemingly minor functional improvements, one should keep in mind that improving the nesting and investigation steps also contributes to togetherness. Some of the identified elements can clearly be the focus of managerial improvements, others such as togetherness, especially within the new home, are dependent on the intimacy of the group, thus less influenced by marketing. In sum, marketing actions should target the first two steps to encourage positive nesting and investigating conditions that will ultimately foster togetherness.

5.2. Limitations

The results presented in this study must be interpreted within the limits of the setting of the data collection. The collection took place during a week with extremely good skiing conditions and exceptional weather; positive conditions for skiers. Results may have varied had participants not been able to ski, a condition not researched in this study.

All the tourists interviewed were in rented accommodation, thus, results might not transfer totally to an all-inclusive model. Not being able to conduct interviews on the last day was another limit to the study, but it was unavoidable since tourists were busy packing before their departure. Also, due to the sample size, the researchers did not differentiate the results according to respondent demographics. For instance, respondents staying as a family might have different interpretation of the notion of home than groups of friends. This would be a topic worthy of investigation in the future.

The tourists were recruited via the resort website and had all booked independently. Tour operator consumers were therefore excluded from the study; these include younger tourists coming from northern Europe and who tend to have a more party-oriented focus, and may have provided a different account of their appropriation process. While different cultures are represented in the sample, they were not differentiated in the analysis due to the sample size.

Finally, the interviewers met with the participant groups every night of their stay which might have introduced a relationship with the researcher and could have had an impact on responses.

6. Conclusion

This study has successfully adapted the appropriation concept to a multi-day holiday context and provided a new model to reflect the holiday context. Both the nesting and investigating steps are intertwined and involve practices that anchor tourists to a destination. The results demonstrate that mundane practices are essential to the tourist experience and can be directly linked to higher experiential objectives attached to the holiday (notably, togetherness). The new model indicates that if the nesting and investigating steps absorb too much time, tourists will be left with less time for the enjoyment of their holiday. Results also show that incapacity to nest and the lack of tourists' investigating practices reduce the depth of their experiences.

The longitudinal data collection undertaken in this study demonstrates that this approach, though rare in tourism academia, is a powerful method to collect rich data. Moreover, by investigating the day-to-day tourist experience, mundane practices are uncovered that give a clear indication of the elements that feed into the experience and how each step unfolds over different days of the week. The results also suggest managerial actions to be implemented at different times both during and before the experience.

This research project investigated the appropriation steps in a specific holiday context. It would be interesting to identify how the steps might evolve in different settings and over a longer period of time. New technological tools could also bring a very useful complementary analysis to the investigation phase, for instance by using GPS devices to track tourist movements. This analysis coupled with the notion of timing could bring a much more precise notion of spacio-temporal routines to provide further insights to the holiday appropriation process.

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Authors' contribution

Isabelle Frochot managed the whole study: funding search,

theoretical framing, training of the interviewees, data collection, data analysis and writing the final paper.

Dominique Kreziak was involved in theoretical framing, training of the interviewees, data collection, data analysis and writing the final paper.

Statia Elliot was involved in the theoretical framing of the study, data analysis and writing the final paper.

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