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Consumer Tribes in Tourism

Contemporary Perspectives on Special-Interest Tourism

🐎 Springer

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We wish to dedicate this book to the memory of the late Foundation Prof. Philip L. Pearce, the first Professor of Tourism in Australia and Distinguished Prof. at James Cook University, Australia, one of our book's contributors, who sadly passed away on 11 August 2020.

*Professor Philip L. Pearce
(21 January 1951–11 August 2020)*

Preface

Tourism stands as the largest industry in the world with 1.4 billion international tourists in 2018 generating USD 1.7 trillion in total exports (UN World Tourism Organization, 2019). Thus, humans are travelling more than ever before, and this has generated a range of tourism segments known as 'special interest tourism'. Two to three decades ago, special interest tourism sectors were viewed as broader segments of the industry and included regional, urban, community, environmental, cruise, heritage, cultural and educational tourism (Weiler and Hall, 1992; Douglas, Douglas and Derrett, 2001). However, today they are viewed much more specifically with examples including avitourism, cycling tourism, film tourism, motor-cycle tourism and surf tourism to name a few. All of these and more are included as case studies in this book.

Each of these segments is driven by consumer demand and is usually experiential in nature. This book examines the various segments from the sociological perspective of consumer groups. Beginning from the standpoint of consumer tribes, a group of people who have chosen to come together for a particular period of time and place, for a specific reason, we refine this further by examining the various tourist groups as 'consumption tribes'. Here, the emphasis is on groups of people sharing tourism and travel experiences around a specific interest. By understanding the passions, values and experiences of these 'tribes,' we can better understand them as tourism consumers and hence better market to them and provide tourism experiences for them.

With this book, we try to break new ground in relation to understanding consumers of tourism in defined shared groups. In this regard, we have constructed a book so the reader can learn more about tourism's consumer tribes, and we have illustrated this with a number of international case examples, which bring new experiences, problems and perspectives into focus.

Accordingly, we want this book to serve three functions:

1. Provide an introductory discourse on consumer tribes in tourism.
2. Profile a range of international perspectives and case studies.
3. Act as a teaching and learning resource for students of tourism and associated disciplines.

Perth, Australia   Christof Pforr
February 2020   Ross Dowling
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Prof. Christof Pforr is Discipline Leader (Tourism, Hospitality & Events) and Course Coordinator for Tourism & Hospitality with the School of Marketing, Faculty of Business & Law, Curtin University (Western Australia).

Prior to joining Curtin University in 2003, Prof. Pforr held academic positions at three other Australian universities and has been a Visiting Professor at universities in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Professor Pforr's past and current research is inter- and multidisciplinary. In essence, his activities have concentrated on four interconnected research areas, sustainability, tourism public policy, destination governance and special interest tourism, all fields he has frequently published in. Professor Pforr has contributed to more than 150 publications (including 10 books) and numerous national and international research projects.

Prof. Ross Dowling is Honorary Professor of Tourism in the School of Business and Law at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. He was appointed as the University's Foundation Professor of Tourism in 2002, and he served in this capacity for 16 years until he retired from full-time work at the end of 2018. He now conducts research into ecotourism, geotourism and cruise ship tourism, and has written or edited 16 books on these subjects. He is actively involved in the development of tourism, and in Western Australia he is chair of Destination Perth and Vice President of Geoparks WA. For his contributions to tourism in Western Australia, he has been awarded the Sir David Brand Medal recognising a lifetime contribution to the industry. In addition, he has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) and been made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his contributions to tourism at a national level.

Dr. Michael Volgger is a Senior Lecturer with the School of Marketing at Curtin University in Western Australia where he is Co-Director of the Tourism Research Cluster. Michael holds a doctoral degree in Economics and Business Administration and a master's degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology. His areas of expertise span questions of transformation and social coordination in tourism destination management, tourism product development and consumer behaviour. Particular interests include the sharing economy, responsible consumer behaviour, development of tourism atmospheres, the governance of the tourism supply side and social perspectives on tourist behaviour. He has been part of research teams which have received research grants in the range of AUD 1 million in Europe and Australia and has published more than 60 academic articles and four books. Dr. Michael Volgger has lectured on tourism and hospitality in Australia, Germany and Switzerland.

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Part I
Introduction

Chapter 1
Consumer Tribes: A Tourism Perspective on Shared Experiences, Emotions, and the Passion for a Specific Interest

Christof Pforr, Michael Volgger, and Ross Dowling

Under the title '*Consumer tribes in tourism: Contemporary perspectives on special interest tourism*' this book adopts a collective approach to special interest tourism consumption. It brings together research on 'special interest tourism', framed primarily as a demand concept, which is experiential in nature and driven by a special interest, and 'niche tourism', offering a supply perspective, with more recent research into the interdisciplinary applications of the sociological concept of 'neo-tribes' (Novelli 2005; Weiler and Hall 1992; Hardy et al. 2018; see also Chaps. 2 and 3 in this volume).

Initially triggered by negative impacts associated with mass tourism, special interest tourism reflects a move away from demand for mainstream tourism offerings. In its early days, ecotourism, for instance, was portrayed as a sustainable, alternative form of tourism. Today, however, special interest tourism has moved beyond these early interpretations and now reflects a broader shift towards an emerging demand for non-standardised tourism experiences (see Chap. 2). To cater for these growing special interest markets by addressing particular preferences, new destinations and activities have emerged since the 1990s. These niche tourism products provide more customised tourism experiences based on the type of interest that motivates people to travel (Novelli 2005).

The concept of neo-tribes was introduced by French sociologist Maffesoli (1996), and sometime later employed also in the tourism sphere (e.g. Hardy et al. 2012, 2013;

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Hardy and Robards 2015). It captures social representations of post-modern communities (Bennett 1999) where according to Maffesoli (1996) boundaries between the individuum and society have become increasingly blurred (Dawes 2016). Maffesoli's notion of post-modern sociality offers an alternative perspective to the modern society which in much of contemporary writing is characterised by fragmentation (individualism) and rationality of social structures. In contrast, neo-tribal theory suggests that post-modern sociality is based on social links, evolved organically and is underpinned by emotional connections to a shared passion (Cova and Cova 2002). Thus, neo-tribes represent groups of people with shared common interests and similar behavioural patterns and are characterised by rather informal ties as well as temporal geographic settings. This dynamic and fluent nature of neo-tribes also implies that a member can be connected to a number of different tribes.

In a tourism context, instead of neo-tribes we refer in this book to 'consumption tribes' (Cova et al. 2007) and tourism tribes (Hardy et al. 2018), whose travel behaviors are influenced by collective mechanisms such as norms and identities, sense of belonging, shared communication codes and even rudimentary social structures (Cova and Cova 2002). Consumption is seen here as socially embedded and symbolic agency which can only be fully understood in the context of societal values and relationships. Cova and Cova (2002) adopt the term consumer tribes, linking a social group to identity building, specific interest-based motivations, behaviour and values. With this postmodern premise, groups of people share tourism and travel experiences, emotions and the passion for a specific interest, a perspective which will be explored in the many case examples presented in this volume.

Adopting this particular conceptual angle, we promote with our text a shift away from special interest tourism, understood as a sum of similarly motivated individuals, to a collective view of special interest tourists who share common characteristics (e.g. shared values, beliefs and mutual interests) and group structures with a particular emphasis on the relationship between them.

In brief, the aim of the book is two-fold:

1. As there is limited research on the collective perspective on special interest tourism consumption, in the first part the book's conceptual and theoretical discourse seeks to contribute to a better understanding of 'groupings' in tourism behavior.
2. In presenting in particular international case examples, the book explores the group culture of a range of contemporary tourist tribes by describing emerging tourism micro segments, identifying shared identities and analysing their collective mechanisms.

The seventeen chapters in this book are organised in three parts. Part One—Introduction (Chaps. 1–3) introduces, describes and discusses the major theoretical concepts of special interest tourism and neo-tribes. This is followed by Part Two—International Case Examples (Chaps. 4–16), which focuses on research on contemporary tourist tribes examples from a range of countries such as the USA, Australia, Italy, Namibia or New Zealand. In Part Three—Conclusion (Chap. 17) we offer a

synthesis of the many theoretical and practical contributions and conclusions drawn from experiences around the world and outline priorities for future research.

After this introductory opening (Chap. 1: *Consumer tribes: A tourism perspective on shared experiences, emotion, and the passion for a specific interest*), which presents the rationale for compiling this book and concludes with an overview of its scope and structure, Betty Weiler and Tracey Firth (Chap. 2: *Special interest travel: Reflections, rejections and reassertions*) provide an important underpinning to the book with their synopsis of the concept of special interest tourism. With reference to the seminal work by Weiler and Hall (1992) three decades ago, they insightfully sketch not only the concept's origins in the 1990s as antithesis to mass tourism but also its contemporary conceptualisation. In their understanding of special interest tourism as primarily a 'demand construct' or consumer-focused concept, the authors advocate to adopt the terminology of special interest travel/traveller, over the prevailing notion of special interest tourism. With reference to Hall and Weiler's (1992: 5) definition, Weiler and Firth point out that the concept is delineated by two defining attributes: (1) a traveller motivated and driven by a special interest, and (2) the experiential nature of the travel. Furthermore, in extending existing theory, the authors explore the special interest tourism construct's relationship with alternative concepts such as subculture (Bennett 1999), serious leisure (Stebbins 2001), consumer tribes (Cova and Cova 2002), neo-tribes (Maffesoli 1996) and neo-tribal tourism (Hardy and Robards 2015), discussing their similarities, differences and overlaps.

Chapter 3 (*Cross-disciplinary applications and conceptualisations of theory of neo-tribes: An investigation*) also offers an important footing for this text. Anne Hardy explores the conceptual developments of the neo-tribe's theory across a range of disciplines from its beginnings in sociology in the late 1980s by Maffesoli (1996) who contrasted subcultural studies in their observation toward social fragmentation and an individualistic culture. Referring, for instance, to consumer tribes (Cova and Cova 2002), the concept of neo-tribes was quickly taken up by marketing and consumer behaviour scholars. More recently, in a tourism and leisure research context, it has been proposed as antithesis to traditional tourism segmentation (Hardy and Robards 2015). Hardy defines neo-tribes "as groups of people who may meet physically or virtually and who may coalesce in a fleeting or permanent manner, and whose group structure may be rigid or consist of different levels of membership" (p. 33).

In the opening of Part Two of the book (International Case Examples) Alana K. Dillette explores in Chap. 4 (*Black Travel Tribes: An Exploration of Race and Travel in America*) the impacts of racial inequality, segregation and discrimination on the travel and tourism sector in the US. A central focus of the chapter is to examine how the history of black travel has led to the existence of black travel tribes. Dillette defines black travel tribes as representation of travellers of African descent and the African diaspora who travel outside their normal home environment. She differentiates two types of black travel tribes: On the one hand are those who provide opportunities for group or solo travel to black travellers. On the other there are those travellers who connect communities of colour through chronicling and sharing their travel adventures but do not offer group or solo travel opportunities (p. 44). Although black

travel tribes still grow in number and significance, Alana K. Dillette points to the importance of working together to sustain a continuing and growing influence with the ultimate goal "to create a world where one day, black travel tribes are no longer a necessity" (p. 50).

As outlined in the contribution on *Film Tourist Tribes* (Chap. 5), according to W. Glen Croy, Ina Reichenberger and Stefanie Benjamin, many film tourism studies focus on the film location as the temporal space where film tourists manifest themselves. However, beyond these geographical and temporal boundaries, the authors highlight a societal perspective that contributes to and enhances our understanding of film tourism and film tourists. In their view, film tourist tribes are delineated as small, yet highly interactive and intense groups with an extended temporal and spatial engagement with the film. Members of the film tourist tribes can be found on a continuum, spanning from incidental through to purposeful film tourists. Adopting a neo-tribal theory lens, Croy, Reichenberger and Benjamin advance our understanding of film tourists by exploring two complementary perspectives of film tourist tribes, the tribal location and the tribal membership.

In Chap. 6 (*The Coalescence of the LGBTQI+ Neo-tribes during the Pride Events*) Oskaras Vorobjovas-Pinta and Clifford Lewis apply a neo-tribal theory perspective to their study of pride events. The authors propose a model, which is rooted in the four defining attributes of neo-tribes, (1) fluidity in membership, (2) shared sentiment, (3) rituals and symbols and (4) space. Based on this conceptual framing the authors discuss the role of neo-tribes at a tribe and sub-tribe level in the context of pride events, which have developed since the 1960s from protest movements to public diversity celebrations, bringing together lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex and other non-heterosexual (LGBTQI+) identities. It is argued that on the one hand the LGBTQI+ communities represent a neo-tribe with a unified purpose, and on the other, individual communities form sub-tribes and provide a unique interpretation based on their identity.

Hugues Seraphin and Maximiliano E Korstanje, in their chapter on *Dark tourism tribes: Social capital as a variable* (Chap. 7), observe an increased interest in the various forms and sites of dark tourism in recent years. Taking into consideration the heterogeneous nature of this form of special interest tourism and also acknowledging the great diversity of interpretations, the authors offer two approaches to sensemaking that co-exist, dark tourism as a tool for resilience building and also as pedagogical instrument. In this context the authors review strengths and weaknesses of both positions with a strong focus on the cultures of neo-tribes. The chapter's objective is not only to deepen our understanding of dark tourists but also to lay the foundations towards new insights into dark tourism.

According to Rochelle Steven, Nicolas Rakotopare and David Newsome (Chap. 8: *Avitourism tribes: As diverse as the birds they watch*) the avitourist super-tribe is united by several key attributes, in particular to see birds in the wild. This insight carries a significant nature and wildlife conservation message to ensure avitourism's sustainable future. Based on a number of common attributes that unite birdwatchers, it would however, as argued by the authors, be a mistake to assume that avitourists are a homogenous group. In their chapter, Steven, Rakotopare and Newsome explore

the diversity of this niche market by highlighting sub-tribes of birdwatchers that exhibit a unique set of attributes and preferences, expressed for instance in their attitude towards conservation and their dedication to birdwatching as well as their preference for specific birdwatching locations. The authors conclude that next to an avitourist super-tribe, there are a range of subtribes, from casual to highly engaged and motivated bird watchers, where membership is determined by levels of engagement and interest in birdwatching.

Ross Dowling, Mamoon Allan and Nicole Grünert in their Chapter on *Geological Tourist Tribes* (Chap. 9) contextualise geotourism, geotourists and geological tourist tribes. They explore the spectrum of geotourists, from those with a focus on 'geological' features to those tourists having a more 'geographical' focus. Depending on their interest and engagement the authors identified five different types of geotourists, the 'incidental', 'accidental', 'serendipitous', 'intentional' and 'purposeful' geotourist. With the neo-tribes perspective in mind, in the chapter particular attention is paid to geological tourists attracted to landscapes or landforms to see geomorphic features as well as earth surface processes. These tourists, who reflect in particular the 'intentional' and 'purposeful' category of geotourists, are generally motivated and driven by their special interest and have a good grasp of geology. Employing a neo-tribal perspective, Dowling, Allan and Grünert see them as emerging geotourists tribes, as they have a keen focus on travelling to see and learn about landforms or geological phenomena.

Rodney Caldicott in Chap. 10 (*Freedom campers: A new neo-crowd (-tribe) breaking tradition with planning boundaries*) addresses emerging issues surrounding an increase in popularity of freedom campers and the impact on local communities, specifically the widening 'gap' between caravanning production and consumption. In this case study from Australia, Caldicott explores this emerging tourism micro segment, in particular the characteristics and preferences of the 'neo-crowd' of unconventional caravanners or the RV market. Adopting a neo-tribal perspective, the author describes shared identities and collective mechanisms of freedom campers, while at the same time acknowledging their heterogeneity. Caldicott reveals that freedom campers' attributes and their site selection are placed along a neo-tribe spectrum ranging from, 'free' to, 'commercial' with a shifting sub-tribe in between.

In Chap. 11 (*Enjoying Sunset: Successful Ageing and the Grey Nomad Community*) issues of successful ageing are explored in the context of a group of older Australian recreation vehicle travellers, who are commonly referred to as 'grey nomads'. This backdrop provides the platform for the identification of commonalities within this tribe, such as common characteristics, beliefs and consistent social practices, as well as a discussion of the mobility patterns within the grey nomad community. The authors, Philip L. Pearce, Hera Oktadiana, John R. Pearce and Tingzhen Chen, employ two conceptual approaches, neo-tribal theory and social representations theory, in order to portray the in-group belonging of the grey nomads.

Using the 200-year long history of cycling as backdrop, Michael Volgger and Manuel Demetz in their chapter on *The Cycling Tourism Tribe* (Chap. 12) connect to the recent wave of popularity over the past decades to highlight that cycling has become a platform of social status and identity building, even representing a

particular lifestyle. This has implications also for cycling tourism where we can observe emerging cyclist tribes, namely road cyclists, mountain bikers and trekking cyclists, signified by sets of shared symbols, values and beliefs. Thus, in their chapter Volgger and Demetz adopt a neo-tribes perspective to aid our understandings of the commonalities of cycling tourism tribes and their differentiation into sub-tribes.

The annual 'Pig Roast' event at Steel Steeds Motorcycle Campground in Pennsylvania (USA) provides the setting for Diane Sykes to explore motorcycle tourist behaviour. In her chapter on *Cruising and Clanning: The Motorcycle Tourism Tribal Experience* (Chap. 13) she highlights that to better understand this niche market requires deeper insights into the social practice of the motorcycle community. Sykes refers to the motorcycle lifestyle as a subculture and the specific interests represented within as neo-tribes of motorcycle tourists, who share values, beliefs, symbols and narratives. With specific reference to the Pig Roast event, Sykes highlights some 'tribal markers' such as shared storytelling around the central campfire, a narrative which also continues after the event. She argues that in particular smaller tribal groups, the so-called sub-tribes, should be described as mobile clans, coming together for a particular trip, event (as temporal anchoring place) or activities. Thus, by introducing the concept of 'clan formation ('clanning') she offers an extension to existing theory.

Anna Scuttari, Giulia Isetti and Philipp Corradini in their chapter on *Water-sport tribes in multi-sport destinations: The case of the Lake Garda, Italy* (Chap. 14) employ the theoretical framework of consumer tribes to analyse lifestyle water sports. Water-based tourism, at the interface between adventure, nature and lifestyle sports, is characterised by heterogeneous groups which share a common passion and social practices. These groups, here refered to as water-sports neo-tribes, are analysed by exploring the practice of engaging in multiple water-sports during a particular holiday but also across a lifetime as well as the co-existence of multi-optional and singular sporting practices. To analyse these phenomena, the authors adopt a case study approach. The case study destination is Lake Garda in Italy, a well-known water sport destination, which offers a great variety of activities for different skill levels. Scuttari, Isetti and Corradini identify an overarching nature sport tribe which can be subdivided into coexisting and linked 'terrain-based' and 'water-based' micro tribes.

Acknowledging that surfing has developed from a countercultural lifestyle of the 1960s and 1970s into a mainstream activity, Robert Holt in Chap. 15 (*Searching the seven seas: Investigating Western Australia's Cape Naturaliste surfing tribe as a surf-tourism paradigm*) segments the broader surfing culture into surfing tribes, which can be separated by their distinct set of beliefs, values and narratives, and the temporal and spatial context of their surfing practice and engagement. With a particular focus on Western Australia's Cape Naturaliste region, a particular surfing tribe, referred to by Holt as the 'Cape Crusaders', exemplifies this social practice. Adopting an ethnographic and autoethnographic perspective, the chapter explores the Cape Naturaliste wave riders as a surf-tourism tribe and examines the motives and mechanisms for their travel preference.

After an introductory backdrop, outlining the ethnographical and auto-ethnographical underpinning of this chapter, *Offshore Sailing: Subcultures and Neotribes* (Chap. 16) provides the reader with a brief induction into offshore sailing, which forms the centre of Jim Macbeth's discourse on subcultures and neo-tribes as their defining feature. By referring to the anthropological grasp of tribes, Macbeth queries the adoption of the term neo-tribes by Maffesoli (1996) and Cova and Cova's (2002) contradictory, and in Macbeth's view, incorrect perspective of the unsteady nature of neo-tribes. Based on this conceptual unease, Macbeth continues to argue that Cova and Cova's emphasis on 'consumption' and 're-socialising' makes the neo-tribe concept unfit to theoretically define offshore sailing.

In the concluding chapter of the book (Chap. 17: *Tribes in tourism: A socio-cultural perspective on special interest tourism consumption*) the editors Michael Volgger, Christof Pforr and Ross Dowling bring together an array of theoretical and practical insights into collective identities of consumer tribes unified by a common tourism motivation. In doing so, they highlight the book's contribution towards a better understanding of special interest travellers' shared common values, beliefs and mutual interests as well as their group structures with their particular collective mechanisms.

We believe that our book *Consumer tribes in tourism: Contemporary perspectives on special interest tourism* provides new insights and perspectives on special interest tourism. Adopting a consumer tribes' approach toward specialist tourism markets, we offer with this text an extension to existing theory, exploring the collective dimensions of special interest travellers who share certain social practices and collective identities. We hope that our book will advance the starting points offered by Hardy et al. (2018), and provides a meaningful context for further research in this area.

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Chapter 2
Special Interest Travel: Reflections, Rejections and Reassertions

Check for
updates

Betty Weiler and Tracey Firth

Abstract The term special interest tourism (SIT) first appeared in the tourism literature nearly three decades ago and continues to be used as a label by tourism scholars, researchers and educators. Given SIT is most robust as a demand construct, this chapter uses the acronym SIT to refer to special interest travel and special interest travellers. The chapter traces the development of SIT, identifying milestones for both SIT and other closely related terms that have gained traction in the tourism literature in recent decades. The similarities, differences and overlaps between SIT, neo-tribal tourism and serious leisure are discussed and presented as a diagram. The chapter concludes with avenues for further research and implications for marketing.

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present an overview of special interest tourism (SIT) and its pathway in the academic literature over the past few decades in order to chart its conceptualisation over time. With the emergence of new concepts such as consumer tribes (Cova and Cova 2002), neo-tribes (Maffesoli 1996) and neo-tribal tourism (Hardy and Robards 2015) in particular, it is timely to reflect on what is meant and encompassed by special interest tourism and how it informs, relates to or is distinguished from neo-tribal phenomena in tourism.

As such, the chapter draws on previous literature to define SIT and present themes that have been explored to date. This helps position SIT in relation to other terms and concepts including serious leisure, niche tourism and neo-tribal tourism. A timeline showing the emergence of some of these other concepts in the scholarly literature in

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parallel with the evolution of SIT scholarly literature is then presented. The review of SIT and related literature provides a foundation for establishing the relationships between SIT and neo-tribal tourism, including what can be learned from the SIT literature to inform neo-tribal tourism and what the latter can bring to the literature that SIT has not. Implications for research and marketing are also considered.

2.2   Defining Special Interest Tourism

Special interest tourism (SIT) has been part of the lexicon of tourism scholarship since at least the early 1990s, when it was introduced as the title of an edited book by Weiler and Hall (1992). Hall and Weiler (1992: 4) suggest that the term was coined by Read (1980) in a chapter he wrote for a tourism marketing and management text. However, it was Weiler and Hall's book that launched SIT in the tourism academic literature and that provided a working definition that has framed subsequent work.

What then, are the defining elements of SIT? Firstly, according to Hall and Weiler (1992: 5), travel can be described as SIT when "the traveller's motivation and decision-making are primarily determined by a particular special interest" or, as Read (1980: 195) expressed it, when the special interest is "the hub around which the total travel experience is planned and developed". In other words, special interest travellers are motivated to pursue a particular hobby, activity or interest on their holiday, and this motivation drives the decisions they make about where, when, and for how long to travel. *The special interest, rather than the destination, drives decision-making.* This defining quality of SIT appears to be widely accepted in principle by all who research or write about SIT, notwithstanding the fact that what is labelled in the literature as SIT often extends well outside this definition. See, for example, the three edited volumes and one authored monograph listed in Table 2.1, all titled and devoted to 'special interest tourism'. According to the definitions presented in the introductions of each of these collected works, these editors and authors concur with Hall and Weiler's definition, even though it is evident that not all the tourists and experiences described in the case studies are centred on a particular special interest. Indeed, over the last few decades case studies presented as being under the umbrella of SIT seem to have strayed further and further from a focus on travel that is driven by a particular special interest. This is true not only of collected works, but by journal and conference paper authors who use the SIT umbrella under which to position their particular case study. For example, travellers may follow a wine-and-food touring route for part of their trip, attend a festival or event, or spend a day at a health spa. While some of these are true special interest tourists, most of these travellers might be better labelled as generalists. In other words, tourists in these case studies may well participate in activities that align with their interests but, as McKercher and Chan (2005) note, this is not the same as planning and executing a holiday around a particular special interest.

A second definitional element notionally associated with SIT is that it is *experience-based or experiential* (Weiler and Hall 1992), as opposed to a more

Table 2.1 Focus of case studies in collected works on special interest tourism

Weiler and Hall (1992)	Douglas et al. (2001)	Agarwal et al. (2018)	Rittichainuwat (2018)
Educational travel Arts and heritage tourism Ethnic tourism Nature-based tourism Adventure tourism Sport tourism Health tourism	Regional tourism Cultural tourism Heritage tourism Rural tourism Educational tourism Cycle tourism Aboriginal cultures and Indigenous tourism Health, spa and health resorts Environmental tourism Wine and food tourism Cruise tourism Festivals and events Sex tourism Senior tourism Urban tourism	Social tourism Family tourism Religious tourism Literary tourism Music tourism Film tourism Carnival tourism Golf tourism Adventure tourism Shopping tourism Food tourism Garden tourism Slow tourism	Food tourism Medical tourism Film tourism Shopping tourism Dark tourism Ghost tourism Suicide tourism

superficial or consumptive travel style and set of behaviours. Here also we see some points of digression by scholars, as many of the case studies in the collected volumes of so-called SIT and labelled as SIT in the wider academic literature, for example urban tourism, cruising and shopping tourism, might be better labelled as consumptive or mass tourism (again, see Table 2.1). In other words, defining what is and is not 'experiential travel' is not clear-cut; indeed some would argue that all tourism is experiential irrespective of whether tourist behaviour involves passive or active 'hands-on' experiences (Pine and Gilmore 1998). Some have tried to distinguish experiential tourism from those activities that are more obviously consumptive (e.g. shopping) or status-building (e.g. a holiday at a well-known resort) and it is perhaps this notion that prompted Brotherton and Himmetoglu (1997: 17) to argue that SIT is "motivated by intrinsic factors derived from the interest or activity". However, much travel that is *not* SIT also can be intrinsically motivated, for example a family camping holiday, and arguably the motivations for many special interests are not necessarily 'intrinsic' only, for example those that involve collecting or those that involve competing for an extrinsic reward (e.g. some sports tourism). That said, there does seem to be agreement that SIT can be characterised as being less consumptive and more experiential in nature.

Weiler and Hall's (1992) volume included a number of review chapters and case studies that focused on what were considered to be subsets of special interest tourism at the time but would not be considered so today. This approach was replicated in the other three subsequent volumes, each providing a suite of updated (Douglas et al. 2001) and/or new (Agarwal et al. 2018; Rittichainuwat 2018) case studies. With the benefit of hindsight, it can be seen that these and other case studies collectively include what other authors would now label (i) 'niche markets' (e.g. cycle tourism;

ballooning; fossicking), (ii) 'target markets' (seniors; families; gay travellers), (iii) 'tourism genres' (educational travel; social tourism; slow tourism) and (iv) 'tourism sectors' (regional tourism; events; cruise tourism) (again, see Table 2.1).

This terminological and conceptual messiness is understandable. At the time that the first edited book was published, terms such as ethical, alternative, sustainable and ecotourism were only just emerging in the scholarly tourism literature. Any tourism product or experience that focused on smaller discerning markets of tourists was implied as more responsible and a better alternative to mass tourism. It is thus understandable that some of Weiler and Hall's case studies fall outside what would be considered SIT today. Indeed, Weiler and Hall themselves flag this confusion in their introductory chapter. Again, with the benefit of hindsight, Weiler and Hall's (1992) compilation might better have been titled *Special Interest Travel*, not only to distinguish it from travel and travellers driven by more generalist motives but also to place the focus on the traveller and the experience rather than on the destination or the product. Our review of the SIT literature led us to conclude that SIT should not be regarded as a supply concept at all, as there are no particular defining characteristics of special interest *tourism*. SIT is a demand construct, and its defining characteristics relate to the special interest traveller him/herself and the trip or travel that the individual constructs for themselves. What makes it 'special' is the perspective and experience of the tourist, not what is delivered by a destination or tourism operator (Trauer 2006).

In the decades that followed, many of what were originally considered subsets of SIT have become runaway successes in terms of volume of publications, including nature-based tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, health tourism, and cultural tourism, and some have emerged as tourism genre in their own right. Each tourism genre is likely to comprise a mix of travellers with generalist and specialist motivations. In other words, for many tourists the decision to engage in an activity within a particular tourism genre (for example, visiting a war museum) may be incidental to their decision to travel rather than being their primary motivation for travel. This is in contrast to the often smaller number of travellers whose decision-making about where and when to travel is driven by their special interest (for example, war history).

In summary, special interest travel is distinguished based on what drives the traveller's decision-making and the experiential nature of the travel. The fact that case studies (both within and outside edited volumes) are labelled SIT when they fall short of meeting these two very basic definitional criteria has impeded development of the SIT construct and no doubt has contributed to the growth of new labels and typologies including neo-tribal tourism, a point we return to later.

2.3   Themes in the SIT Literature

In addition to attempts to define SIT, scholars have proposed a number of other themes as potentially consolidating the SIT literature and distinguishing SIT from other constructs. In the same vein as the definitional elements reviewed above, it

is useful to review the literature in relation to these themes, in an effort to better understand the SIT phenomenon. As this section demonstrates, all of these themes are to some extent contestable.

One theme that is not widely embraced is that *special interest tourists exhibit a particular socio-demographic profile.* Brotherton and Himmetoglu (1997) in particular suggested that special interest travellers are of higher socio-economic status, are more experienced/sophisticated tourists, typically belong to clubs, are price-sensitive and tend to be allocentric travellers. This line of argument, however, has not been pursued by other scholars, and it does seem unlikely that, given the wide range of possible interests that could motivate and drive special interest travel, special interest tourists would share a common profile. Of course, travellers who share a particular special interest may well have a common socio-demographic profile, and this has been reported in studies of specific SIT segments such as golf tourists (Hennessey et al. 2008) and bird watching tourists (Kim et al. 2010), but the desire and behaviour to undertake special interest travel is not confined to a particular socio-demographic.

A second and closely related theme is that *special interest products (or experiences) exhibit certain common characteristics* that distinguish them from 'other' tourism products. For example, it has been suggested that SIT is active, novel, adventurous, authentic, emotionally engaging, involving, personalised, and more satisfying and memorable (Weiler and Hall 1992; Brotherton and Himmetoglu 1997; Agarwal et al. 2018). While SIT can be some or all of these things, all of these have been dismissed as defining characteristics of SIT, with many embedded into the definitions of new terms in the literature such as quality tourism, alternative tourism, ethical tourism, and responsible tourism. For example, Argawal et al. (2018: 14) are quite explicit about saying that "SIT is … no more or no less authentic than mass tourism". Many have sought to contrast SIT with mass tourism in other ways, such as the style of travel, the benign nature of the travel, and the quality of the experience. In reality, in terms of style of travel, SIT can often look like mass tourism and, as noted earlier, travellers pursuing a special interest (for example wildlife tourists) may well visit destinations, participate in experiences, and stay in accommodation that is shared with mass tourists. Some suggest that special interest tourism came about due to the growing opposition to mass tourism and the increasingly negative impacts of mass tourism development on destination regions. As such, special interest tourism has often been regarded as synonymous with 'ethical travel' (Frommer 1988) and 'sustainable tourism' (Richter 1987), in terms of delivering quality outcomes for both the tourist and the hosts/destination, although empirical evidence to support this notion is lacking. The assumption that special interest tourists are more experienced travellers, with greater awareness of their environment and seeking both authentic experiences and deeper involvement with host communities, is not always verifiable.

A third advance in the SIT literature has been the idea of *a continuum in level of interest and expertise* among special interest travellers. While the special interest needs to be the driver of travel decision-making, the pursuit of a special interest while travelling does not necessarily have to be of an obsessive or extreme nature. Thus, both Brotherton and Himmetoglu (1997) and Trauer (2006)—the latter building on

the former—have proposed a continuum of experiences: dabbler, enthusiast, expert, and fanatic. Trauer uses this continuum to propose a 4-cell model for what she calls a 'micro-level' of analysis of SIT. The dabbler is a novice and participates infrequently and with low involvement. The fanatic is an expert and seeks more frequent and higher involvement. This idea stems from the serious leisure literature and adds a useful perspective, although some may question whether, if one is at the 'dabbler' end of the spectrum, one is in fact engaging in serious leisure/SIT (Veal 2017). Trauer herself suggests that enduring involvement is a key element of both serious leisure and SIT. It is not difficult to see how the novice end of the continuum begins to blur with being a generalist who choose to participate in an activity while on a holiday, as discussed by McKercher and Chan (2005) (see last section of this chapter).

A fourth related theme is the idea of an *SIT career path.* Brotherton and Himmetoglu (1997) propose that travellers progress from being generalists to being special interest travellers, something that to our knowledge has not been investigated or supported in the literature. Somewhat differently, Trauer (2006: 194) mentions the "potential for a career path in SIT", that is, that over time an individual may seek to pursue their special interest at increasingly frequent intervals and with greater levels of involvement. While this would clearly not apply to all special interest travellers, it is probable that those at the expert or fanatic end of the continuum would have progressed to that point over time in their home pursuits (if the interest is a 'serious leisure' interest) as well as in their travels. As with Pearce's (Pearce and Lee 2005) more generic travel career ladder, however, the idea that there is or should be a unidirectional path in one's travel behaviour over a lifetime has been questioned, as it implies that one form of travel (in this case generalist travel and/or dabbling) is somehow a lesser form of travel than another (in this case, fanatical SIT).

A fifth theme that is not prominent but very much relevant to the present discussion is whether there is a '*shared social world*' element to special interest travel. While the SIT experience may be shared with travellers who have like-minded interests, the idea of a collective to which SITs create, contribute to and strengthen is less evident in the SIT literature than it is in the more recent neo-tribal tourism literature (Hardy and Robards 2015). Hall and Weiler (1992: 8) were prepared to go only so far as to say that "special interest tourists will be more likely to exhibit preferences and behaviour associated with a particular social world" and more likely to embrace "special beliefs, values, moral principles, norms and performance standards" associated with such a world (Stebbins 1992: 257). Brotherton and Himmetoglu (1997) found that a majority of SITs are members of clubs associated with their special interest holiday choices in their daily 'non' SIT existence, suggesting a strong link between home-based leisure and the activities of SITs, however they acknowledge that their study draws on a very limited study sample. Trauer (2006) goes further, arguing that a shared social or cultural world is important in SIT, and examples come to mind to support this, such as scuba diving and wine tourism; yet one can imagine many special interest travellers making travel decisions quite independent of seeking engagement in an SIT collective, such as solo walkers and wildlife tourists.

In summary, there are a number of themes that have appeared in the SIT literature with varying levels of support. These themes have been used in some cases to identify

what is a special interest travel experience and what is not, as well as who may be labelled a special interest traveller. The value in presenting these in the current chapter is to explore how SIT relates to other labels and constructs, and particularly whether neo-tribal tourism offers potential as a construct with perhaps clearer and more definitive boundaries.

2.4 The Evolution of SIT Over Time

The term special interest tourism first came to prominence in the tourism literature in the early 1990s as a counterpoint to mass tourism. Discussions of special interest tourism at this time signalled the arrival of 'the new tourist' (Poon 1993) characterised by a desire for 'REAL' (rewarding, experiential, authentic and learning) travel experiences. Research into SIT at this time tended to focus on understanding the characteristics and types of special interest tourists and how they differed to conventional tourists (Brotherton and Himmetoglu 1997). As illustrated in Fig. 2.1, new terms have since emerged, many of which share commonalities with SIT.

For example, parallels can be drawn between SIT and Stebbins's (2001) theories of serious leisure with respect to both the SIT participant continuum (dabbler to fanatic) and the behaviours and norms that come with shared social worlds. Stebbins' ideas are not without its critics (see for example Veal 2017), however, the basic notion that a passion for a particular activity or interest can drive one's leisure choices including travel decision-making has persisted for decades in both the leisure and SIT literature and continues to be a link between these two constructs. Thus, the concept of serious leisure travel can be seen to be closely aligned with special interest travel, with the travel component perhaps being the "desire to engage … in a novel location" (Agarwal et al. 2018: 3).

As also illustrated in Fig. 2.1, other terms such as niche tourism, which grew out of niche marketing (Rapp and Collins 1990), have effectively taken over the role previously played by the term SIT, particularly when referring to products and experiences that are not widely sought. That said, Novelli (2005) considers there to be a spectrum from macro-niche tourism (with relatively large market shares) such as cultural tourism, to micro-niche tourism (such as geotourism and geneology tourism). Moreover, Novelli dedicates one section of her edited book on niche tourism to a subset of case studies that she labels special interest tourism (e.g. photography, geology, gastronomy and transport). Nonetheless, niche tourism is a useful term in that it is inclusive of experiences that are not necessarily what the individual traveller pursues in their home environment (that is, not serious leisure), and travel that is not necessarily wrapped around an 'interest'. That is to say, not all consumers of niche tourism products can be classified as special interest tourists according to Weiler and Hall's (1992) definition. So, for example, dark tourism is considered a niche tourism product but the motivation and decision-making have less to do with a special interest and more to do with events that have occurred at the destination.
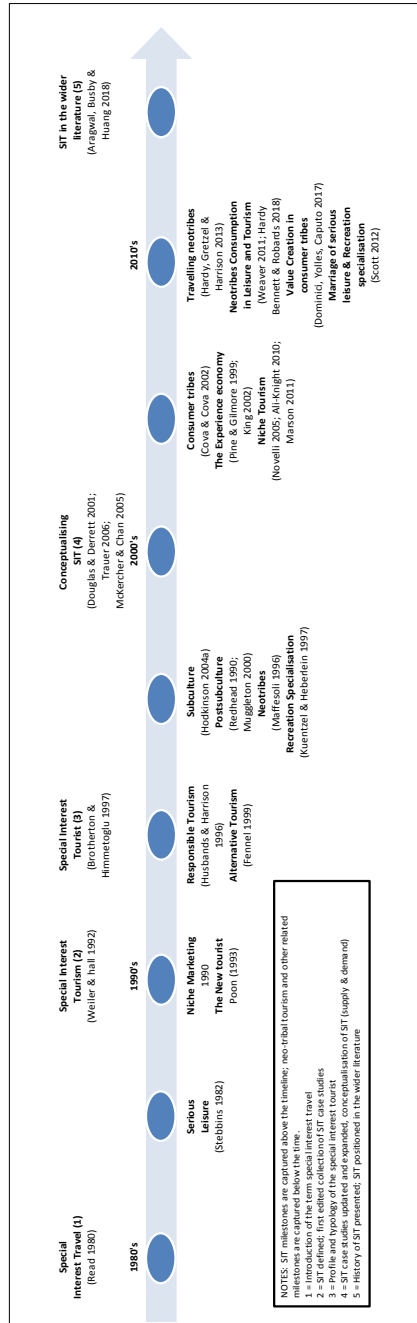
Fig. 2.1 Timeline of SIT and related scholarly literature

Niche tourism can also refer to a product or experience with a fairly small market appeal. Whereas SIT is consumer-focused, niche tourism involves focusing a product on a subset of the market. Many tourism operators choose to adopt a competitive strategy of specialising in the creation of high-value tailored products to appeal to smaller segments of the market. So-called macro-niches are probably the equivalent of tourism genres (e.g. adventure tourism, cultural tourism), within which there are true niche tourism products and experiences such as abseiling/climbing tours and indigenous immersion experiences. Similarly, travellers such as youths, seniors and families seem to be better referred to as market segments rather than as SIT or niche markets.

At the same time as efforts were being made in tourism to pin down SIT as a concept, the discipline of sociology was wrestling with the notion of 'subcultures'. The term neo-tribe was introduced by Maffesoli (1996) as an alternative to the concept of subculture. Where 'subculture' was used to describe groups of homogenous individuals that share a common belief or interest, the term 'neo-tribe' highlighted the fact that individuals from different walks of life also often come together through a series of temporal group gatherings characterised by fluid boundaries and floating memberships. Neo-tribal theory has since been applied in other disciplines such as marketing, which introduced the term 'consumer tribes' to acknowledge the influence of subcultures on individual consumer behaviour (Cova and Cova 2002). These subcultures of consumption "challenge the view that consumers are [always necessarily] isolated individuals who self-consciously consume to maximize their utility" (Goulding et al. 2013: 813).

Neo-tribal theory in the context of tourism is a much more recent advancement (see Fig. 2.1), embraced for its potential for "understanding lifestyles, behaviours and needs of consumer groups" (Hardy et al. 2013: 51). Neo-tribal theory has been applied in a number of different tourism contexts including recreational vehicle holidays (Hardy et al. 2012, 2013); cruise tourism (Weaver 2011; Kriwoken and Hardy 2018), clubbing holidays (Goulding and Shankar 2011) and music events (Gibson and Connell 2003) as well as within certain tourist segments (Vorobjovas-Pinta 2018). The findings of these studies suggest that the social behaviours and motivations of these different tourist types can usefully be conceptualised in terms of neo-tribes.

2.5 Links to Neo-Tribal Tourism and Other Constructs

As already indicated, one conclusion we have come to is that it is not fruitful to look for what is special about special interest tourism destinations or products; SIT is most useful as a demand construct. Referring to the travel experience (rather than focusing on the business of tourism including destination and product development) puts the focus on the individual's motivation(s) and decision-making (including pre-trip, during travel, and post-travel) and travel behaviour.

How then are special interest travellers similar to neo-tribal tourists and how do they differ? They appear to be similar in that an individual can have more than one special interest and be a member of more than one tribe; the special interest or tribe does not necessarily dominate one's behaviours (Hardy and Robards 2015). Both special interest travel segments and tribes also share the quality of being transient, with fluid membership (Goulding and Shankar 2011).

However, as illustrated in Fig. 2.2, neo-tribal tourists and special interest travellers are not always the same thing. We suggest that an individual is both a special interest traveller and a neo-tribal tourist only when:

- Their travel is formed around a common interest and/or shared passion for a particular object, issue, or activity
- They share a social world and are capable of collective action
- They consume goods as symbols of the special interest/tribe
- They adopt rules of engagement such as dress codes, language, etiquette, and rituals (Goulding and Shankar 2011; Hardy and Robards 2015; Hardy et al. 2018).

Although this suggests considerable common ground, there are neo-tribal tourists who are not special interest travellers. Neo-tribal tourism that is necessarily based on a special interest includes some of the RVers in the research by Hardy et al. (2012). These are travellers with a wide range of motives and interests and activities, so *their trip is not driven by a special interest*, but they do share many common travel patterns (such as mode of travel and length of time on the road) and exhibit neo-tribal behaviour, including being attracted by like-minded travellers. Cruise ship passengers are another example of travellers who are not necessarily there because of common special interests, but rather to share a mode of travel. On the other hand themed cruises targeting tourists who seek the company of like-minded travellers
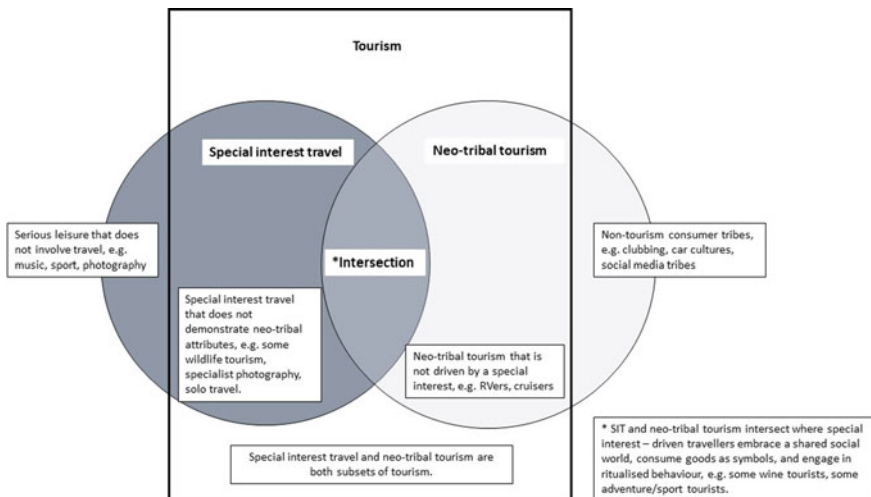

Fig. 2.2 The relationship between special interest travel and neo-tribal tourism

who share a common interest such as gambling, gastronomy, wellness, opera or photography (Weaver 2011) may well be an example of neo-tribal tourists who are SITs.

Similarly, there are special interest travellers who are not neo-tribal tourists. Co-presence and community are seen as central to neo-tribalism, where individuals come together as a micro community to coalesce, usually (although not always) around a particular special interest (Weaver 2011). In contrast, being part of a community does not always apply to special interest travel. For example, there are individuals who travel pursuing their special interest, but without necessarily participating in a *shared social world*. Bird-watchers and some other types of wildlife tourists go to great lengths to pursue their interest, but often do this as individuals or couples, rather than as a 'tribe'. This is also true for many food tourists and those driven by their passion for specialist photography.

While *symbolic consumption* has been identified as an element of consumer tribes and also has been researched in the context of tourism (Gazley and Watling 2015), there has been little written about SITs and symbolic consumption. One can imagine this occurring with some special interests, for example wine tourists, as well as some food tourists and adventure tourists, but perhaps not with others. The *adoption of rules of engagement* is also evident in some but not all SITs. In other words, special interest travellers who do not engage in symbolic consumption and do not adopt rules of engagement would not be considered neo-tribal tourists.

2.6 Implications for Researching and Marketing Special Interest Travel

The foregoing review suggests there is still much to be gained by continuing to research special interest travellers and special interest travel, including their overlap with neo-tribal tourism. Despite several attempts to conceptualise SIT markets, experiences, products and even destinations, the acronym SIT is almost certainly best used to refer to special interest travel and the special interest traveller, that is, the traveller and the experiential component, rather than special interest tourism as a distinct product. Yet we still have a poor understanding of the special interest traveller. The existence of a special interest travel career progression (from dabbler to fanatic, or from novice to expert) and the factors that might impact this might be a fruitful avenue for research.

It is important to recognise, however, that one cannot ascribe the label 'special interest tourist' to an individual or group of individuals beyond a particular travel experience. An individual cannot be categorised as *being* a special interest tourist, as this runs the risk of suggesting that an individual can only have one special interest, and that all travel undertaken by that individual must be driven by that special interest. This, of course, would be as flawed as labelling a person as a resort traveller based on the fact that they spent two weeks at a beachside resort during the school holidays.

In this sense, special interest travellers are similar to neo-tribal tourists. Clearly, there are many factors that bring particular motivations including special interests to the fore for any given trip. On the supply side, it is equally folly to think that a product such as a cruise, tour or resort, let alone a destination, would cater only to those whose primary motivation was to pursue their special interest. Thus, future research and scholarship should employ the term special interest travel to refer to a particular trip undertaken by one or more individuals whose primary motivation and decision-making (including choice of destination, length of stay, price, activities at the destination, etc.) are based on their special interest.

Furthermore, the term SIT should be contrasted with generalist travel rather than with mass tourism. Special interest tourist typologies (Brotherton and Himmetoglu's 1997) go some way to explaining the differences in behaviour of special interest tourists based on their level of experience and commitment to pursuing their special interest, however an opportunity exists to further develop special interest tourist typologies (Agarwal et al. 2018) and to better understand how special interest travel differs from generalist travel.

The importance of the social world and membership with a 'tribe' of like-minded individuals to the overall special interest tourism experience remains unclear. Some individual travellers may give little consideration to the social context of their leisure pursuit, preferring to undertake their special interest travel alone, for example bird-watchers and mountaineers. The travel experience of other types of special interest tourists may be greatly enhanced through opportunities to interact with like-minded individuals who share the same interest, for example participants on an organised cycling tour. Therefore future research could investigate the importance of the social environment and 'tribe' membership for different types of special interest travel including independent travel, organised tours and mass events.

Another element that has not been widely considered in the literature on special interest travel is the sense of identity that comes from participating in special interest travel. Consideration should be given to how changes in communication technology, such as the prevalence of social media, influences and shapes the 'situational self-image' (Gazley and Watling 2015) and group identity for special interest tourists. Related to this is the importance of behavioural rules and practices, rituals and symbolic consumption for special interest travel. All of these are elements of serious leisure that may, or may not, have traction in the context of SIT.

In their seminal book on special interest tourism, Weiler and Hall (1992) noted that special interest tourism is often considered synonymous with 'ethical' and 'responsible' travel (Frommer 1988), yet there still remains a lack of empirical evidence to support this idea. More recently writers have considered the potential for special interest tourism to move tourist behaviour in the direction of ethical consumerism (Agarwal et al. 2018). However further research is necessary to understand special interest tourists vis-à-vis ethical travel, and the potential role of their special interest 'tribe' in shaping their behaviour. Weiler and Hall (1992) also observed that few writers had considered the benefits and costs of special interest tourism from the industry's perspective. Now almost three decades on, the impacts of special interest

travellers and how their impacts compare to generalist travellers still remains an unexplored area of research.

Notwithstanding the fact that special interest travel and travellers do exist, SIT's potential as a target market for destinations and for specific tourism businesses needs to be treated as a separate issue to research opportunities. Some researchers have studied how specific destinations are targeting special interest tourists to compete more effectively as destinations face the risk of homogenisation. Agarwal et al. (2018) express concern regarding a continuing trend of hyper-segmentation in marketing, as suppliers focus their strategies on ever-more-specialised markets. Recent publications discuss some of these newly emerging forms of special interest tourism such as slum tourism and suicide tourism (Rittichainuwat 2018), as well as the opportunities and impacts they present for industry and the host community. In their edited book on special interest tourism, Douglas et al. (2001) caution against introducing a new category of SIT to classify every new class of traveller whose interest lies beyond the conventional idea of tourism, a particularly important observation when it comes to marketing practice.

Complementing these observations, McKercher and Chan (2005) present a compelling case for dismissing the way visitor numbers are used to make a case for high-volumes of special interest tourists generally and for particular subsets of SIT, arguing (quite rightly) that pursuing a special interest or engaging in a specific activity while travelling cannot be equated with travelling that is motivated primarily by one's special interest. So, for example, a traveller might well visit a spa or have a health treatment while on holidays, but that does not make them an SIT. On the other hand, someone whose travel decision-making is wrapped around a particular festival or sporting event (whether as a participant, volunteer or spectator) can be considered a special interest tourist, even though they may combine it with other activities and interests.

In other words, there appears to be no basis for advocating that destinations and tourism businesses exclusively target SITs. Firstly, they are not of sufficient numbers and membership lacks stability over time. Travel in pursuit of special interests may wax and wane depending on internal (motivational) as well as external factors such as economic downturns, weather events and terrorism/safety threats. Secondly, special interest travellers generally do not collectively exhibit particular socio-demographic or consumer behaviour characteristics that lend themselves to being easily targeted by marketers. Thus, even if a government or operator wants to target an SIT 'market', their heterogeneity in profile and fluidity in membership makes them difficult to identify and reach. On the other hand, cooperative marketing and the harnessing of new media may provide new opportunities not previously available to destinations and businesses to reach SITs and sustain their interest.

In conclusion, this chapter has sought to illustrate how the conceptualisation of special interest travel and neo-tribal tourism have occurred separately, and to examine how the two concepts differ and where they converge. Insights gained from this investigation have helped to identify avenues for research and to illuminate opportunities and challenges for marketing to both special interest travellers and neo-tribal tourists.

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Chapter 3
Cross-Disciplinary Applications and Conceptualisations of Theory of Neo-Tribes: An Investigation

Check for updates

Anne Hardy

Abstract The concept of the neo-tribe was first developed in sociological literature in the 1990s but has since been used by scholars in cultural studies, leisure, marketing, consumer behaviour, tourism and recreation. Since its first definition by Maffesoli in 1996, where ephemerality, fluidity, communitas and lifestyles were core concepts, the concept has been unpacked, reconceptualised and debated. This has occurred across a variety of disciplines, most notably cultural studies, tourism, marketing and consumer behaviour. This chapter will explore the conceptual 'movement' that has occurred around the concept across the disciplines and in doing so, will explore the implications of these conceptual changes for the future use of neo-tribes.

Keywords Neo-tribes · Cross-disciplinary conceptualisations · Theory

3.1 Introduction

The concept of neo-tribes was first coined in sociological literature by Maffesoli in 1996, but since then, its application has extended to the disciplines of cultural studies, tourism, youth studies, health care, sport, marketing and beyond (Bennett 1999; Best 2013; Cova et al. 2007; Colineau and Paris 2010; Hardy and Robards 2013; Hardy et al. 2012; Robards and Bennett 2011). This chapter will review the way in which the concept has been applied and the conceptual developments that have emanated from differing disciplines: sociology and cultural studies; marketing and consumer behaviour; and tourism and leisure studies. The use and conceptual development of the term from within these disciplines will also be explored. Contradictory, complementary and contentious applications of the concept between the disciplines will also be highlighted, along with under-explored conceptual issues that still require exploration.

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3.2 Sociological and Cultural Studies' Conceptualisations of the Neo-Tribe

The concept of the neo-tribes emanated from sociology. The term originates from sociologist Michel Maffesoli's *Le Temps des Tribus* (1988; later translated as *The Time of the Tribes*, 1996) and was first used by Shields (1992) using the English translation of Maffesoli's original term 'tribus' (Hardy et al. 2018). It emerged as a counter-thesis to concepts such as individualisation and social fragmentation that were argued to have emerged as a result of the disintegration of bonds shaped by class, nationalism and industrial society (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). The conceptual development of the term was welcomed by many, as its emergence represented a broader shift called 'post subculture studies'. Advocates of this movement such as Redhead (1990) followed by Muggleton (2000) argued contemporary youth culture could no longer be defined as a subculture, as it did not reflect class background, and youth identities were highly fluid, complex and developed as a result of individual choice and our current consumer-based society (Chaney 2004; Muggleton 2000).

The concept of neo-tribes also moved away from subcultural studies that had typically focussed on political resistance (see Hodkinson 2004a, b) and who were defined as stable groupings that were based upon class (Bennett 1999). Bennett (1999) argued that youth culture more closely aligned with the work of Maffesoli (1996) as they were "*without the rigidity of the forms of organisation with which we are familiar, [neo-tribe] refers more to a certain ambience, a state of mind, and is preferably to be expressed through lifestyles that favour appearance and form*" (Maffesoli 1996, p. 98). The argument by Bennett resulted in vigorous debate within the sociological literature (see Blackman 2005; Bennett 2005; Hesmondhalgh 2005).

Despite the debate that emerged from differing schools of thought, the concept of neo-tribes quickly gained resonance within the fields of sociology and cultural studies. A number of characteristics of neo-tribes were defined. Most obviously from the name, was their characteristic of the coming together, either physically (according to Maffesoli 1996) or virtually (this characteristic was added following the emergence of the internet as defined by Robards and Bennett 2011). The notion of coming together to experience shared sentiment or a passion was built upon the notion of *communitas*, originally defined by Turner (1974a). Arguably the affective outcomes of the coming together to form a neo-tribe aligned directly with this concept.

A further characteristic of the neo-tribe was defined within sociology and cultural studies and referred to their fluid and unstable nature (Maffesoli 1996). Massesoli's work built upon this understanding and defined the neo-tribe as ephemeral groupings of people that were devoid of the rigidity of organisation (Maffesoli 1996). He argued that neo-tribes can form in supermarkets, and departments stores around consumption, where "indistinct companionship, resembling nothing so much as animal migration is in fact constituted of a multiple of small cells that interact with each other" (Maffesoli 1996, p. 98).

The highly ephemeral and unstable nature of the neo-tribe has recently been challenged within ssociological and cultural studies, most notably by Robards and

Bennett (2011), who argue that neo-tribes can indeed exist as enduring groupings of people. Armour's (2018) study of music fans uncovered further evidence of the longevity of neo-tribes albeit in differing forms – thus suggesting that neo-tribes have an element of flexibility in their longer-term existence. Recent conceptualisations from within sociology and cultural studies have also argued neo-tribes are groups who are capable of resistance (Armour 2018; Canosa 2018; Hart 2018).

A further development of this concept relates to the notion of class. Early work by Bennett (1999) argued that neo-tribes were unique as they were not necessarily class-based groupings. However, recent work by Le Grand (2018), explored alternative food consumption such as farmers markets and challenged this notion. The author argues that class-based groupings do exist, along with exclusion and social division within the neo-tribe and with those who interact, or do not interact, with it.

3.3 Marketing and Consumer Behaviour Conceptualisations of the Neo-Tribe

The concept of the 'tribe' was embraced by marketers and consumer behaviour researchers, particularly in the early and mid-2000s. Early use of the term was 'inspired in part by the application of… Maffesoli' (Cova et al. 2007, p. 5). Marketing literature tends to use the term tribes, rather than neo–tribes. Having said that, distinctions are drawn between different types of tribes: 'Brand tribes' have been used to describe social relationships formed around consumer brands (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). 'Consumer tribes' have been defined as neo-tribes whose primary focus is on consumption (Cova and Cova 2002). Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) ascribed three common elements, or markers, to consumer tribes: consciousness (stemming from Weber's 1922, 1978 notion of belonging); shared rituals and traditions (emanating from the work of scholars such as Douglas & Ishwerwood 1979, and Durkheim 1984); and moral responsibility to the group. Arguably, consumer tribes have displayed a number of elements that are closely aligned with business practice: transience, playfulness, entrepreneurial behaviour and alignment (Wenger 2000).

Marketing and consumer behaviour researchers have made significant contributions in understanding the relationship between the individual and the tribe. It has been suggested that "the link is more important than the thing" (Cova and Cova 2002, p. 595). The consuming individual may be a member of multiple groups (Cova and Cova 2002; Kozinets 1999) and groups may consist of those with shared personality traits or values, and may act in a collective manner (Cova et al. 2007). The tribe is therefore a network of heterogeneous peoples in terms of age, sex, income etc., who are linked by a shared passion or emotion towards a product.

Conceptually, marketing and consumer behaviour literature has also contributed to neo-tribal theory through its exploration of the engagement that marketers can have with consumer tribes. Cova, Kozinets and Shankar (2007) posit tribes can be transformative and empowered through product development and the development of

consumer products. Given that they are active and enthusiastic in their consumption, sometimes in the extreme, tribes produce a range of identities, practices, rituals, meanings, and even material culture itself. They re-script roles, twist meanings, and shout back to producers and other groups of people while they fashion their own differentiation strategies (Cova et al. 2007, p. 4). Marketing literature has also conceptualised how marketers can facilitate the connection between individuals; called 'tribal marketing' (Cova and Cova 2002). Attention has been given to how marketers can build loyalty through the creation of rituals, cult places, development of emotional loyalty, developing a sense of support between the company and the customers and building relationships and community amongst customers (Cova and Cova 2002).

Marketing and consumer behaviour literature has also contributed to understanding the construct of tribal membership. A variety of conceptualisations have been posited. Kozinets (1999) identified four member types in his early work: tourists, who have a passing interest in the consumption activity; minglers, who have strong social ties but who have only a cursory interest in what is being consumed; devotees, who have a strong interest in what is being consumed but have few social ties to the tribe; and insiders, who have both strong social and personal ties to what is being consumed. Further to these, Cova and Cova (2002) proposed four major roles adopted by tribal members: members of institutions and associations; participants who attend informal gatherings; practitioners who have quasi daily involvement in tribal activities; and sympathisers who have only marginal integration with the tribe. Kozinets (1999) proposed that consumers and their communities have become more proactive in expressing their desire to coalesce and be involved in product development. Thus, it has been posited that marketers can build loyalty through the creation of rituals, cult places, development of emotional loyalty, developing a sense of support between the company and the customers and building relationships and community amongst customers (Cova and Cova 2002).

A further significant conceptual development that is evident in marketing and consumer behaviour literature relates to tribal behaviour and particularly ritualistic behaviour. Early consumer behaviour research by Rook (1984) pointed out that there is no single definition of a ritual. Despite this, consumer research established the importance of rituals in forming interpersonal connections (Stanfield and Kleine 1990). Recent work highlighted the importance of rituals in their study of in-line skaters. They established the notion of the tribal clover, whereby trends, gatherings, places and day to day practices occur. Within these, visible traces such as rituals occur, which provide groups a sense of permanence (Durkheim 2001). Rituals allow members the neo-tribe to reaffirm their identity and express their shared identity and bonds. This may occur in the form of ceremonial performances, clothing, gathering times or the use of language (Cova and Cova 2001).

3.4 Tourism and Leisure Conceptualisations of the Neo-Tribe

The application of neo-tribal literature to the field of tourism and leisure research is relatively uncommon. The modus operandi of much research into tourist types has focussed on segmentation, where tourists have been classified in terms of profiles such as their socioeconomic profiles and movements within a destination (Cha et al. 1995; Dann 1977, 1981; Kozak 2001). Consequently, neo-tribal constructs may arguably be viewed as an alternative to traditional tourism segmentation (Hardy and Robards 2015). Traditional approaches have taken a class based perspective and posited segments as those which share characteristics such as income, age and gender. Cova and Cova (2001, 68) argued that postmodern approaches to consumer research have tended to reject consumer segments and market niches. Rather they are far more focussed on ethnosociological approaches (such as those espoused by Sherry 1995), whereby groupings of individuals are explored in terms of their similar experiences, emotions and affinity, rather than groupings based on class and psychosocial profiles. This approach places focus on the intangible aspects of mobility, including belonging, interaction, and membership, all of which are central aspects of neotribalism (Weaver 2011). It has been argued that if these aspects are not assessed the elements that differentiate one group of tourists from another, and ultimately the reasons why tourists may choose to travel and gather in certain places, may be overlooked (Hardy and Robards 2015).

Within the leisure and tourism literature, a range of contributions have emerged that have added to conceptualisations of neo-tribes. At the micro level, tourism literature has contributed to understanding the role that neo-tribal rituals may play in developing a framework within which co-creation may occur. Goulding and Shankar (2011) built upon the work by Turner (1974b) and proposed that rituals (within a clubbing context) have five components: mythology (the stories that bind communities together); formulism (planning and preparation that support the experiences); sacredness (the process of creating meaningful places); communitas (the formation of community); and transformation (the temporary change whereby the body experiences the non-ordinary) (Goulding and Shankar 2011).

The second conceptual theme that has emerged from tourism is an exploration of the role of fluidity of neo-tribes. Work by Hardy and Robards (2015) and Hardy, Hanson and Gretzel (2013a) questioned Maffesoli's conceptualisation of neo-tribes being highly fluid. Through their work on recreational vehicle users, they demonstrated a spectrum of membership, ranging from highly fluid through to those who had prolonged involvement. This examination built upon previous work in the digital media context by Robards and Bennett (2011).

A third extension of the theory that has emerged from tourism relates to the characteristics of the neo-tribe: Hardy et al. (2013) proposed two characteristics that can assist in the identification of a neo-tribe: symbolic characteristics such as a sense of fellowship, communitas and fluidity in membership, and behavioural characteristics such as language, behaviour, rituals and performance sites. Their

more recent work introduces a fourth extension to neo-tribal conceptualisations, by presenting the concept of sub-tribe as a subset of the broader neo-tribe which. This concept was further developed in subsequent work (see Hardy and Robards 2015; Kriwoken and Hardy 2018).

A fifth extension of the theory regards the role of physical space as a conduit for the formation of the neo-tribe and the role of virtual space once tribal members return to their daily lives (Vorobjovas-Pinta 2018a, b) in a leisure context, as well as a non-western setting. Lv and Qian (2018) also explored the role of space in the formation of a tribe. And finally, tourism researchers have investigated the formation of neo-tribes. Kriwoken and Hardy (2018) classified the development of tribes as being either spontaneous, whereby groupings evolve from people with similar passions coming together; or they may be facilitated, as a result of a company assisting their formation and sense of community. Finally, Dinhopl and Gretzel (2018) conceptualised the impact of membership status. They explored the emulation and adoration amongst modern digital tribes in the context of snowboarders and particularly those attempting to mimic or perform in similar ways to their snowboarding idols.

3.5   Conclusion

The take-up of the concept of the neo-tribe across a range of disciplines is testament to its resonance and usefulness in describing not only daily life, but also consumption, leisure and tourism. In its early days, the neo-tribe was conceptualised as being ephemeral, devoid of enduring bonds, based on fellowship and a sense of communitas, devoid of class and being highly fluid, by sociological and cultural studies scholars such as Maffesoli (1996), Malbon (1999), Shields (1992), Bennett (1999, 2005) and Robards and Bennett (2011). The concept was embraced by marketing and consumer behaviour scholars as an alternative to traditional segmentation and niche marketing approaches. Consequently, conceptualisations of the tribe have, not surprisingly, focussed on neotribal formation, membership and tribal behaviour. The potential for tribes to act as brand ambassadors, brand co-creators and the means by which companies can work with existing tribes remain areas of research in these disciplines. Much of this work has been influenced by the seminal work of Kozinets (1999), Cova and Cova (2002) and Cova et al. (2007).

Further conceptualisations of the neotribe have emanated from the tourism and leisure literature. Conceptual work in this field has been influenced by both sociology and youth studies authors (e.g. Maffesoli 1996; Bennett 1999), plus marketing and consumer behaviour scholars (e.g. Goulding and Shankar 2011; Cova and Cova 2002). Work in tourism and leisure has largely focussed on neotribal behaviour, the neo-tribes use of space and place, the existence of sub-tribes, the role of co-creation and rituals (see Goulding and Shankar 2011; Hardy et al. 2013a; Hardy and Robards 2015; Kriwoken and Hardy 2018; Vorobjovas-Pinta 2018a, b).

These disciplinary conceptualisations from across tourism and leisure, marketing, consumer behaviours, sociology and cultural studies have arguably resulted in neo-tribal existence being defined in a different manner. As such, neo-tribes are now conceptualised as groups of people who may meet physically or virtually and who may coalesce in a fleeting or permanent manner, and whose group structure may be rigid or consist of different levels of membership (Table 3.1).

Several challenges remain for neo-tribal theory. First, the conceptual arguments vis a vis fluidity of membership, ephemerality and class now arguably align the concept of the neo-tribe more closely with subculture- a convergence that its seminal authors would no doubt resist. Further work and debate are needed to distinguish the two concepts of neo-tribes and subcultures and determine where the two constructs align and differ. Second, while much is known about the formation and functioning of the neo-tribe, little is known about tribes' dissolution and cessation. Finally, a challenge for the neo-tribal concept is to maintain relevance and not to become so

Table 3.1 Major conceptual developments, including the strength of influence, regarding the concept of the neo-tribe by field of study

Sociology & Cultural Studies

(Bennett, 1999; Robards and Bennett 2010)

Lifestyle

Communitas

Ephemerality

Fluidity

Marketing & Consumer Behaviour

Kozinets, 1999, Cova and Cova, 2002; and Cova et al.2007.

Tribal formation

Rituals

Membership

The tribal member

Engagement with the tribe

Tourism & Leisure Studies

Goulding & Shankar, 2011; Hardy, Hanson and Gretzel, 2013; Hardy & Robards, 2015; Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2018a, 2018b

Sub tribes

Co-creation

Rituals

Space and place

diluted that it is no longer able to conceptualise groupings of individuals. Continued interdisciplinary scholarship will ensure that this does not occur.

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Part II
International Case Examples

Chapter 4
Black Travel Tribes: An Exploration of Race and Travel in America

Alana K. Dillette

Abstract This chapter examines race and leisure travel in America. It explores the impacts of racial inequality, segregation and discrimination on the travel industry. This work aims to examine how the history of Black Travel has led to the existence of Black Travel Tribes. It will also describe the nature of the tribes, why they exist, and what they hope to accomplish for Black travellers around the world. The chapter will begin chronicling the impacts of slavery and segregation on Black Travel, followed by an exploration of Black Travel Tribes, their shared identities and collective mechanisms, concluding with a discussion on growth opportunities and challenges facing the tourism industry regarding Black Travel Tribes.

4.1 Understanding the Past

Black[1] people in the United States have been plagued with racial inequalities, segregation and discrimination for centuries (Foster 1999). Unfortunately, the travel and tourism industry has not been immune to these inequities. On a global scale, the tourism industry has traditionally been White washed, paying little attention to the authentic experiences of racial and ethnic minorities, creating an invisibility of Black people in the travel sphere (Buzinde et al. 2006). In the marketing realm, travel and tourism has traditionally portrayed leisure vacations with all White faces (Burton and Klemm 2011; Davis 2018; Martin 2004). In fact, more specifically, Martin

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[1]The word 'Black' is used throughout the paper to describe people of the African diaspora. 'Black' is a political identity that acknowledges an understanding of shared experiences of injustice, by extension of this identity, APA, MLA, AP and other format styles have slowly embraced the respect that should be given to various racial and ethnic groups and how they wish to be labeled. Thus, any mention of those groups ought to reflect this respect and distinction through the capitalization of their group name (i.e. Black, White, African-American, Latinx, Syrian, or Lakota). Adopted from Dillette et al. (2018).

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(2004) highlighted that leisure activities in outdoor spaces were portrayed through magazine advertisements as a predominantly White space. As an attempt to create a racial bridge, the industry produced separate advertisements that highlight Black faces, perpetuating the old American Jim Crow[2] segregation laws—"separate but (un) equal" (Alderman 2013). There is also evidence that Black communities have even been marginalized at heritage tourism sites in the United States, sites that are meant to highlight the brutalities of slavery (Alderman and Modlin 2013; Benjamin et al. 2016). Unfortunately, a recent study on marketing and racism done by Davis (2018) revealed that not much has changed.

Research on Black travel has been conducted sparingly by a relatively small group of researchers over the last few decades (Alderman and Modlin 2013; Benjamin et al. 2016; Dillette et al. 2018; Floyd 1998; Foster 1999; Holland 2002; Lee and Scott 2017; Philipp 1994, 1998, 1999, 2000; Shinew et al. 2004; Washburne 1978). Early on, Washburne (1978) posited that, leisure activities that were performed significantly less by Black Americans could be attributed to their lower socio-economic status. However, more recent studies rebut this claim, arguing that African-Americans are constrained not by their socio-economic status, but by anxieties steeped in fear of racial discrimination while travelling (Floyd 1998; Holland 2002; Philipp 1994, 1998, 1999, 2000). Carter (2008) found that Blacks tend to display different travel behaviours than Whites. More specifically, Blacks tend to travel in groups, which can be linked to fears associated with past racism and discrimination (Carter 2008). Recently, Dillette et al. (2018) revealed that Black travellers are still experiencing issues of discrimination, racism and lack of representation. On a more positive note, we have witnessed progress in race relations across the industry, culminating in the fact that in 2017, African-American travellers accounted for US$63 billion across the tourism industry worldwide (Mandala Research 2018). In fact, it has been documented that Black travellers spend just as much as their White counterparts while travelling (Agarwal and Yochum 1999). Despite this progress, it is important to note that the tourism industry has been shaped by these historical racial inequities, especially in the United States.

The evident marginalization of Black people in the tourism realm, though unfair, is not altogether surprising given the historical tenants of normalized White supremacy in American society. Many of the cautious travel behaviours of Black people (often travelling in familial groups, avoiding unfamiliar places, unplanned situations and travelling alone) can be traced back to the collective memory linked to slavery (Johnson 1998). Once slavery in the US was abolished (1865), Blacks had a long road to recovering from this brutal and discriminatory practice. Many ex-slaves became sharecroppers or took on other low-skilled jobs where they still faced significant discrimination up until 1964 when Jim Crow segregation was outlawed. These practices not only ingrained attitudes of racism amongst American society, but they

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[2]The 'Jim Crow Era' recalls the time when racial segregation was legal in the United States of America between 1877 and 1965. Laws included the enforcement of racial segregation in public facilities such as transportation, housing, education, restrooms, hotels, restaurants, drinking fountains etc.

also made it difficult for Blacks to experience leisure in the same way their White counterparts did.

Despite the adversity Blacks faced during this tumultuous time, many still managed to establish themselves as successful. Small groups of prosperous Blacks began to participate in leisure and travel activities as early as the late 1800s (Foster 1999). Determined Blacks, including one of the most respected ex-slaves and abolitionists Frederick Douglas, created leisure lifestyles for themselves, gallivanting in significant numbers along the railroads in the United States, some venturing off to other countries in Europe and Africa. Those who were able to travel abroad, recount finally feeling a release from the racism ever present in their home country. Claude McKay, a Jamaican writer and poet who eventually settled in America, reflects on a journey he took through Europe where there was a mixture of races present sharing,

> For the first time in my life, I felt singularly free of all colour consciousness. I experienced a feeling of being a dumb animal among kindred animals, who live Instinctively and by sensation only, without thinking" (Foster 1999, p. 131).

Though determined, this group of Black Americans did not travel without experiencing ongoing discrimination. As a result, many prosperous Blacks sought to self-segregate themselves from others to achieve total relaxation. This came in the form of entertaining in their own homes, travelling in all Black groups, patronizing Black businesses and travelling back to the African continent seeking a connection to their roots (Yankholmes and Timothy 2017).

Such conflict between Blacks and Whites at the time led to the famous Supreme Court decision of 1896, Plessy vs. Ferguson, which established segregation in public accommodations. The conflict made the early twentieth century invention of the automobile a welcomed alternative to travelling via railroad. There was hope that this mode of transportation would add a sense of liberation while travelling, the ability to travel without a strict itinerary, even the thought of popping up at destinations on a whim. Unfortunately, this dream was not the reality Blacks had hoped for. Though the automobile brought freedom for many travellers, for Black travellers, a leisure road trip could quickly turn into a terrifying experience. The added worries of figuring out the local racial customs in unfamiliar places, locating safe spaces to eat, sleep and recreate were a heavy burden for many. To address this issue for the increasing amounts of Blacks on the road, a 'directory' of sorts—*The Negro Motorist Green Book*, was published for the first time in 1936 (Fig. 4.1). This handy road companion promised to *"give the Negro travellers information that will keep him from running into difficulties, embarrassments, and to make his trip more enjoyable"* (Green 1956). The Green Book was published yearly between 1936–1966, a few years after Jim Crow segregation was outlawed.

Unfortunately, post segregation dreams of successful integration and partnerships between Blacks and Whites is still far from the current reality in the United States. In fact, some may argue that in today's climate, we live in a more self-segregated society than ever before. Although many of the accounts detailed here are almost a century old, eerily similar accounts are still present in the eyes of the founders of the modern-day Black Travel Movement. Jim Crow segregation has long since been abolished,

Fig. 4.1 The 1956 cover of
The Negro Travellers' Green
Book (Reproduced cover
from Green 1956)

however, the leftovers of this discriminatory past are still pervasive in modern day
American society. This history of Black Travel has led to the existence of current
day Black Travel Tribes which exist in both virtual and in person communities for
Black travellers around the world.

4.2 Present day Black Travel Tribes

In response to the ongoing issues of racism, discrimination and under representation,
Black travellers have taken things into their own hands, creating tribes 'for us, by
us'—Black men and women organizing and leading travel groups around the world
(Dillette et al. 2018). In anthropology, tribes refer to a human social group. Tradition-
ally, the term has been used to describe specific groups in mostly non-Western regions
such as Africa and areas of South America and South-East Asia. More specifically,
the word *tribe* is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as:

A social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader.

Today, modern renditions of tribes with the goal of creating safe spaces for people of colour to experience the freedoms and transformation that result from travelling have made a resurgence. Originally surfacing in 1914, The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), started by Marcus Garvey led a mass 'Back to Africa' movement encouraging diasporic Africans to travel to, or return to their homelands (Rogers 1955). This movement gained significant momentum, but died out after Garvey was deported back to his homeland of Jamaica in 1927. Fast forward to more recently, in 2011, a resurgence of this movement began with the Nomadness Travel Tribe (Fig. 4.2), a travel lifestyle brand dedicated to serving Black and Brown nomads through a tangible community of travellers (Nomadness Travel Tribe 2019). Nomadness was birthed from a gaping hole in the larger travel and tourism industry—a lack of authentic representation and accessibility to spaces and places for Black Americans (Dillette et al. 2018).

Following Nomadness, numerous other Black Travel Tribes—organizations, communities and businesses that cater to Black travellers have developed around the globe (maybe name some examples). These tribes have grown organically from a need to see authentic representation of Black travellers in the media, as well as for community and healing amongst Black travellers. Though they do not all carry the term 'tribe' in their name—close relation to the historical tenets of tribes link them to this age-old phenomenon. The main purpose of these groups is to provide safe spaces for Black people, and allies of Black people to make connections with each other while traveling to destinations around the world. 'Black' is not necessarily a member criterion, but rather a focus of these groups on Black identity, culture and ways of life.

Fig. 4.2 Photo of Nomadness Travel Tribe outside Taj Mahal, India (Reproduced from Nomadness Travel Tribe 2019)

   Black Travel Tribes can be narrowly defined as organizations with the goal of connecting travellers of African descent and the African diaspora to travel and leisure experiences outside their normal home environment. This market includes two types of Black Travel Tribes: those organizations that provide opportunities for group or solo travel to Black travellers (Black Travel Tribe organizations) and those travellers who connect communities of colour through chronicling and sharing their travel adventures but do not offer group or solo travel opportunities (Black Travel Tribe influencers). This emerging market has seen significant and continuous growth in recent years, propelling African-American travel into a US$63 billion market in the United States alone, up from US$48 billion in 2010, confirming that this market is making a significant impact, and steadily growing. Additionally, one of the founding companies in the movement reported a 700% increase in membership from 2012–2017 with 13,000 active users on a daily basis, a 79% engagement rate (Nomadness Travel Tribe 2019).

   Similar to other forms of niche tourism such as wellness or sport tourism, this movement is a niche market within the larger travel and tourism industry that can be segmented within its own niche as well. The Black Travel Tribes that currently exist predominantly cater to young professionals and cover an extensive map of offers on the market. A content analysis of these groups revealed that destinations include countries within all continents except Antarctica, and cater to niche markets including adventure, cultural, lodging, culinary, luxury, eco, outdoor and wellness travellers (Fig. 4.3). Collectively, these organizations boast online communities of almost 2.4 million people across the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
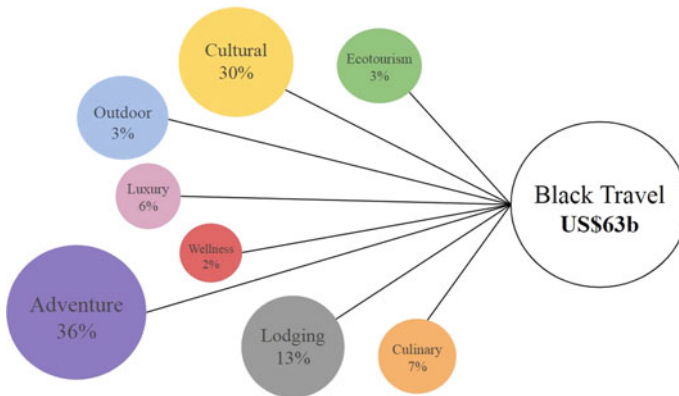

Fig. 4.3 Segmentation of the black travel tribe market

4.2.1 Understanding Shared Identities and Collective Mechanisms

The most common argument in opposition to the creation of movements that specifically cater to one specific group of people is polarization. In the case of Black Travel Tribes, the question is—why Black travel, why not travel for everyone? Reasons are varied, but can be traced back to the roots of the horrific past of the slave trade and the eventual production of slaves in America. Though slavery was abolished over one hundred and fifty years ago (1865), the long-lasting psychological effects have been passed on through collective memory for centuries. As a result of prolonged periods of enslavement, Black people were prevented to learn, dream, or experience leisure—the results of which, have had a profound negative impact. This lack of accessibility led to generational limits in education and the disbelief in Black people that they too can attain total relaxation through travel and leisure like their White counterparts. This shared history is the interwoven link that connects each organization within the larger Black Travel Movement, ultimately explaining why Black Travel Tribes are necessary. Shared identities amongst Black travellers have led to catalysts for the movement to begin and consist of barriers to Black Travel including continuing racism and discrimination, in addition to a stark lack of representation in travel media and marketing, leading to a need for community amongst Black travellers (Fig. 4.4). Information on shared identities is based on primary data gathered by the author through fieldwork including interviews, focus groups, observations and firsthand experience. Information is presented generally and anonymously to provide the reader with a full picture of Black Travel Tribes. With the development of social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, Black Travel Tribes have been able to share their counter-narrative stories on these self-publishing platforms. Using social media as a collective mechanism to gain traction in communities of colour, Black Travel Tribes have essentially changed the landscape of opportunities and representation in travel media and marketing.

4.2.2 Barriers to Black Travel

Rooted in a shared past of enslavement, barriers to travel for Black people have trickled down over centuries, now represented through manifestations of fear, discrimination, frustration and issues of accessibility. One of the most salient barriers to travel for Blacks is the construction of fear as a result of collective memory (Buzinde & Santos 2008) in addition to present day experiences of racism and discrimination (Dillette et al. 2018). Collective memory refers to the *"shared pool of memories, knowledge and information of a social group that is significantly associated with the group's identity"* (Olick et al. 2011). In the case of traveling, some of the oldest collective memories of Africans being transported over the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas to be enslaved can be linked to the fear Black people still feel about
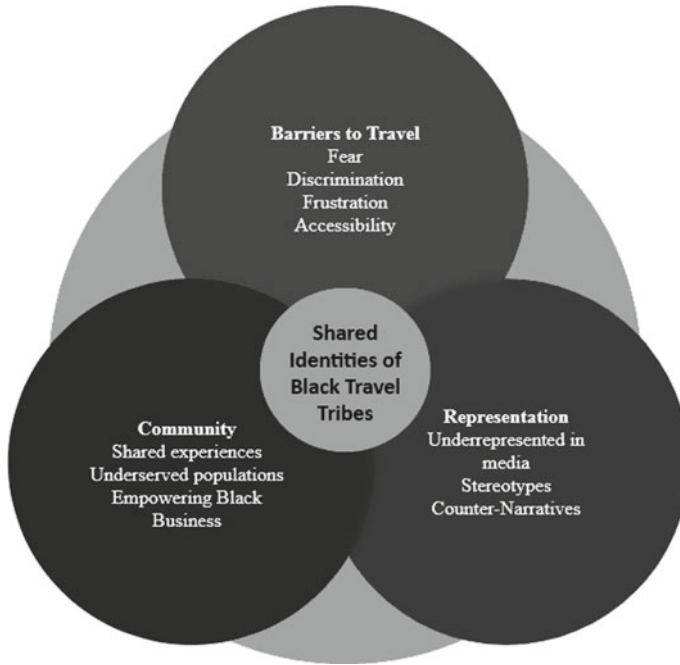
Fig. 4.4 Shared identities of black travel tribes

travelling today. These fears have been continuously validated over time through major moments in history like Jim Crow segregation and The Negro Motorist Green Book. More recently, these fears have been validated through acts of violence from extreme communities such as the White Supremacist and through acts of brutality from authorities against Black people (Byington et al. 2018).

Beyond these more mainstream examples of racism and segregation, fear of traveling has also been authenticated by everyday experiences of racism and discrimination while traveling (Dillette et al. 2018). This deep-rooted reality of fear has led to institutionalized racism that has manifested in the travel industry as a lack of accessibility to travel spaces and places. Lack of accessibility refers to the lack of access to physical space (i.e. segregated swimming pools during Jim Crow) in addition to lack of access to spaces that are dominated by another homogenous race or ethnicity—thereby excluding other groups by creating an unwelcoming and monolithic environment. Lack of access can also be attributed to a lack of wealth, rooted in the inability for Black people to create generational wealth for hundreds of years during slavery and post slavery where many Black people were forced into sharecropping. This manifests itself in many forms, including having difficulty gaining access to a suitable form of identification for travel, whether that be a Driver's License or a Passport, in addition to feeling like an outsider once one does gain access to these rights of passage. Simply put, these barriers have all been catalysts to creating an alternative and more welcoming space for Black travellers to find their tribe.

4.2.3   Lack of Representation

Representation across media outlets has long been plagued with a disproportionate amount of White faces as opposed to those with a darker hue. As mentioned earlier, this issue has been no different in the travel industry. Improvement in this area is certainly being noticed in recent campaigns to address what has been deemed the 'diversity issue'. This issue of representation has served as a significant catalyst that links Black Travel Tribes together. Numerous founders of the movement attribute their motivation for beginning and their success thus far to mainstream media doing a poor job of providing representation of Black travellers. For example, only very recently in October 2017, the over 30-year-old US-American television Channel 'Travel Channel' premiered its first ever show hosted by a Black woman, *Kellee Edwards of Mysterious Islands.* Therefore, Black Travel Tribes not only represent a safe space for travellers of colour to find a community with whom they can face challenges, but also a space where they can see themselves authentically represented in imagery enjoying leisure and recreation while travelling the world. Something that, not long ago, was a rare occurrence. Black Travel Tribes represent a movement that can no longer be ignored, a movement of force, and a tangible community with power.

4.2.4   The Need for Community

Black travel has grown to be more than just a new age representation of the traditional travel agent. They are a community of movers and shakers that believe in supporting each other. Grown from a need to feel authentically represented and supported, Black Travel Tribes have developed organically to provide support not only for travellers, but also for Black business owners and suppliers. At its core, Black travel groups were created to provide spaces for Black travellers to feel welcomed and comfortable to ask questions, share stories and create experiences together with other like-minded individuals. Some have even called the movement 'The Green Book 2.0.'—a term to describe a modern-day guide for Black travellers to locate spaces and places that will be welcoming to them. As an added benefit, these groups have also extended their arms to welcome and promote other Black businesses in the destinations that they visit, thereby supporting the generation of wealth in Black communities on a global scale. Many groups have begun to focus their travels on the continent of Africa, with the goal of bringing money back to their ancestors' land. Other groups focus on countries that have a large population of the African diaspora, with the same goal, in addition to educating themselves about how other diasporic nations have developed. These tribes are aiming to educate, inspire and support Black tourism businesses including hotels, restaurants, event spaces, museums, tour guides, historical and cultural sites.

4.2.5   Social Media as a Collective Mechanism for Counter-Narrative Storytelling

Storytelling is an act as old as time itself. Beginning in childhood, stories help us to frame the way we think about the world and relate to others. Before more modern forms of record keeping were developed, stories were passed down orally from generation to generation. Today, we enjoy the fortune of having access to recorded stories from around the world, some that are steeped in history, and others make-believe fairy tales. Today, stories are used to influence, through marketing and media, politics and education. Bottom line - stories are powerful.

With this in mind, it is important to discuss how stories are developed through the dominant narrative in society. In Dillette et al.'s (2018) study on counter-narrative storytelling through social media, they argue that *"dominant culture shapes its own social reality in ways that promote self-interest through words, stories and silence"*. As it relates to race, storytelling has traditionally been dominated by the White narrative in the United States. Counter-storytelling, on the other hand, utilizes underrepresented voices to "build up, as well as break down, community, shared understandings, and deeply held beliefs" (Price 2010, p. 160). In the case of Black Travel Tribes, the founders have been able to utilize social media as an avenue to finally take ownership of their own narrative (Anderson and Hitlin 2016). We have seen this with other popular social media counter-storytelling movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo and #TimesUp. With its ability to instantly connect people across the globe with like-minded interests, in addition to gaining the attention of industries that would have otherwise ignored them or silenced them—social media has served as a collective mechanism for Black Travel Tribes to become relevant and heard (McClain 2016). Not only have these tribes used social media to reach their target audience, but also to connect with other groups doing similar work through the phenomenon of hashtags.

Within the movement, two hashtags have been used to connect these tribes—#TravellingWhileBlack and #BlackTravelMovement. Linked across these hashtags are stories. These stories chronicle the experiences of Black travellers, both positive and negative. A virtual community of sorts, linking together those Black travellers around the world who want to be seen and heard. In a way, the avenue of social media has levelled the playing field allowing Black people to own their narratives and build platforms with significant reach and impact. In fact, Black people have always travelled, they just did not always have a way to document it. Essentially, social media allowed Black travellers an alternative path to break into a market that was previously tightly regulated. It has allowed Black travellers, as a collective, to reshape their entire existence across the travel industry through one of the most powerful entities on earth, the media.

4.3 The Future of Black Travel Tribes

Black Travel Tribes have grown to be more than simply a new age representation for travellers of colour, they are a community of movers and shakers with a capacity for unprecedented growth. The rapid growth of the movement shows evidence of its necessity in today's current environment, however, moving forward, one must consider what the areas for growth and challenges are going to be for Black Travel Tribes. As noted, one of the challenges for these tribes stems from the viewpoint that polarization may be an inadvertent consequence of the creation of a safe space for Black travellers. It begs the question, is it possible to have an inclusive space for Black travellers without inadvertently excluding other types of travellers? Perhaps, a more critical question is—Is it possible to create inclusion without exclusion? On the more positive side, modern day Black Travel Tribes are still in the growth phase of the business life cycle and face a future of opportunity to continuously evolve and develop. Considering the shared identities and collective mechanisms of Black Travel Tribes, areas of development will involve collaboration and expansion.

One of the goals of Black Travel Tribes is to connect the Black community to the world. Tribes currently do this through promoting the presence of Black Travel in the media, offering a space for travellers to connect with each other and join in on trips around the world, as well as connecting the global society to Black business, entrepreneurship and socio-political initiatives. Collaboration for these tribes could manifest itself through partnerships within the Black Travel Movement, as well as outside of the movement with other neo-tribal groups—particularly those serving other marginalized populations such as female specific travel groups, travel for people with disabilities or groups dedicated to the LGBTQ community. These partnerships will be important for the continued growth of the movement, contributing to building even more inclusive travel spaces in the future. Tribes will also need to sustain their focus on creating authentic partnerships with larger travel companies, destinations and brands in order to penetrate Black communities around the globe, moving beyond the current focus on the West. Partnerships like these will offer stability for the tribes, and an element of diversity within the tribes themselves. It will also commit these tribes to the undisputable power of travel for transformation through cross-cultural connection and understanding.

However, this question remains—WHY are Black Travel Tribes still necessary so many years after desegregation? The unfortunate, but certain answer we can garner from this chapter is they are still a necessary step to continue in the right direction of equity in the travel and tourism sphere. Though the legal 'end' to discrimination happened back in 1964 with the enactment of the Civil Rights Movement—more recent research, accounts in the media and personal stories shared through these Black Travel Tribes suggest that we are still fighting negative experiences for Black people travelling (Alderman 2018). Not only are we still fighting current day experiences, but the deep-rooted fear of racism lives and is deeply embedded in the social memory of Black America (Carter 2008; Lee and Scott 2017). These experiences and this memory are what catapulted Black Travel Tribes into action (Dillette et al. 2018).

Black Travel Tribes have shown their resistance to racism through the simple act of moving groups of Black bodies through space and time across borders. However, the existence of these tribes is not enough. It is of particular importance for those who do not identify themselves as a part of these tribes to attempt to understand *'why'* they are needed, and the racial power dynamics at play behind the scenes. Furthermore, we must also consider *'how'* we can work together to create a world where one day, Black Travel Tribes are no longer a necessity. Collectively, we must accept that racism is still a real experience for so many people. However, we must also hold hope that, through travel—we all have the ability to change this experience through the way we treat others different from ourselves, welcoming them into our homelands with open minds and hearts.

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Chapter 5
Film Tourist Tribes

Check for
updates

W. Glen Croy, Ina Reichenberger, and Stefanie Benjamin

Abstract Geographic film locations have received much attention in tourism as toured, managed and experienced sites. The emerging societal element however demonstrates that film tourists are not solely geographically bound. Importantly, film tourist tribes have an extended temporal engagement, there is greater involvement (demonstrated by film value and identity), and they are socially interactive (with other tribal members). Definitionally, social interaction and film involvement are central to the film tourist tribe, and consequently level of tribal membership. That is, geographic film locations are simply the physical realisation of the tribe, yet not the full representation of it. Importantly, touring is still crucial, distinguishing film tourist tribes from fan-tribes. Film tourist tribes are populated by the continuum of film tourists. At the core is a small yet highly interactive and intense group, surrounded by the periphery that have a continuing, though more tenuous, bond to the tribe off-site. The tribe is surrounded by a larger territorial community, with no societal connection beyond the film location, which is surrounded by an even larger non-film tourist group. This chapter contributes societal interaction and film involvement dimensions to characterise film tourists, enabling a greater understanding of film tourists and film tourism.

Keywords Film tourism · Tribal location · Tribal membership · Film involvement · Interaction · Film value

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5.1   Introduction

Film tourism studies are demonstrating an emerging societal element (Laing et al. 2011); a bond between tourists in addition to that via the films (including movies and television (TV) series) viewed and sites visited. This societal bond indicates persistent film communities or even tribes, where tourism to the filmed site is the aspirational demonstration of membership (Benjamin et al. 2012; Buchmann et al. 2010; Roesch 2009). Whilst the societal element is identified, the attention it receives is still much less than the traditional focus on the geographic locations where film and tourism coincide; where film tourists coalesce. Put another way, many film tourism studies place boundaries geographically, temporally and socially, defined by the toured filmed site. These boundaries are useful to scope studies, though have also limited the insights into the nuances of film tourism.

Demonstrating the boundaries, early studies indicated that scenic and attractive locations featured in films attracted tourists (e.g. Riley and Van Doren 1992; Tooke and Baker 1996). This relationship between film and growing tourist numbers led others to focus on the location's management challenges, as well as opportunities for exploitation (Beeton 2016; Croy and Walker 2003; Hudson 2011; Wray and Croy 2015). These studies highlight the reach and influence of film to create and modify perceptions of and behaviours in film locations, and applied this knowledge to the destination for potential strategic use. Also investigated were the tourists attracted by film to determine their location experience, and the centrality of film to this (Beeton 2001; Carl et al. 2007; Connell and Meyer 2009; Croy 2018; Croy and Buchmann 2009; di Cesare et al. 2009; Kim 2012; Macionis and Sparks 2009). These studies demonstrate that film has a limited inducing effect on the majority of tourists, though that there is a small proportion whose experience was highly influenced by film. At a similar time, there was a rise of a critical perspective to film in and on toured locations (Bolan et al. 2011; Mendes 2010; Tzanelli 2007). These studies emphasised the interpretation and consequences of representations of people and places in film and for tourism. Collectively, whilst these studies acknowledged the influence of film beyond the toured site (viewing, reach, attraction, image and tourist), the emphasis is largely still geographically and temporally bound by the toured film site.

Other studies have focused on the highly-influenced film tourists (e.g. Buchmann et al. 2010; Kim and Kim 2018; Rittichainuwat et al. 2017; Roesch 2009; Yen and Croy 2016). These studies demonstrate a more nuanced understanding of the core film tourists (though generally still location-bound). These film tourists are much more involved and invested than others. As part of their experience, the film location is their aspirational space. Importantly, these studies highlight that the experience is not limited to the film location. Indeed, these studies provide greater insights into film tourists and their off-site engagements, demonstrating the importance of societal experience. Insights into the social experience are indicating film tourism is not specifically bound by the toured film location, and that a multi-connected personal and collective element is crucial to the experience. This aspect has yet to receive much attention.

Whilst the film location is the aspirational space for the core film tourists, it is also the very same gathering location for the full-spectrum of film tourists. Within the spectrum of film tourists, film creates a common connection between place and tourists. These connections, as being demonstrated in the core film tourist studies, are a social bond depicting a modern tribe, and the toured location is the physical gathering of the film-tribe. A film tourist tribe highlights a societal perspective that will importantly further our understanding of film tourism.

In this chapter we aim to interrogate the conceptualisation of a film tourist tribe from two perspectives, the tribal location and tribal membership. In the investigation of the film tourist tribal location we assess temporal and spatial boundaries of the tribe. In tribal membership we assess the film value and identity members have and their bonds to the tribe. We propose that combining these two perspectives will provide a more complete understanding of film tourism, and the existence of film tourist tribes.

5.2   Film Tourists

Despite the argument that film tourism is not as big as some might believe (Beeton 2006; Croy 2018; Li et al. 2017), there are film tourists. Film tourists exist along a skewed continuum, from incidental through to purposeful film tourists (Rittichain-uwat and Rattanaphinanchai 2015). Croy (2018) suggests that, at a national level, about 80 percent of tourists would be typified as incidental (film played no motivational role, and the tourists have no or only a shallow film experience), and only about 0.3 percent would be purposeful film tourists (film plays a strong motivational role, and they seek a deep film experience). The general media have called the purposeful film tourists 'set-jetters'; superfans that reserve and book their trip with the intention of getting behind-the-scenes of their beloved movie or TV show (Del Valle 2019). Croy (2018) notes that the proportion of purposeful film tourists might even be overstated. In between these two extremes are other film tourist types, including the casual, and sightseeing (both having a shallow film experience, though with film playing a moderate to high motivating role respectively), and the serendipitous film tourist, for who the film played no to a high motivating role, and through their on-site visit they had an unanticipated/unintended deep film experience (Croy and Heitmann 2011). Similar film typologies are also proposed (e.g. Benjamin et al. 2012; Connell and Meyer 2009; di Cesare et al. 2009; Macionis and Sparks 2009; Rittichainuwat and Rattanaphinanchai 2015; Rittichainuwat et al. 2017), mostly demonstrating a skewed diversity of tourist types at the same film location.

Nevertheless, purposeful film tourists invest a lot to achieve their film goals (e.g. Buchmann et al. 2010; Roesch 2009). This includes film and memorabilia collections and film related travel (Benjamin et al. 2012). For some, they are so involved that they facilitate fan websites and even organise and lead tours to film locations (Roesch 2009). Prominently, Roesch (2009) and Buchmann et al. (2010) outline how these highly invested and involved film tourists define themselves based upon their deep

film knowledge and experience, even defining themselves by the authenticity of their film location fellowship. The social bonds are indeed, or at least emerge to be so tight, that the purposeful film tourists would easily be described as a tribe, actively differentiating themselves from others outside the tribe (Roesch 2009).

Following the distinction between the purposeful and other film tourists, the literature has however created a dichotomy or trichotomy of film tourists, losing the nuances of these film tourist typologies. The dichotomy being the purposeful film tourist as contrasted with everyone else, or the trichotomy being the purposeful film tourist, contrasted with all other film tourists, contrasted with non-film tourists. Again, it must be reinforced that the film tourist types exist along a continuum. There are tourists for whom film is a very strong travel motivator though they do not invest or involve themselves as much as the purposeful film tourists (i.e. sightseeing film tourists). There are also other tourists who have as deep film experiences as the purposeful film tourist, though they do not have such high film motivations (i.e. serendipitous film tourists). Additionally, even those with no or a low film motivation and having a shallow experience still have a connection to the film at the same location. Basically, there are not such contrasting distinctions between the film tourists. Engaging the nuances of film tourist typologies indicates that a film tourism tribe might exist beyond the purposeful film tourist, to others with a connection to the film and location. That is, the bounded toured location may just represent one aspect of film tourist tribe, and the diversity of tourists at these sites indicates a complex tribal society.

As an example of the diversity and complexity of film tourists at a location, Benjamin et al. (2012) explore the Mayberry Days Festival in Mount Airy, North Carolina, USA, that showcased the 1950s TV series, *The Andy Griffith Show* (*TAGS*). From the study, they categorised tourists as 'amateur' or 'fanatic'. The tourists ventured to Mount Airy for a myriad of reasons, however, the love or admiration for *TAGS* was not the main motivator for attending the festival. The amateur fans (90%) were excited and intrigued about venturing to a festival that mimicked "small-town" life that was reflected in the show, whereas the fanatic fans (only 10%) were interested in going deeper by recreating scenes, participating in *TAGS* activities, and purchasing *TAGS* related memorabilia. The findings evidence a much higher series-related value for fanatics than for amateurs.

However, it is important to state that not all films attract tourists, and when they do, often the scale of influence would only demonstrate a very small film tourist tribe (Beeton 2006; Croy 2018). For example, the prominent series *Breaking Bad*, which ran for five seasons (2008–2013), was set and filmed in Albuquerque, USA. Though there was a short-term tourist boost after the series' release, changes in tourist numbers were largely in-line with state and national trends (Vanderhoof 2018). The series still has a presence on the city's official website and it attracts some fans, though "the primary impact that *Breaking Bad* had on the city was less about raw numbers than brand awareness" (Vanderhoof 2018, para. 16).

Overall, there is a continuum of film tourists, in which a societal dimension is emerging. However, even within the continuum, the value of film and the connection

with others varies, also indicating that film tourist tribes will vary in size. The tribe though has been best identified at the toured locations.

5.2.1   Film Tourist Tribal Location

The emergence of the societal element of film tourism has begun to reorientate how we conceptualise film tourists and film tourist tribes. As noted, the traditional conceptualisation has been based on the geographic, temporal and social engagements at the toured film site. That is, film tourists and their collective tribes were previously understood by where they visited, how long they stayed and the amount of interaction they had on site. The film tourist tribe was therefore disbanded to disparate tourists once they left the site. The studies of the purposeful film tourists are demonstrating that this is too simplistic for three reasons.

First, film tourists (by and large) have engagement with the film prior to touring the film site extending the geographic and temporal boundaries (e.g. Kim 2012). Second, the level of involvement with the film (compared to other films), especially to prompt some desire to tour the film site, presents an emotional dimension to the tribe (e.g. Kim and Kim 2018; Rittichainuwat et al. 2017). Third, film engagement is often social, also existing beyond those touring the sites, and increasingly online (e.g. Roesch 2009; Yen and Croy 2016). As such, the film tourism tribes might be better encapsulated within the broader conceptualisation of fandom, and the extreme fanaticism (Thorne and Bruner 2006). For the fans, the toured film location then becomes the realisation of the physical tribe, a gathering point and even a tribal home. All the same, we focus on the tourist members of the broader fan group.

Even considering the toured film location as the tribal home has its limitations. Film locations are not always neatly bound. Films are often shot over vast areas, sometimes in more than one region or nation. As such, the tribal home is dispersed. For example, *The Lord of the Rings* was filmed in both major islands of New Zealand, from Matamata in the north to Fiordland in the south (Carl et al. 2007). There are concentrated locations of related film tourism activity (e.g. around Queenstown and Wellington), though there would not be a singular tribal home. Some might then equate New Zealand as the tribal home for *The Lord of the Rings* film tourists (Carl et al. 2007; Li et al. 2017). The series *Game of Thrones* is another example of a vastly dispersed set of film tourism locations, from Iceland to Ireland, Spain, Morocco and Croatia, making identifying the gathering point much more difficult.

Another difficulty in identifying the film tourist tribal home is that films often present composite places, made up of components of dispersed locations (Rittichainuwat et al. 2017). For example, Gotham City for the *Batman* films is predominantly a composite of New York and Chicago, though it also includes Los Angeles and Detroit (amongst other places in USA). Then, the 'nearby' Wayne Manor is actually in England (and across recent films, multiple places across England). Another prominent example, this time a single building (in film), is Hogwarts School from the *Harry Potter* films. Different aspects and rooms of the building are from Alnwick,

Gloucester, Harrow, Durham, Lacock and Oxford across England (again, amongst others). The physical dispersal can be further compromised by special effects and stages in so far that some filmed locations do not actually exist (Rittichainuwat et al. 2017).

Combined, the tribal locations bring together extended temporal and spatial dimensions, moving beyond just the toured location. Nonetheless, this emphasis largely excludes the societal dimension that is inherent within a tribe. Placing emphasis on the societal dimension moves from space and time to interaction and involvement. The tribe can then be located at points of interaction, and the tribal home may be where these interactions are most intense.

In addition to interacting at the film locations, the fans interact at a number of places related to and developed from film, collectively, best represented by the concept of 'contents tourism' (Yamamura and Seaton 2020). Contents tourism is broadly defined as travel motivated by popular culture artefacts (such as film), as well as related characters, locations, narratives and further creative endeavours (such as fan-content) (Yamamura and Seaton 2020). Interactions also occur at 'off-location' film and related events, such as the various conventions and theme parks (Beeton 2016; Kim 2012; Waysdorf and Reijnders 2016). At these events and parks there are very evident levels of involvement and interaction, with many voluntarily costumed tribe members around (i.e. cosplay) (Rittichainuwat et al. 2017; Waysdorf and Reijnders 2016). Cosplay, for example, provides the opportunity to visibly communicate one's dedication to the film and has been found to create a sense of camaraderie amongst tribal members—interactions with previously unknown tourists are facilitated by their visible identification with a film or character, contributing to an emotional connection likened to 'family' (Waysdorf and Reijnders 2016), and creating a sense of belonging (Reichenberger and Smith 2019). Such interactions and societal bonds create a sense of spirit amongst members of the tribe, through which film tourists are able to create an atmosphere of trust where their dedication to film can be expressed visibly without judgement (Lee 2012).

There are also film-based interactions at non-film sites. For example, Livraria Lello, a bookshop in Oporto, Portugal, which supposedly inspired part of Hogwarts' imagery, has become a *Harry Potter* attraction of its own (as well as being a bookshop). Other locations have created connections to film for tourism purposes, including Riverside, Iowa, United States of America (USA) (as the future birthplace of *Star Trek*'s Captain Kirk), and Liberal, Kansa, USA (as the home of Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*) (Croy and Walker 2003).

Beyond the physical spaces, film tourist tribes have online interactions, demonstrating high levels of involvement (Roesch 2009; Yen and Croy 2016). In the example of *Harry Potter*, there is an official website (WizardingWorld.com), in addition to numerous fan-sites. Across these sites there are large numbers of fans, and some demonstrating extremely high levels of involvement. High levels of involvement are evidenced by the fan sites themselves, though also by fanfiction and noted efforts to engage with *Harry Potter* related people and events. For example, on FanFiction.com (2019), there are over 613,000 stories relating to *Harry Potter* (ranging from a number of 500-word pieces, to those reaching 300,000+ words).

All in all, tribal interaction locations, by number, are mainly online, including some with high-levels of involvement and interaction, and consequent intensity. Nonetheless, physical locations also demonstrate high levels of involvement, interaction and intensity, though they are not necessarily bound to the actual film sites. Locating the film tourist tribe is complex as they exist across physical, temporal and social dimensions, and in the most part gather not specifically at the filmed site.

5.2.2 Film Tourist Tribal Membership

The previously highlighted complexities of film tourists and their spatially and temporally diverse characteristics highlight that our current understanding of film tourists remains challenging. Placing the tribe in the centre of the discussion, however, opens up new opportunities to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of film tourists. While the societal bonds between film tourists have been considered when distinguishing between different types of film tourists, the term consumer tribes is predominantly concerned with the collective construction of *value* and *identity* (Kravets et al. 2018). Yet the value and meaning that the film and touring related locations hold for individuals appears to be lacking prominent attention in prior research. Consumer tribes can be defined as "a group of people emotionally connected by similar consumption values and usage" (Mitchell and Imrie 2011, p. 39) to express their identity and create a community (Cova et al. 2007; Thorne and Bruner 2006). While film tourists, regardless of their temporal and spatial dimension, arguably have similar consumption usage, previous typologies show that their values differ, as does the relevance of film for self-identity, and the role of community and the tribe.

Considering the role of self-identity and community, as well as shared values, implies that film tourist tribal membership is not primarily dependent on spatial and temporal locations but on individuals' involvement. Involvement is not with the film-related activities or locations per se, but with the film itself (audience involvement, Kim 2012; Kim and Kim 2018). Considering audience involvement sheds light on the differing values that film tourists gain from touring film-related locations. While tourists with lower involvement identify meaning and value in often externally oriented terms of, for example, novelty (Macionis and Sparks 2009) or prestige (Kim 2012), those with higher involvement have developed a deeper, more personal internal connection. Here, value can be found in emotional contexts; feelings of intimacy and bonds with characters, referential reflection of their own lives through the lens of the film (Kim and Kim 2018), immersion in fictional landscapes and realities (Buchmann et al. 2010; Waysdorf and Reijnders 2016), as well as non-judgmental fan-based self-expression in line with existential authenticity (Lee 2012; Roesch 2009; Rittichainuwat et al. 2017). The manifestation of these high-involvement values then occurs within a participative, interpretive community of like-minded tourists (Benjamin et al. 2012; Roberson and Grady 2015; Yamamura and Seaton 2020).

The *Game of Thrones* TV series presents a demonstration of the interpretative community. The series averaged 44.2 million viewers for the episodes in season eight (across all platforms) (Fitzgerald 2019). The fan base has been activated to travel (Tkalec et al. 2017), for example being cited as the key factor behind the growth in tourists to Iceland. For instance, in 2011 when the series premiered, there were 566,000 tourists to Iceland (a slight increase on the post-Eyjafjallajökull volcanic eruption 2010 numbers). In 2015, the number of tourists increased to more than 1.3 million, and by 2018, to 2.3 million international arrivals (Icelandic Tourist Board 2019). As previously noted, any perceived causation relationship needs to be taken with caution (Beeton 2006; Croy 2018). All the same, in both the winter and summer 2016 tourist surveys (surveying 1,940 and 2,250 tourist respectively), 12.3 and 16.3 percent did note international films, documentaries, music videos and TV representations did prompt respondents' idea of going to Iceland (Icelandic Tourist Board 2016a, 2016b). Whilst not the key factor to explain the rise in demand, film was a factor nonetheless.

Game of Thrones fans are also found in destinations around Spain where historical landmarks, like the Castle of Zafra and the Amphitheater of Italica, were transformed specifically for the dragon pit of King's Landing. In 2014, Seville supposedly witnessed a 15 percent boost in tourism only two weeks after filming (Rolfe 2014). Even though the final season ended in 2019, *Game of Thrones* tours have evolved to meet tourist demand. For instance, Belfast, Northern Ireland, is the official home to a *Game of Thrones* studio experience in 2020 (Goldstein 2019). Activities of this experience include the chance to dress up in House Greyjoy cloaks and venture to filming locations on an 'epic' nine-hour bus tour. A number of other minibus *Game of Thrones* tours now also operate in Northern Ireland.

Film locations then simply provide a space within which the otherwise dispersed tribe can gather. If higher involvement and personal-emotional value is regarded as a prerequisite for film tourist tribal membership, only those tourists for whom community-building and participation holds value could be considered part of the tribal membership spectrum, where a decrease in value would signify greater removal from the tribe. Indeed, even for *Game of Thrones*, not all tourists fall into the category of fanatic. There are numerous incidental film tourists who happen to be at locations also featured in film (Tkalec et al. 2017). The film tourist tribe would then not consist of all film tourists at a specific site, but fans who coincidentally gather in temporally limited spaces.

This then raises the question how tribal and non-tribal film tourists relate to each other, as non-tribal film tourists find themselves within the spatial and temporal boundaries of the tribe while contributing to their community-building through their presence and participation. Here, non-tribal film tourists can be considered 'accidental' community members, and the distinction between core, peripheral and marginal community members can be utilised to describe film tourists based on their involvement and subsequent role at locations.

While the core film tribe with high involvement is not necessarily subject to the spatial and temporal boundaries imposed by tourism, these do become relevant once tourists gather at the film-related location. Incorporating the concept of (tribal)

community, we can therefore distinguish between relational communities (based on connections such as involvement and interaction) and territorial communities based upon geographical closeness (Gusfield 1975). In the case of film tourist tribes, both come into play. Relational communities (core and peripheral members) suddenly adopt a territorial component, and for those who are not part of the relational community (marginal members), the territorial component is dominant in characterising their experience.

5.2.3   Film Tourist Tribe Conceptualisation

From what we have discussed, it has become apparent that the previously emphasised spatial and temporal dimensions used to describe film tourism have placed limits on a better understanding of film tourists. Instead, using the societal bonds and film involvement as defining characteristics has provided a reconceptualised means to understand film tourists.

The film tourist tribe is not constrained by temporal or spatial limits. The tribe derives its existence from the film. From the film, emergent values, identity and interactions are demonstrations of the tribe. More importantly in conceptualising the tribe is the intensity of film-involvement and societal bonds. Here, the core members are characterised by highly involved and extended temporal and spatial engagement with the film and other members. They place an intense value in the film, and interactions with like-minded others, resulting in tenacious bonds within the tribe. The broader core fandom membership might be quite large, though, as previous studies have indicated, many may not realise film location visitations (e.g. Croy 2018; Macionis and Sparks 2009), excluding them from the film tourist tribe. Others are however indicating that the core fans are increasingly being able to tour locations (Kim 2012; Li et al. 2017; Rittichainuwat and Rattanaphinanchai 2015; Roesch 2009; Tkalec et al. 2017; Waysdorf and Reijnders 2016; Yen and Croy 2016), predicting that film tourist tribes will grow.

Beyond the core membership of the film tourist tribe, there is a periphery set of members. These members value the film, and have some degree of interaction, though with less strength and intensity. Their respective importance of the film and social engagement with others still extend beyond the film location, though their societal bonds with the tribe are more tenuous. It might be that from their film location experience they serendipitously place a greater value on the film and social interactions with others in the tribe, moving them to the core.

For the majority of tourists, in general and those that visit the film locations, their connection with the tribe is film-location specific (territorial). These are those beyond the margins of the tribe, in the wider community. Beyond the location, there is very little to no persistence in the societal bonds. They do not sufficiently value the film to persist with societal interactions beyond the spatial and temporal boundaries of the film-related location. This large set of marginal film tourists are onlookers that infrequently, irregularly and briefly drop-in to the tribe's space, time and relationships,
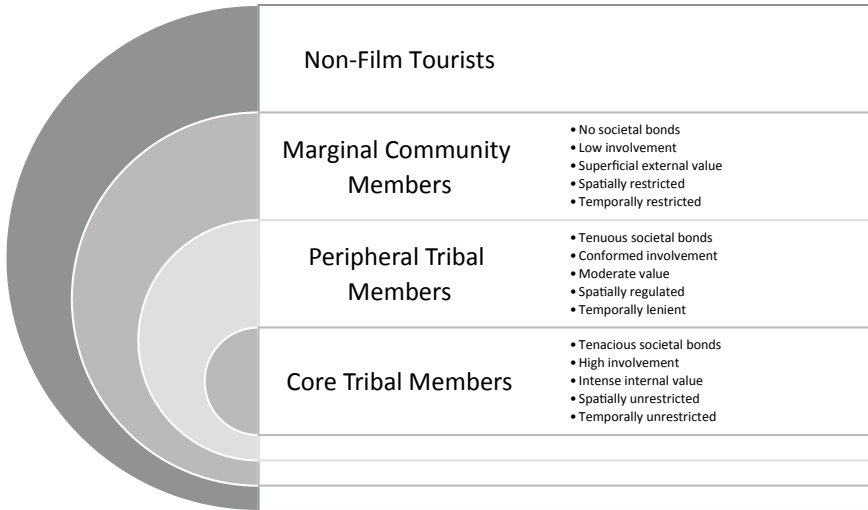
Fig. 5.1 Film Tourist Tribe Visualisation

and in instances at least, are undesired by the tribe (e.g. Roesch 2009). Finally, there are non-film tourists who coincidentally tour the filmed locations.

Importantly, for the tribe, interaction and involvement occur online and in off-location sites as well. All the same, the film location still represents an aspirational space for the tribe. Additionally, at the film location the involvement and societal dimensions are complemented by the temporal and spatial dimensions of the tribe. It is the combination of relational and territorial dimensions that define tribal membership, especially as compared to the peripheral members, and further the marginal film tourists (Fig. 5.1).

5.2.4 Film Tourist Tribe Examples

In this section we exemplify the film tourist tribe conceptualisation using two examples (*Harry Potter* and *Gilmore Girls*), revealing details of how the community dynamics and societal bonds manifest themselves and are enacted.

As already indicated, *Harry Potter* presents an example of a film involvement dimension and differentiation to the wider community (Lee 2012; Waysdorf and Reijnders 2016); the *Harry Potter* Tourist Tribe. As with other films based on books, there is the added complexity of distinguishing between book and film fans (or arguably the redundancy of distinguishing between them, Yamamura and Seaton 2020), though often film locates the book's imagined places (Croy 2012). There is a large community of *Harry Potter* fans, or Potterheads, evident within online fansites. From this fan community, there are a number that travel to film locations

(e.g. Warner Bros *Harry Potter* Tour, England, and others in England and Scotland) and related off-location sites (e.g. The Wizarding World of *Harry Potter*, Universal Studios, Japan and two in the USA) (Waysdorf and Reijnders 2016).

For the on- or off-location experience, as online imagery depicts, there are core members of the tribe, in costume (though costuming is not a prerequisite), recreating scenes, partaking in activities and the like. For core tribal members, the experience is often characterised by obvious demonstrations of fan value and identity, and bonding within the tribe (as other film tribes also demonstrate, Beeton 2016; Buchmann et al. 2010; Kim 2012; Roesch 2009). Their experience is highly informed and enhanced by their vastly involved film (and book, character…) knowledge and connection (Kim and Kim 2018; Reichenberger and Smith 2019; Yamamura and Seaton 2020). The location visit becomes a status symbol and is actively used in identity promotion within the tribe through personal social media and fansites.

There are also others, the periphery *Harry Potter* tribal members, who have engaged with the films (and likely the books) prior to visiting the location. They may also be in costume, though likely not as invested as the core members. They are demonstrating an association with the film as compared to the tribe, also reflected in their lower value in or knowledge of film/book contents or tribe. The periphery members have engaging on-site experiences, connecting with the tribe. For the core tribal members, these periphery members provide both an endorsement of their more invested fandom (others are also fans), and an ability to distinguish their 'coreness' (these others do not know or care as much). Post-location, the periphery members may also demonstrate their *Harry Potter* identity, though largely they are voyeurs in the fan-specific online environment.

The marginal *Harry Potter* community members are likely to have viewed some of the films, though would not have much if any engagement beyond the films (e.g. fansites). Their location experience is film-related, though not necessarily to relive or recreate the film. More so, the marginal members are on- or off-location tribal voyeurs, viewing the tribe from the outside, and through a different lens (and even language) to those within the tribe. After the location visit, their identity is not enhanced, nor is there an attempt to enhance their identity by demonstrating visiting the aspirational *Harry Potter* location; it is also not a reference that their non-film tribe would fully appreciate. There is also a final group, who coincidentally are at the film location, though are unaware or not concerned by the connection (e.g. tourists at Gloucester Cathedral visiting for religious purposes).

The second example demonstrates the societal interaction dimension of the *Gilmore Girls* Tourist Tribe. A passionate fan of the *Gilmore Girls* created an annual fan-festival in 2016 based in Kent, Connecticut, USA (Gilmore Girls Fan Fest 2019). The *Gilmore Girls* Fan Fest is promoted as "a gathering of friends (some you've already met but many you'll soon get to know), many with shared dreams celebrating something that we all love, traveling from far corners of the world to connect with a show (a lifestyle, a religion you might say) that has uniquely impacted their own lives" (Gilmore Girls Fan Fest 2019, para. 3). Although the TV series (2000–2007; Netflix reboot 2016) was based in the fictional town of Stars Hollow, the communities

around Kent promote themselves as "the 'real' Stars Hollow" and the 'inspiration' for the television show (Visit Connecticut CVB 2019, para. 1).

The first fan festival in 2016 had 1,250 people register, and next year had 1,750 register (Yandoli 2019). While attendees' report initial attendance at the festival is due to the high involvement in the *Gilmore Girls* (Gilmore Girls Fan Fest 2019; Newman-Brewing 2019; Yandoli 2019), the case evidences that instead of the themed-activities, fans continue to travel from around the world to this festival to return to their '*Gilmore Girls* family' (Yandoli 2019). The importance of the societal interaction dimension is noticeable, indeed, *Gilmore Girls* 'friends' and 'family' are very common terms used when outlining reasons for returning to the festival (Gilmore Girls Fan Fest 2019; Yandoli 2019). This also indicates that, through the Festival interaction experience, there is a serendipitous movement from the periphery to core members of the tribe.

In 2019, the main festival was held in Unionville, Canada (the site where the original pilot was shot), in addition to the Kent festival (where they maintained a smaller presence) (Gilmore Girls Fan Fest 2019). The Unionville festival included many of the same activities of previous festivals, where "fellow hardcore nerds of the show take part in Stars Hollow-related activities, like mock town halls… knit-a-thons, tap dancing, cider tastings, karaoke, trivia and panel discussions with secondary cast members and original crew" (Newman-Brewing 2019, para 4). As indicated, the festival is attended by core members of the *Gilmore Girls* tourist tribe.

Core tribal members share that the festival experience continues to be something 'very special', a 'special fandom', and one festivalgoer said that "you come here and you're like, 'These are my people'" (Yandoli 2019, para. 16). Festival attendees share that their experience is like a reunion and a home away from home. This core of the *Gilmore Girls* Tourist Tribe, although reunites every year, continues within active Facebook groups and fandom chatrooms sharing their recollections, experiences and anticipating future festivals. Of note, in addition to the 1,000–2,000 festival attendees, more than another 20,000 are members of the Festival's Facebook site, indicating a much larger potential *Gilmore Girls* Tourist Tribe core if they attend one of the Festivals.

5.3   Conclusion

In conclusion, the societal dimension of film tourism, whilst earlier identified, has not received necessary attention. The societal bond between film tourists presents foundations for film tourist tribes. These tribes are compiled from a continuum of film tourist types, from the purposeful through to the incidental. Whilst often studied in film locations, these tribes exist beyond these spatial and temporal boundaries. The film tourist tribes exist off-site and online, as part of broader fandom groups. Importantly, these fan groups might be very large, though the film tourist tribe is that which achieves the aspirational location visit.

However, not all film tourists value the film and the societal bonds as much as others. Within the tribe and community, they could be categorised into three sets, that of the core tribe (small in number, though highly interactive and intensely involved), the periphery tribe (a continuing bond with the tribe off-site, though more tenuous), and the marginal community members (the vast majority, with no societal connection beyond the film location). The extreme of the relational and territorial film tribe dimensions is used to define the degree of membership; with all high value, relational interaction and territorial importance typifying the core members. Overall, including the societal and involvement dimensions adds to the motivational and depth of experience previously used to characterise film tourists, enabling a greater understanding of film tourists and film tourism.

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Chapter 6
The Coalescence of the LGBTQI+ Neo-Tribes During the Pride Events

Oscar Vorobjovas-Pinta and Clifford Lewis

Abstract Pride events have transformed from being protests to becoming celebrations of diversity. As a social phenomenon, such events represent the collective interests of the LGBTQI+ communities and the individual agendas of the gender and sexually diverse groups that are part of the LGBTQI+ acronym. This chapter examines pride events by applying a neo-tribal theory perspective based on the four characteristics of neo-tribes being: fluidity in membership; shared sentiment; rituals and symbols; and space. It is argued that while the LGBTQI+ communities together represent a neo-tribe with a unified purpose, the individual communities form sub-tribes and provide a unique interpretation based on their sexual and gender identity. Using a participant observation approach, this chapter presents a discussion on the interplay between sub-tribes and the overall neo-tribe that coalesce together to construct a pride event, its holistic message and the experiences therein.

Keywords Neo-tribal theory · LGBTQI+ · Pride · Neo-tribes · Sub-tribes · Participant observation

6.1 Introduction

Pride events celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex and other non-heterosexual (LGBTQI+) identities. Tracing back to the 1969 riots at Stonewall Inn in New York, pride events have evolved into a celebration of otherness (Lamond 2018), transforming from being gay liberation marches into street parties (Laughland 2012) that celebrate the LGBTIQ+ culture (McNair and Hughes 2012). Such events provide LGBTQI+ community a platform not only for the celebration of the latest achievements in legal rights but also time for reflection and self-acceptance

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(Ammaturo 2016; Fuss 1991; Johnston 2005; Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy 2020). In doing so, these events contribute to social good by providing the general public with an exposure to what has traditionally been considered taboo, while at the same time helping LGBTQI+ individuals to experience public support and have a platform to demonstrate their identity (Johnston 2007).

Whilst LGBTQI+ events play a crucial role in debating sexuality and the remaking of social worlds, some argue they have become too influenced by the corporate sponsorship deals (Markwell and Waitt 2009). This is observed through organisers' focus on the lucrative financial outcomes and capitalisation on 'pink dollar'. Similarly, many metropolitan destinations worldwide jumped on the 'being proud' and 'out' bandwagon and utilised LGBTQI+ events to promote themselves as 'gay capitals' of the region or even the World (Markwell 2002). Nonetheless, LGBTQI+ events, whilst commercialised, continue to celebrate pride and the latest achievements for and in the community.

LGBTQI+ communities around the world use pride events as a public forum to communicate their identity and to seek support from a wider society (Ong and Goh 2018). LGBTQI+ events are the symbolic stages that not only modify the heteronormative (urban) spaces but also have a transformative power to mobilise participants' emotions to articulate collective non-heterosexual identities (Ammaturo 2016; Ong and Goh 2018; Markwell and Waitt 2009). These events form a foundation for identity building in the context of gay and lesbian identity politics (Ammaturo 2016). As such, the concept of neo-tribalism plays an important role in terms of solidifying community bonds through membership, shared sentiment, rituals and symbols (Vorobjovas-Pinta 2018b). This has synergies with Durkheim's notion of the 'ritual', where members of the community "both create bonds of solidarity, and produce 'meaning' or 'purpose' for collective action" (Ammaturo 2016, p. 19).

This chapter uses LGBTQI+ pride events to illustrate the interplay of the four characteristics of a neo-tribe. It further builds on the work by Hardy and Robards (2015), and Kriwoken and Hardy (2018) contributing to the discussion about the existence of sub-tribes.

6.2 Literature Review

6.2.1 The Emergence of Neo-Tribalism

The theoretical framework of neo-tribalism emerged during the transition from modernity to postmodernity, through the work of Michel Maffesoli (Bennett 1999). Maffesoli coined the concept of neo-tribalism in his seminal work *Les Temps des Tribus* (1988; later translated as *The Time of the Tribes* 1996). To Maffesoli (1996), neo-tribes are 'heterogeneous fragments', which persist as a hangover from the era of mass consumption. These fragmentary associations of people are conceptualised as fluid 'neo-tribes' rather than strictly bound subcultures, and this distinction forms

the core of Maffesoli's theoretical invention. Evans (1997, p. 229) best captures Maffesoli's understandings of such parameters:

Maffesoli's writings can be seen […] as a sociological concretisations and inscription of all those more abstract and rarefied debates in postmodern theorising around the themes of 'language games', 'interpretive communities', 'networks', the return to the microsphere of the fragment and fractality.

The neo-tribal concept was shaped into its present incarnation by a number of scholars—most notably by sociologist Andy Bennett (see Bennett 1999, 2002, 2005, 2011)—and in the late 1990s neo-tribal theory was consolidated as an alternative to the theory of subculture (Bennett 1999). This distinction was most evident in the field of youth cultural studies, as the concept of neo-tribalism exemplified the critical shift comprising 'post-subculture studies' (Hardy and Robards 2015).

The 2000s saw a series of critical debates as to the validity of the subcultural paradigm. A subculture was conceptualised as a relatively homogenous setting, within which individuals are held together in relatively stable, alternative-mainstream groups, such as goths or punks (Bennett 1999). These subcultures functioned as smaller and parallel models of the larger mono-cultural mainstream. Neo-tribalism, as it foregrounds fluidity, reflexivity, and individuality, then stands in stark juxtaposition with the culturally dominant, uniform, and class-based theory of subculture of the time (Bennett 1999, 2011; Robards and Bennett 2011).

Through these debates, neo-tribal theory indeed emerged as an alternative model as to how social groupings form, fragment or dissolve, and communicate amongst themselves and between each other (Greenacre et al. 2013). Tribes are more than a residual category of social life. They exist, often unnoticed, alongside modern society in a manner both complex and intertwined (Cova and Cova 2002).

To compare neo-tribes and the tribes of antiquity is to draw a distinction between purely affective bonds—emotional affinity and cultural like-mindedness—and the kinship bonds of pre-modern tribes. Archaic tribalism is also associated with coercive conformity, under which rules and systems of enforcement and punishment are leveraged to ensure acquiescence to tribal norms; neo-tribes, due to their flexible and mutable nature, rarely hold a codified set of rules and norms in common, and so have a lessened need for coercive normativity. Cova and Cova (2002) extend this idea to posit that modern neo-tribes represent collective conquest that stands in opposition to institutional power. Neo-tribes are themselves distinct among the social groupings of modernity. Meir and Scott (2007) suggest neo-tribes organise around locality, emotional affinity and passion, as opposed to predominant and economic modes of social sorting such as occupational, educational, class, or ethnic identities. The differences between neo-tribes and archaic tribes are presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Comparison of Neo-tribes and Archaic Tribes. Adapted from Cova and Cova (2002) and Meir and Scott (2007) (Reproduced from Vorobjovas-Pinta 2017)

Neo-tribes	Archaic tribes
Ephemeral and plural associations	Permanent and singular identity
A member can belong to multiple tribes	An individual is a member of one tribe only
Neo-tribal boundaries are fuzzy and conceptual	Tribal boundaries are physical
Members abound by shared sentiment, rituals and symbols	Members bond through kinship and dialect

6.2.2 Towards the Conceptualisation of Neo-Tribes

There have been numerous attempts to conceptualise neo-tribal theory, and to distil the characteristics essential for neo-tribal existence. The roots of these conceptualisations do, however, all derive from Maffesoli's (1996) seminal work, in which he distinguished six key aspects of tribalism:

The affectual nebula. This aspect refers to the feeling and passion which, contrary to more conventional explanations, constitute the essential ingredients of all social aggregations. As such, Maffesoli explains that the experience of the other is the basis of community.

Undirected being-together. For Maffesoli, the undirected being together is a universal given of neo-tribes. This aspect ultimately represents the power of inertia, which helps neo-tribes to perpetuate and prevail in their existing states. Before any determination or qualification there exists this vital spontaneity, which guarantees a culture its own puissance and solidity. 'Puissance', or drive as it might be regarded, provides an inherent energy and vital force to all people, as opposed to hierarchical frameworks of institutional power.

The religious model. Maffesoli emphasises this analogy, and suggests it is the core characteristic supporting the theory. He explains figurative religiosity through shared symbols and rituals, which create mutual emotions and affinity.

Elective sociality. This aspect elaborates on the advantages and opportunities provided by free-form sociality in contemporary society, especially in great metropolises. His suggestion is that in the absence of larger, organising structures in society, people become inclined towards smaller group affiliations, and will seek in turn to deepen these ties as an organising principle in their own lives.

The law of secrecy. Secrecy provides a protective mechanism with respect to the outside world. Individual identities become subordinated and subsumed by the overarching 'affinity group', or in other words, the neo-tribal bond.

Masses and lifestyles. Maffesoli places neo-tribes as micro-associations within the larger relational network of society. They become a conduit for collective creativity and expression, and an essential means for people with disparate backgrounds and lifestyles to negotiate co-existence and forge affective bonds. Neo-tribalism gives

meaning, locality, and sociality to the anonymised and economic organisation of society in large population hubs.

Following from the aspects described here, Arnould and Thompson (2005) position Maffesoli's neo-tribalism as part of consumer culture theory. The intersections are obvious: economic reorganisation prompted by the service workplace of post-industrial society, and inexorable globalisation, has driven intercultural exposure, cross-border integration, and limitless consumer choice, all of which combine to raise the social value of radical individualism, and ever more fragmentary identity constructions.

Further applications of the theory proceeded by organising social phenomena under the various characteristics of neo-tribalism. For example, Goulding and Shankar (2011) reviewed the theory through analysis of clubbing culture. The authors worked to determine whether clubbers might be viewed as members of a neo-tribe. The authors concluded that club attendees can indeed be regarded as members of a neo-tribe, as the activity of going out to a club involves individuals leaving behind the rules of everyday society. Such activity is necessarily limited in temporal duration; the individual must return to his or her day-to-day life and reality, and re-assume and conform to societal norms. The experience of clubbing may involve a sudden and novel set of social relations, which might entail role reversals, the mixing of social classes, and the formation of instant friendships, even if these reorientations and connections are themselves transitory. Furthermore, the experience may be marked by its intensity, especially involving pleasure and sensuousness. Following from this rationale, Goulding and Shankar (2011) asserted that neo-tribes are multiple and fluid, that they are playful, limited in their moral restraints, and that they are dynamic and ephemeral. The authors conceptualise neo-tribes as entrepreneurial, and state that they are bound by situated rules, codes and etiquette.

Hardy et al. (2013) proposed two major clusters of neo-tribal characteristics: the symbolic and the behavioural. The symbolic aspects encompass a sense of community, the sharing of a lifestyle, and the centrality of common social aspects, which permeate members' lives. The behavioural element is conceptualised as a "physical sharing of space" (Hardy and Robards 2015, p. 445). The authors note neo-tribes can be arranged around brands, labels and commercial goods. Similarly, Cooper et al. (2005) and Cova and Cova (2002) emphasise the importance of fellowship and a sense of belonging, which is manifested through shared passion, rituals, and consumption patterns, and the shared occupation of a particular physical or virtual space. As with neo-tribal collectives themselves, the symbolic core of their commitment is no stable construction, and itself varies through the life of the tribe; what is unitary is instead a mutual pride, and the coming together around the pursuit of a symbolic meaning shared in the moment (e Silva and dos Santos 2012). The diffuse construction of meaning and symbolism is held together by a shared sense of togetherness, and of common emotions, lifestyles, morals and beliefs, as well as tribal consumption practices and patterns.

Readings of these studies converge on a surprisingly consistent understanding of Maffesoli's theories and insights. These various interpretations and analyses approach his seminal work from the authors' respective disciplinary frameworks

and foci, but their underlying applications of his principles remain broadly aligned. Drawing upon the aforementioned studies, and the seminal work by Maffesoli (1996), Vorobjovas-Pinta (2017, 2018a, b) proposes a model for the universal characteristics of neo-tribes. Neo-tribes can be conceptualised as possessing the following four characteristics: (a) fluidity in membership; (b) rituals and symbols; (c) shared sentiment; and (d) space.

6.2.3 Understanding the Four Characteristics of Neo-Tribalism

Neo-tribalism is characterised generally by fluidity, occasional gatherings, and dispersal (Bennett 1999; Goulding and Shankar 2011; Hardy et al. 2013). As proposed in the previous paragraph, neo-tribalism can be condensed into four overarching characteristics: shared sentiment, rituals and symbols, fluidity in membership, and space (Vorobjovas-Pinta 2017, 2018a, b). Figure 6.1 depicts these characteristics, and the relationships between them.

Shared sentiment within neo-tribal theory represents an impulsive desire to seek out others with shared interests, sensibilities, and passions; this then has an impact on patterns of consumption (Cova and Cova 2002; Hardy and Robards 2015). Similar patterns of consumption can themselves act as means of connection between people, and the potential for consumer behaviour to express, strengthen and share identity has clear import from a marketing perspective (Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999; Cova

Fig. 6.1 Neo-tribal characteristics (Reproduced from Vorobjovas-Pinta 2017)
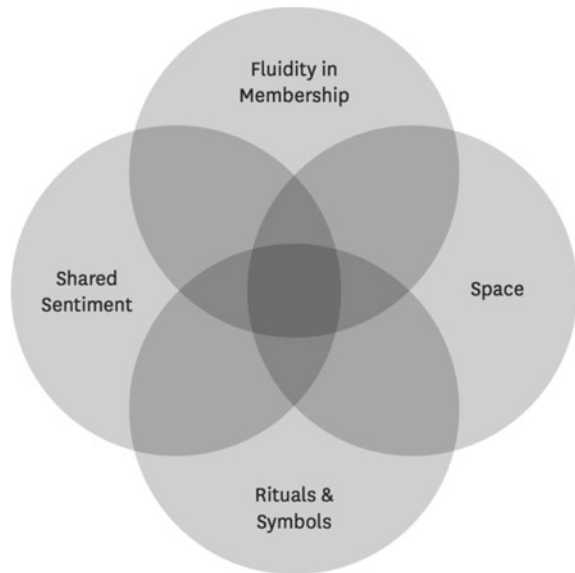
and Cova 2002). This aspect has synergies with Turner's (1969) conceptualisation of 'communitas', whereby a sense of fellowship can subsume individual hierarchies of status. The overarching phenomenon demanding consideration is linkage between shared sentiment and its empowerment of individual members of a neo-tribe to gain strength, and a sense of identity, from their envelopment and connection within that group.

Neo-tribal groupings driven by the shared sentiment also possess unique rituals and symbols. Rituals and symbols pertain to the neo-tribe as they help it to shape, sustain, and understand the social bonds between the members (Maffesoli 1996). The need for such rituals and symbols is indeed heightened, and not diminished, by their ephemeral nature; the need to 'consolidate and affirm their union' leaves dynamic neo-tribes in a constant effort to develop or appropriate symbols and means of strengthening their unstable bonds (Arnould and Thompson 2005, p. 874).

Fluidity in membership is understood as the phenomenon of people coming together from different walks of life for a shared purpose. The existence of the neo-tribal group is temporary and transitory, in that its removal from day-to-day routine is only enabled by its essential transience. Neo-tribal membership does not propose permanent and structural change. There is no compulsion to even maintain one exclusive tribal affiliation (Goulding and Shankar 2011). People may not only belong to multiple tribes, but they may also experience paradoxical conflicts within and between them (Cova and Cova 2002).

Cova and Cova (2002) suggest that the tribe, or at least part of its membership, experiences a need to occupy a defined space for its tribal gatherings. On another note, Hughson (1999) suggested that neo-tribes gravitate towards a central point of assembly. In his work on LGBTQI+ resorts, Vorobjovas-Pinta (2018b) explains that space is at the centre of a neo-tribe—it is a connective thread that enables a neo-tribal coalescence. Spaces are used as sites of performance for the collective manifestation of identity. Spaces, for this purpose, can be physical (e.g. a football stadium, a concert hall) or virtual (e.g. internet forum, a smartphone app) (Robards and Bennett 2011).

6.3 Methodology

A participant observation approach was adopted in this research which integrated observations, note taking, informal conversations and formal semi-structured interviews with event attendees (spectators and participants). Becker and Geer (1957) explain that the most complete form of sociological datum is that collected by the participant observer as it provides a holistic explanation of a phenomenon as opposed to a point-in-time view. Such an approach has been used previously to study pride events (see: Binnie and Klesse 2011) as it provides a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon allowing the researcher to construct a more robust explanation based on own and learnt experiences. Participation observations were conducted at multiple pride events including both urban and rural locations in Australia and the

United Kingdom. For the purpose of this paper, these observations are combined to explain the role of neo-tribes at both a tribe and a sub-tribe level.

6.4 Findings

Pride events provide an opportunity to examine neo-tribes at multiple levels: the macro-tribe perspective of the LGBTQI+ community as well as the sub-tribe perspectives based on common sexual and gender identities, or interest or membership defined by public groups and fetishes with which the individual identifies. Given that pride parades are an overall performance, it may be argued that this performance is composed of multiple sub-tribe performances. To that extent, sub-neo-tribes are influenced by the agenda of the tribe, and in turn contribute to the agenda of the tribe.

Vorobjovas-Pinta (2018b) notes four principles of neo-tribes being: fluidity, space, sentiment, and rituals. The relevance and performance of these principles in practice are informed by the overall macro-tribe, and then interpreted and enacted by the sub-tribe. This paper provides a reflection of the tribe and sub-neo-tribes for each principle.

6.4.1 Fluidity

Hardy and Robards (2015) and Vorovjovas-Pinta (2018a; b) explain that neo-tribes form around a common agenda wherein members come together for a specific purpose—as opposed to abiding membership. Such groups are often held together by emotion and passion rather than formalised connections. Pride parades provide the opportunity for the LGBTQI+ community to collect for the common purpose of creating more inclusive communities through protest-based-celebration, and a display of the community (Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy 2020). This collection being based on emotional affinity and empathy through a shared sense of being gender or sexually diverse, the commonality of experiences (such as coming out and living one's identity), and a camaraderie of being different to the norm.

While such a collection is necessary to the performance of pride parades and events, it contributes to individual wellbeing by providing a collective sense of identity and a demonstration of the significance of the community thus helping to reduce minority-stress typically experienced by the LGBTQI+ community (Swank et al. 2012; Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy 2020). Within a rural context for instance, a young lesbian was thrilled to meet others who were similar to her and where she did not stand out as being different, given that she was being called a 'tranny' at school because of her diverse sexuality. Such fluid collections also provide the basis for forming long-term associations with similar others.

Pride events enable the collection of sub-tribes that may come together for the purpose of the event to represent their unique perspective. In doing so, such events

help provide a better means of identifying with one's sexuality by demonstrating the heterogeneous nature of LGBTQI+ lives and identities. For instance, realising you can be gay and masculine as opposed to begin effeminate—which is a common stereotype of being gay projected through the media. In addition, the fluidity of the event provides an opportunity for those who are not public about their sexual and gender identity to view or participate in the event, for a confined period of time, and in a relatively anonymous manner. Anecdotal evidence from a LGBTQI+ advocacy group in Australia suggests that it is not uncommon for older men for instance to come and view a pride parade from a distance wondering what life could have been like if they were out themselves.

The idea of fluidity can also be extended to include the event with pride events typically providing a liminal space departing from heteronormativity. This liminality appears necessary to create an environment where such a collection can happen. The temporal boundaries imposed by the fluidity of the event can also contribute to its support within groups with opposing views as it provides a definite containment of the event. In environments where pride events are conducted for the first time, such liminality marks the start of transformation—challenging members of the general community, encouraging the public display of support and acceptance, and finally creating an opportunity for ongoing discourse. Rural communities that have hosted such events for the first time often appear to be surprised at the support such events receive and its impact on transforming and challenging traditional beliefs, the citizens perceptions of the community, and the ongoing inclusive environment they foster.

6.4.2 Space

The idea of space explains the geographic location of the tribe (Vorobjovas-Pinta 2018a, b). At an overall level, pride events by their very nature create a temporal inversion of space identity creating an environment where diverse sexual and gender identities can be displayed. In doing so, it challenges the norms of the environment, creating an expectation of the alternative. This transformation being essential to create a safe and inclusive environment that allows the expression of the neo-tribe's identity and a demonstration of their sentiment.

Within a pride parade context, the notion of space includes the route taken by the parade. In order to maximise impact, this route typically encompasses main thorough fares within a location—thus helping to communicate the message to a broader audience. From a sub-tribe perspective, space concerns the location of the sub-tribe within the overall parade. This location often being based on tradition (for instance the *Dykes on Bikes* marking the opening of the Sydney Mardi Gras), respect within the community (with Indigenous community members often being the first contingent in Australian pride parades closely followed by the 78′ers who marched in

the first Australian Mardi Gras), and sponsorship support (with prominent sponsors being placed early in the parade).

The notion of space also encompasses venues used to host pride events. This location often being carefully considered based on the expected audience, as well as the perceived community sentiment towards the event. Such venues could include public locations such as community parks and centres where there is greater acceptance, or private and ticketed locations where there are concerns as to the readiness of the community.

6.4.3   Shared-Sentiment

Neo-tribes typically form around shared values and sentiments (Hardy and Robards 2015; Vorobjovas-Pinta 2018b) including aspirations and support for a particular lifestyle. Pride parades by their very nature are imbued with purpose—this purpose being a reflection of the local LGBTQI+ community's sentiment and status within the location (Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy 2020). Though such events commenced as a means of protest, for instance the Stonewall parade in 1969 and the Sydney Mardi Gras in 1978, their role and message has typically evolved given the greater acceptance of the LGBTQI+ community. For the tribe, the primary purpose of these events differs based on the location of the event. For instance, while the Sydney Mardi Gras and the London Mardi Gras have evolved to be a celebration of diversity given their metropolitan locations, pride events in rural communities still serve one of three roles: as an invitation to the general population to experience the different, a demonstration of the significance of the community and its supporters, or an event to bring the LGBTQI+ community together. Despite their location however, the sentiment of the tribe remains focused on an overall support of the notion of pride events and a representation of the community—underpinned by the common life experience of being gender or sexually diverse. Sub-tribes provide a unique interpretation of the overall sentiment based on their identity or membership.

At an event level, the sentiment is informed by the theme of the event—which is often based on prevailing political discourse. For instance, the Sydney Mardi Gras has had a unique theme each year as a statement to the prevailing socio-political climate. Within a rural context, this theme may also be influenced by the perceived readiness of the community. For instance, rural pride events may position themselves as being family-friendly events that celebrate inclusion as opposed to LGBTQI+ pride events in order to avoid associations with the nudity and promiscuity attached to pride events in urban centres—as such promiscuity is often a barrier to participation by the general population.

6.4.4   Ritual and Symbols

The symbols and rituals include the signs, colours, performances, and behaviours that are an inherent component of the group, as well as the event (Hardy et al. 2013). The nexus of these create a safe space where the liminality of the pride event can be experienced and where identities can be publicly enacted (Ford and Markwell 2017). At an overall level, streets and venues are often decorated with pride flags and other symbols for the duration of the event. These decorations being essential to transform a heteronormative landscape into one that is conducive to creating a liminal safe space. The use of slogans, and pro-pride speech also forms part of the symbolism of such events, helping to create a shared sense meaning of being of an alternative sexual or gender identity, as well as contributing to a sense of bonding amongst the community.

At the sub-tribe level, signs and symbols can be observed based on the brands as well as the sexual and gender identities represented. A dual identity is displayed by sub-tribes through the integration of symbols and rituals. For instance, Australians Indigenous LGBTQI+ individuals typically open the event through a smoking ceremony and display their colours and flags alongside the pride flag and the paraphernalia associated with it. Symbolism can also be observed at a commercial brand level. Within metro locations, these typically involve international brands that sponsor the event and participate as floats in the parade—such as Qantas airlines involvement in the Sydney Mardi Gras. These brands have typically been criticised for contributing to the commercialisation of pride events which take the event away from the values and purpose they have traditionally represented. In rural environments, these brands include local businesses and retailers—the local involvement being key to contributing to the community nature of such events and making them feel more authentic to their original purpose. Sub-tribes may also display their identity through costumes associated with their unique sexual and gender identities. Pups for instance, who are a subculture of the gay BDSM community, dress up resembling a dog, and those into leather wearing leather chaps or similar paraphernalia. These unique costumes, and interpretations of the pride message, being key to demonstrate the heterogeneity of LGBTQI+ identities.

6.5   Conclusions

This chapter has presented a discussion on the role of neo-tribes at a tribe and sub-tribe level in regard to pride events. Using a participant observation approach, the explanation provided indicates that pride events need to be examined at the level of sub-tribes due to their nuances, and their contribution to the overall event. This chapter has discussed how multiple identities co-exist and contribute to towards both a holistic community identity and a unified pride message. Future research may

explore this notion in greater detail to understand how sub-tribes contribute to, and in turn are influenced by, the neo-tribe they belong to.

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Chapter 7
Dark Tourism Tribes: Social Capital as a Variable

Hugues Seraphin and Maximiliano E. Korstanje

Abstract There is a recent morbid tendency to consume (gaze) sites of mass death, mourning and suffering. This tendency was baptized in different forms such as dark tourism, thana-tourism or mourning tourism to name only a few. To date, no matter the multiplication of theories and studies, two great tendencies coexist. On one hand, some voices allude to the dark tourism as a mechanism of reisilience which helps community to recover after a disaster takes hit. The other signals to the pedagogical functions of dark tourism as a fertile ground to develop empathy with the Other's pain. The present chapter reviews the strengths and weaknesses of both position with strong focus on the cultures of neo-tribes. Based on the previous publications on Maffesoli, as well as the theory of social capital, we lay the foundations towards a new understanding of dark tourism which is helpful not only for academicians but by practitioners and policy-makers.

Keywords Neo-tribalism · Dark tourism · Social capital · Vodoo · Ground zero

7.1 Introduction

Dark tourism has to do with sites with lugubrious character such as institutions of punishment like decommissioned prisons (Hodgkinson and Urquhart 2017), or sites associated with massacre and/or crime scenes (Tunbridge and Ashworth 2017), such as Dachau, a former concentration camp in Germany (Lennon and Webber 2017). The term *Dark Tourism* often connotes several undistinguished definitions which very on time and culture, but what is equally important the term includes broader meanings which sometimes sound unclear (Hartmann et al. 2018). Terms such as *Thana-Tourism*, *War-Tourism*, *Doom-tourism* and *Prison-Tourism* are indifferently

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employed by academics, creating, so to speak, a great dispersion in the produced knowledge. Paradoxically, while the public opinion showed further interests of this issue, the academic debates falls into a climate of misunderstanding and confusion about what dark tourism means (Hooper and Lennon 2018).

Today, for the popular opinion dark tourism is often associated with the term 'thanatourism', defined as "tourism motivated by associations with death" (Seaton 1996, cited in Tunbridge and Ashworth 2017, p. 13). That said, some forms of tourism even if designed to be dark, could be considered to be bright for some people, particularly if it helps them to reconnect with their heritage and as a result helping them to understand who they are (Carr 2017; Tunbridge and Ashworth 2017). Additionally, "dark tourism initiatives frequently profess a social mission, with site providers arguing that the interpretation of dissonant heritage promotes peace through tourism by way of, for example, (re)educating visitors" (Dunkley 2017, p. 108). Dark tourism is also an opportunity to "see beneath the surface when only surface is available" (Spaul and Wilbert 2017, p. 92). As Cohen (2011) puts it, dark sites offer an historical lesson about a specific-contested event and are widely demanded by those citizens who are particularly interested in history. Beyond dark tourism sites often lies the veil of authenticity. Visitors do not only want to experience something new, they want to live what others unfortunately suffered (Cohen 2011). Dark tourism reavives long dormant sentiment of solidarity and reciprocity with the victims (Sather-Wagstaff 2016).

In this context, Hammond and Wellington (2013, p. 163), define 'conceptual framework' as "a general orientation to a topic using a mix of published literature, personal knowledge and speculations on the kind of relationship that might emerge in the main study". This chapter articulates and built around the following framework (Fig. 7.1) extracted from the literature review:

Fig. 7.1 Conceptual framework of the study. *Source* The authors

1. Dark tourism frequently has a social mission, such as the promotion of peace, (re)education of visitors and also provides an opportunity to investigate in depth a topic or experience (Dunkley 2017; Spaul and Wilbert 2017).
2. Dark tourism is a contextual and cultural phenomenon (Séraphin 2017a, b).
3. Social capital happens through social interaction and ultimately contributes to community wellbeing (Bowdin 2011).
4. 'People are increasingly gathering together in multiple and ephemeral groups (…) We can readily observe the emerging of tribalism' (Cova and Cova 2002: 596–597).

The chapter is organised as follows:

Section 7.2 (overview of the study), provides a background to the study. Section 7.3, is a literature. Preliminary conclusions are drawn. From Sect. 7.4, both study-cases are presented for gaining further understanding on dark tourism, and the differences between the different forms of dark tourism from a tribes and the type and level of social capital developed. (echoing Hammond and Wellington's method (2013) in comparative research). The conceptual framework fleshed out in the Sect. 7.1 is used to discuss the findings as well as its strengths and weaknesses. Finally conclusions are drawn and implications for knowledge and practices fleshed out.

7.2 Overview of the Study

To some extent, Nazism has created a criminal bureaucracy to exterminate the undesired Other (Korstanje 2016). As a result of this, countless concentration camps are serving as living reminders of the Holocaust and the conditions that facilitated the rise to power of Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany. To what extent, a site, like the concentration camp, is symbolically marked or whether a site such as Hitler's house remains systematically unmarked depends on the politics of dark tourism (Korstanje and Baker 2018). Here two assumptions should be undertaken. Although the tragedy (like 9/11 or the Holocaust) places lay-people in equal conditions before the suffering, engendering a much deeper sentiment of reciprocity in others, no less true the imposition of heritage (consumption) imposes a message which is politically manipulated by the status quo. Secondly, while the (fabricated) lesson does not tell the historical facts nor the socio-economic background that preceded the disaster, the possibilities the same event repeats are really higher. (Korstanje 2016; Sather-Wagstaff 2016; Tzanelli 2016).

This tension between dark tourism as a pedagogical actor and dark tourism as a form of entertainment still remains open (Biran et al. 2011; Stone 2006; Stone and Sharpley 2008). In this respect, Dachau and its concentration camp (KZ in German), is a good example, as since the 1990s the destination has been marketed as a (dark) tourism product, and yet is mainly visited for memorial, educational and pedagogical reasons by Germans and non-Germans (Lennon and Webber 2017). Other relevant

examples include, forced and slave labour camps, prisons, places of deportation, bunkers, etc. (Carr 2017). Dark tourism can also be considered to have a bright side for some destinations, as they are mainly known for their association with this eponymous form of tourism (Seaton 2017). For instance Bran Castle in southern Transylvania, contributes to the appeal of Romania as a destination (Light 2017).

Dark tourism (like the visit of Bram Castle) can also be seen as bright as it has a ludic and light-hearted enjoyment aspect to it (Light 2017).

As a field of research, dark tourism is still open and dynamic. Actual research could be seen as reminiscent of the last chapter of Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas Prince of Abyssinia*, entitled 'A conclusion in which nothing is concluded' (Séraphin 2018). Recent research conducted by Séraphin (2017a, b), also revealed that dark tourism is a contextual phenomenon, whose development depends on culture. In so doing, Séraphin (2017a, b) suggested that the places in France where recent terrorist attacks happened are unlikely to be turned into dark tourism sites because France is quite a conservative country in some death-related aspects. On that basis, it could be said that when investigating dark tourism, it is important to identify context variables, culture being one of them. Indeed, a variable is a factor that changes or influences something but sometimes they are not controllable or even identifiable (Hammond and Wellington 2013). This book chapter considers social capital as an important variable within the different occurrences of dark tourism.

Besides the great dispersion of definitions (Hopper and Lennon 2018), a troubling aspect that affects the applied research today, seems to be the adoption of a coherent methodology in empirical research (Korstanje 2016; Tzanelli 2016). In the fields of dark tourism applied research is associated with the quantitative research based on questionnaires. Although the discipline advanced a lot over the recent decades, the obtained outcomes came with limitations and problems. Part of the problem stems from the fact that sometimes interviewees do not respond truthfully to protect their interests or because they find it difficult to express their innermost feelings. This suggests that the administration of questionnaires or informal interviews led to confusing findings (Korstanje 2016). Additional problems are related to basic differences in the cultural background of researched tourists. To wit, Muslims see death differently than many secular western tourists and vice-versa. The struggle to build a bridge between quantitative and qualitative methods, towards a more contextual discussion on dark tourism, seems to be far from being resolved to date.

7.3 Literature Review

7.3.1 Social Capital

The term was originally coined by Bourdieu (1989) who following the Marxian debates, was interested to unravel the connection of economic production and class-cultural reproduction. As he observed, classes were stable over time simply because

they successfully reproduced the cultural basis of their own perpetuation. Unlike Marx, who believed the class produced a strong ideological power to subordinate its members, Bourdieu realized precisely that the opposite direction. Social capital should be seen as a symbolic disposition, which cements through education, reproduces, remaining inexpungable for the agency, dominant forms of control from generation to generation. This theory did not only revolutionize the social sciences but shed light on a specific feature of capitalism, the exertion of power and its material asymmetries. "Social capital consists of the possession of material or cultural resources that derive from group membership, modes of production, relationships, networks of influence and support" (Getz and Page 2016, p. 99). As a concept and theoretical framework, 'social capital' is not widely used, instead, more and more attention is given to 'social capital': interrelationships, connectivity, trust, community networking, community identity, community pride, social cohesion and reciprocity, tribes, tribal, neo-tribe, etc. (Bennett 1999; Cova and Cova 2002; Quinn 2013). All those terms fall under the umbrella of 'Social Capital'. For example, in an event management context, social capital is about the capacity of an event to binding the community together (Richards and Palmer 2010). This happens through social interaction, which ultimately contributes to community wellbeing (Bowdin 2011).

As events and tourism are closely related (Getz 2008), the entwined relation between social capital and events should find some correspondence in the one between social capital and (dark) tourism. In view of this, this chapter has one clear objective:

Investigating the difference between different dark tourist tribes from a social capital point of view.

7.3.2 Dark Tourism and the Culture of Neo-Tribes

Methodologically speaking, there is a great controversy revolving around the notion of neo-tribalism as a separated aspect of subcultural theory. Some voices have observed that beyond the figure of neo-tribes lies an interesting methodological source to study objectively and understand fluid and complex forces as identity, consumption or lifestyle. To a closer look, people are widely conditioned by voluntarily forms of associations and shared sensibilities which crystalize in the neo-tribes (Andy 1999). The idea of *consumer tribes* denotes a new theoretical position within the epistemology of social sciences, and of course exhibits a fertile ground for further interrogations in the years to come. One of the pioneering studies in these fields can be traced back to Maffesoli's works (Maffesoli 1996) who argued eloquently that the process of globalization, far from leading the society to a climate of solipsism and individualism, recreates the conditions for the rise of neo-tribes which look for the collective maximization of pleasure. In his view, consumers often seek to form collective cultural ethos (lifestyles) oriented to avoid the costs while maximizing the gains. Needless to say, such a debate not only revolutionised the constellations of sociology but paved the ways for a new paradigm to interpret the cultural changes to come.

Today, the theory that proclaims society may be segmented by class of consumers have arrived to stay in the fields of marketing and management, and very well it is captivating the attention of many sociologists. Cova et al. (2007) hold that the term consumer tribes is very hard to grasp. In fact, the lay-people often grouped in the same segments are moved by multiple reasons and goals which remain very difficult to classify. Secondly, consumers are associated to people in quest of destroying all resources at their path. At a closer look, these authors add, consumers are changing the consumed object (and services) opening the doors to a culture of creativity that revitalizes the social ethos. Part of the prejudices revolving around the term came from ill-interpretations imposed by Marxism and neo-Marxism (Cova et al. 2007). As they go on to write, "*in the first instance, let's be clear that Consumer Tribes rarely consume brands and products – even the most mundane ones- without adding to them, grappling with them, blending them with their own lives and altering them. Consumer tribes do things. Consumers are people, yes, but people who live in a specific social and historical situation*". (Cova et al. 2007: 4).

Following the above cited excerpt, some interesting studied moved to show the strange connection of neo-tribalism and the stereotypes and long dominant discourse left by colonialism (Canniford and Shankar 2007; Pace et al. 2007; Rata 2000). Still further, Canniford and Shankar (2007) explain how media culture dispossess and reappropriates from the notion of primitivism in order to prepare (if not commoditize) seductive products for consumers. As imagined as the opposite for the civilized culture, the primitiveness occupied a central position in the Western social imaginary since the colonial period to date. To wit, the western rationality would educate and socialize the natives in order for they to avoid a rapid and inevitable disappearance. This uncanny paternalism situated symbolically the culture as a form of mediation between European travellers with this non-Western Other. Today, the industry of tourism (and to be more exact surf-culture) not only commoditizes the non-Western culture but also re-situates the natural-oriented lifestyle as a countercultural rebellion to the ruling elite. The discourse of returning to the state of nature evinces a need of reappropriating from the Other through the Western rationality, widely aligned to the colonial rule. The ideals of freedom, simplicity and pureness which today epitomize the modern surfer, came from the archetype of the noble savage. It is noteworthy that heritage consumption engages in two lost worlds, the colonial periphery forgets the cruelty and oppression of colonial powers, and the global capitalism which nowadays commoditize these cultures as a form of heritage spectacle (Otnes and Maclaran 2007).

In the fields of tourism, there is little said about neo-tribalism, less by the seminal paper authored by Hardy and Robards (2015) who acknowledge that one of the limitations of segmenting tourists per class, income or consumer habits consists in a simplification of their own behaviour. Beyond the veil of segmentation lies the needs of classifying consumers to optimize profits. These categories, far from being self-explanatory, obscure more than they clarify. To resolve the dilemma, they offer the neo-tribal approach as a new richer opportunity of deepening the understanding of tourists' symbolized habits. Authors alert to the needs of challenging Maffesoli's thesis. Neotribes are not stable or fluid, the specialists suggest, but it rather cements

table forms of connection and dialogue. All these above-debated points pave the ways for new (more critical interrogations) on the role played by neo-tribalism and dark heritage consumption. What are the benefits and problems of neo-tribalism associated to the morbid consumption?

7.4 Dark Tourism, Social Capital and Tribalism

So far this chapter has established that having a special interest for a specific form of (dark) tourism, is to some extent being part of a tribe. Indeed, a tribe by definition gather people with similar narcissistic interests; or who identify themselves to something similar; or share the same religious belief; etc. (Cova and Cova 2002). This chapter has also established the connection between social capital and tribalism. Cova and Cova (2002), explain that the postmodern era is partly characterised by the fact it has fragmented the society into groups or 'tribes'. (Dark) tourism is also doing the same, by segmenting people according to their interests. That said, what is still an unknown, is the level of similarities and differences (in terms of social capital) between the different tribes generated by dark tourism.

   To discuss the differences and impacts between varieties of dark tourism adopting a social capital lens (variable), two examples will be considered: first, voodoo as a religious ceremony (Seraphin and Nolan 2016), and Ground Zero, as an attraction point. Both selected examples of dark tourism fall under the umbrella of (dark) heritage tourism. Indeed, according to Séraphin et al. (2018), there are three types of heritage: built heritage (e.g. forts and relics), scientific heritage (e.g. plants and birds) and cultural heritage (e.g. fine art and customs). Voodoo falls within cultural heritage (intangible) while Ground Zero under built heritage tourism (tangible). Heritage as such is a growing part of the tourism industry due to a surge in nostalgia (Park 2014; Séraphin et al. 2018). Heritage that appears as a secure and stable platform that could be viewed as a re-enactment of the past, is often used and commodified by the tourism industry (Séraphin et al. 2018).

7.5 Similarities and Differences from the Social Capital Lens

7.5.1 Voodoo: Dark Tourism (Case 1)

Voodoo comes from West Africa and appeared during slavery time as a way for slaves to cope with the degradations of slavery but also to resist forced conversion to Christianity (Iannacoonne 1995). It was also a way for the slaves to keep a strong connection with their motherland, Africa, and additionally, to retain their humanity, resist the masters' oppression and to adapt to the new environment. In a

seminal paper entitled alien-nation: zombies, immigrants and millennial capitalism'', Comaroff and Comaroff (2002) examine the connection between witchcraft and the effects of colonization in the domestic South African economy. Following this viewpoint, the (black) magic acts as an internal force which is disposed for the wizard to operate (in his name) in the bodies of the white lords. While colonization (and now capitalism) historically exploited the natives' bodies to amass a wealth which was repatriated to Europe, now the use of magic or witchcraft aims to colonize the mind of the European oppressor. The same applies to the modern figure of zombie as it is imagined by the global spectatorship. The zombie was more than a monster as George Romero's films shows; it was a creation of the voodoo in Haiti. The idea of an undead which is manipulated by a local wizard aligned with the belief that the "white colonizer" can be colonized as well (Korstanje 2019).

In sum, the practice of Voodoo is led by a Master also called *Hougan,* who is a priest, healer, fortune teller, exerciser and entertainer. The ceremony has a number of practices such as prayer, music, dance, mystical rituals of witchcraft, and dark magic. As a religion, Voodoo is still playing an important role in Haitian culture and beliefs (Séraphin and Nolan 2015). "Participating in religious ritual, whatever that ritual may be, is a public expression of a shared understanding and acceptance of a common identity" (Andrews and Leopold 2013, cited in Séraphin and Nolan 2015, p. 224). Therefore, it is understandable that as a religion Voodoo contributes to Haitian identity (Séraphin and Nolan 2015). That said, Voodoo as a ceremony has been commodified and turned into a tourism product. In some instances, the authenticity of the religion and its rituals can be questioned.

There is no doubt that Voodoo has a huge potential from a social capital point of view. Not only had the religion managed to keep a group (slaves) together, but it is still an important aspect of their life centuries later. Indeed, "it is said that Haitians are 80% Catholic and 100% Voodooist and religion is the mainstay of Haitian society" (Séraphin and Nolan 2015, p. 221). The social capital developed is between Haitians. As Voodoo is now used as a tourism product, it also involves non-Haitians tourists (Séraphin and Nolan 2015). Thus, the social capital developed is also between Haitians and tourists. During a long time (1939–2012), Haiti has used its culture and particularly the Voodoo religion to attract visitors, as depicted by the first designed logo (Fig. 7.2) of the Haitian Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO). Indeed, the logo represents a black mambo or Hougan, who is the female priest in the Voodoo religion (Séraphin et al. 2018).

More importantly, Séraphin (2017a, b) also argued that dark tourism is a sustainable form of economic activity for an emerging destination like Haiti, because it does not have considerable negative impact on the environment or on the interaction between locals; instead, it contributes to cultural exchange between locals and visitors, while meeting the economic needs of the locals. From a social capital point of view, Voodoo could be summarised as follow (Fig. 7.3).

Figure 7.3 is inspired by the triple helix model. "The triple helix model is being widely used as a source of inspiration for policies and programmes aimed at fostering innovation. This is evolving across the range of policymaking geographical scales, as

Fig. 7.2 Haitian DMO logo
(1939–2012). *Source*
Ministry of Tourism Haiti
(1939)

Fig. 7.3 Social capital and
Voodoo. *Source* The author
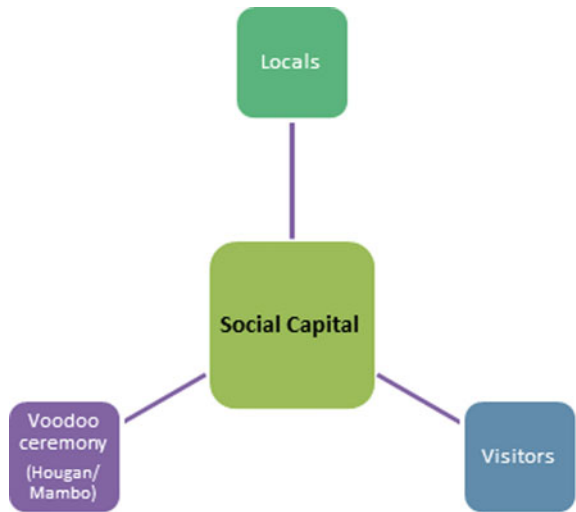
well as independently of the geographies of context that determine different frame-
work conditions for promoting innovation" (Rodrigues and Melo 2013, p. 1675). As
a model, the helix model was first implemented in academia to model active collab-
oration between government, industry and universities (Saad and Zawdie 2008), in
other words, a collaboration between public, private sector and academic institutions
(Carlisle et al. 2013). In the context of Voodoo and (dark) tourism, the helix model
represents an interaction between locals, visitors and the Hougan and/or mambo, and
is associated with terms like social capita, sustainability and branding. Based on the

fact that the Haitian DMO rebranded itself and moved away from the Voodoo logo, it is legitimate to wonder whether or not, Voodoo, and more broadly dark tourism is a suitable image for a destination. Indeed, "brand may avoid evoking negative emotion linked to past brand issues and failures as they may potentially negate the constructive effects of heritage" (Rose et al. 2016, cited in Séraphin et al. 2018, p. 99).

7.5.2   Ground Zero: Dark Tourism (Case 2)

On 11 September of 2001, four civilian airplanes were weaponized against the commercial and military icons of the most important power of the world, the United States. Al-Qaeda, a terrorist cell directed by Osama Bin Laden, planned the bloodiest attacks on American soil after Pearl Harbor. This event not only shocked public opinion worldwide but also generated escalated effects that harmed seriously tourist destinations (Bonham et al. 2006; Mansfeld and Pizam 2006). Against any odds, tourism in New York city recovered to numbers it had witnessed before the attack and Ground Zero developed into a symbolic emblem of terrorism and the War on Terror. Nowadays, Ground Zero is presented as one of the city's tourist attractions (Korstanje 2016; Lisle 2004; Stone 2012; Sturken 2004). This begs an interesting question: Is Ground Zero or dark tourism a way of commoditizing the disaster or violence? Or is it simply a pedagogic instrument to inform others what happened there?

In her seminal book, *Heritage that Hurts,* Sather-Wagstaff (2016) explores the liminal spaces of Ground Zero and their connection with human solidarity. Based on a self-ethnography, she understands that dark tourism exhibits a mediatory role between the self and its finitude. Since 9/11 affected her biography in many senses, she toys with the belief that the Other's death may be an opportunity to live for others. From Hiroshima to Pearl Harbor, the greater disasters are sold to a person or global spectatorship, who was not there when the disasters actually hit. The term "heritage that hurts" refers to the "exceptional status" produced by the terrorist attack, which evoked a much deeper sentiment of solidarity and support for America as never before (Sather-Wagstaff 2016). However, once the political power introduced the message to be told to visitors the nature of this solidarity transformed in a new product. The new message sent might overlook the historical facts beyond the event, but also imposes a political disposition, which is unilateral and arbitrary. The allegory of the 9/11 site was externally designed by professional politics but is negotiated and internalized by subjective agency in each encounter. This dialogical tension between politics and tourists' agency is embodied in dark tourism consumption. The introduction of the theory of social capital to dark tourism fields not only is innovative but also helps in resolving part of the methodological problems existing research shows.

7.6   Similarities and Differences

The symbolic encounters of Voodoo and Ground Zero have been placed under the critical lens of scrutiny in the precedent sections, but what are the commonalities and differences between tourist consumption in the contexts of Voodoo and Ground Zero?

At first glimpse, both encounters (Voodoo and Ground Zero) start from a morbid nature of tourism consumption. In fact, Voodoo is a way to communicate and pay tribute to victims. The same applies to Ground Zero where terrorist attacks hit New York suddenly and unexpectedly. External threats often interrogate the essence of the self as well as its ontological sense of security. When this happens, the self is moved to express a testimony to other citizens. This activates a sentiment of communion with the victims. However, unlike Ground Zero, Voodoo externalizes a repressed state of pain, which resulted from the colonial exploitation, while it is re-directed against the white ruler. In the Ground Zero case, terrorists not only were culturally incorporated into the society they overly hated, but they were also strangers in their own home. Voodoo is a reaction to the colonial intruder, whereas terrorism acts as the adoption of the logic that anyone anywhere can be a victim of their own neighbour. Terrorists are native-born of the societies they attack while tourists are foreigners. The act of killing foreigner (tourists) inscribes in the needs of destabilizing the local government harming not only its credibility as the warrantor of security but also declining the social bondage through the articulation of a climate of fear. In this vein, dark tourism plays an ambiguous role, which consists in commoditizing the "Other" while re-energizing the solidarities of the survivors. Paying attention to the performance of the event, and how the locals internalize it, is vital in this conceptual debate.

To compare the performance of events and venues as related to heritage, culture, communities and social changes, Hammond and Wellington (2013), developed a model, referred to as the *seven interlocking spheres of performance.* This model is going to be adapted (Table 7.1) and used to establish the similarities and differences between Voodoo (event) and Ground Zero (venue/sightseeing).

Table 7.1 Interlocking spheres of performance

The seven interlocking spheres of performance	Voodoo	Ground Zero
To heal	/	/
To deal with the divine and demonic	/	X
To teach or persuade	/	X
To create beauty	X	X
To make or change identity	X	X
To foster community	/	/
To entertain	/	X

Source The authors (adapted from Andrews and Leopold 2013)

Table 7.2 Dark tourism and social capital

Social capital criteria	Voodoo	Ground zero	Index 1 = very strong; 5 = very weak	
			Voodoo	Ground zero
Interrelationship	/	/	3	2
Connectivity	/	/	3	2
Trust	/	X	4	1
Community networking	/	/	1	1
Community identity	/	X	1	1
Community pride	/	X	1	1
Social cohesion	/	X	2	1
Bounded community	/	/	3	2
Social interaction	/	X	3	1
Community wellbeing	/	X	4	2

Source The authors

Voodoo and Ground Zero, are two examples of dark forms of tourism which are very different in terms of outcomes (Table 7.1; framework developed from Andrews and Leopold 2013). 'Healing' and 'fostering community' are the two elements they have in common. Those two terms are very strongly related to social capital (Sect. 7.2). The following section offers a comparison more focused on social capital. Table 7.2 provides a complementary and more focused comparative analysis.

7.7 Index of Dark Tourism Social Capital Development

The 'index' presented in Table 7.2 developed in this section is to some extend biased and subjective. The term bias is not a helpful one as it implies that there is a state of being unbiased. There is not (Hammond and Wellington 2013, p. 15).

As for the keywords listed in the column 'Social capital criteria' in Table 7.2, they are based on research listed in Sect. 7.3.1. As for the scale used in the column 'index', it is based on a Lickert scale. The boxes of the table have been populated using information collected in this study.

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 indicate both that Voodoo and Ground Zero appeal to two different tribes of dark tourism. That said, according to Table 7.2, Ground Zero is better in terms of developing social capital (for each criteria Ground Zero scored either 1 or 2. Voodoo, covers the scope 1–4). To some extent, Table 7.2 could be said to have adopted a Multi Criteria Decision Analysis. MCDA is a general term for methods providing an approach to support decision making in problems involving several criteria and choices (Botti and Peypoch 2013). To understand the competitiveness of a tourist destination, MCDA is also a relevant tool as this method takes

into consideration all the relevant factors that might typify the competitiveness of a destination (Botti and Peypoch 2013). This chapter hinted that MCDA is a relevant tool to support decision when clustering into 'tribes' types of special interest tourism such as a dark tourism as well as to assess the strengths of each 'tribe' according to their assets.

7.8 Discussions

7.8.1 (Dark) Tourism, Dialogical Space and Social Capital

Seraphin et al. (2019a) have provided evidence that Community Based Festivals (CBFs)_have the capacity to develop social capital between the members of a community (feelings of belongingness; national identity); but also extend to people belonging to different groups. In that instance, Community Based Festivals to showcase their values, celebrate a particular culture and strengthen and renew community identities. Against this background, CBFs "could be viewed as mediators between local residents and visitors" (Séraphin et al 2019a, b, p. 3). This is all the more important in the current context of tourism-phobia and anti-tourism movements (Séraphin et al. 2019a, b).

Séraphin and Nolan (2015) have already established the fact that Voodoo can bridge the gap between locals and visitors. It could also be added, that as a dark form of tourism, Voodoo contributes to the development of a dialogical space between locals, visitors and the Hougan/mambo, which might help to prevent issues like tourism-phobia as attending a Voodoo ceremony enables visitors to understand and respect the local culture; and for locals it is an opportunity to showcase its culture (Séraphin et al. 2018; Séraphin 2017a, b). While Séraphin et al. (2018, 2019a, b) argued that festivals and cultural events such as food related events have the potential to bridge the gap between locals and visitors, thanks to their educational potential, even at pre-visit stage (Séraphin et al. 2016), this book chapter is arguing that dark forms of tourism such as Voodoo also have the potential to educate visitors and other stakeholders.

7.8.2 Key Reflections

The development of social capital seems to be a significant variable in attending Voodoo ceremonies and visiting Ground Zero, and yet they are both dark forms of tourism. Does that mean that dark tourism should be extended in its meaning? At present, dark tourism seems to be seen as a general term for all forms of tourism associated with massacre, crime scenes and death. There is now a trend toward dissociating some forms of dark tourism from others, such as the forms of dark tourism

that could be associated with brightness. In this book chapter, another alternative perspective of dissociation is offered, namely 'social capital'.

7.8.3 Conceptual and Practical Implications

For dark tourism practitioners, this chapter provides evidence of the importance of including a social capital dimension with the activities as it strongly contributes to their success and sustainability. Future research needs to investigate more thoroughly the difference between the different activities falling under dark tourism. This is all the more important as a strategy applied to one could be generalised to all. Additionally, this dissociation could help with the design of a body of knowledge for this area.

7.9   Conclusion

Dark tourism is a form of special interest tourism. Voodoo and/or the visit of Ground Zero, are examples. It is important not to lose the sight of the fact that both forms of dark tourism are very different. Those two examples provide evidence that dark tourism as a field of research is quite broad and heterogeneous. The chapter as evidence that dark tourism could be segregated according to its ability to:

(a) Forming a tribe. Indeed, to be considered to be a 'tribe', types of dark tourism need to be able to develop (between members of the group or with the visited site or attended events) at least one aspect or criteria of social capital listed in Table 7.2.
(b) Developing and fostering social capital. The chapter reveals that some forms of dark tourism are better than others at developing and fostering social capital. From the analysis of a tangible form of dark tourism heritage (Ground Zero) and an intangible form of dark tourism heritage (Voodoo), it appears that tangible forms of dark tourism are better at developing social capital.

This book chapter has endeavoured to contribute to a better understanding of 'groupings' or 'tribalisation' within activities falling under dark tourism. As a result of the discrepancy identified, the inability of some tribes to develop strong social capital could be investigated in future research. Same for the impact of this inability.

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Chapter 8
Avitourism Tribes: As Diverse as the Birds They Watch

Rochelle Steven, Nicolas Rakotopare, and David Newsome

Abstract There is a temptation to consider birders, or more specifically, avitourists, as a homogenous group of individuals that single-mindedly seek to add new and exotic species to their personal list of conquest birds. To make this generalisation under-appreciates the diversity of this niche tourism market as well as their drivers and motivators. Avitourists do indeed vary in terms of what tourism experience they seek and how the level of dedication to the act of birding is related to these experiential expectations. In this chapter, we will explore this diversity, but also the themes that unite avitourists. One of the most important unifying themes is the fact that almost all avitourists expect to see wild birds, as opposed to captive species. This underlines the need for effective management of the tourism product in natural areas and wild bird conservation, to ensure the avitourism industry can continue to provide the suite of benefits afforded to its participants and the communities avitourists visit.

Keywords Birdwatching · Avitourism · Tribes · Bird photography

8.1 Introduction

Birdwatching or birding, depending on one's inclination, is a popular pastime and in some cases a whole lifestyle that is embraced by millions of people all over the world (Moss 2009). Observing birds in the wild has a recreational history unrivalled by any other wildlife watching activity (Kjølsrød 2019). Dating back to ancient

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Egypt, birds were portrayed in their art and in some cases, species found in the region became the icon for gods or goddesses (i.e. Nekhbet [vulture], Thoth [ibis], Geb [goose] and Horus [falcon]). In more recent history, naturalists of the mid-nineteenth century visualised their local and exploratory bird observations in colour plates that often formed the basis of books and museum records, creating the first documentation of global biodiversity (Moss 2004). The truly recreational context of bird observation came about in the early twentieth century, when a move away from harvesting birds for collections of eggs, skins or feathers was initiated by concerned citizens witnessing bird populations declining around them (Moss 2004; Kjølsrød 2019). At this time, a motivated group of bird enthusiasts took advantage of improvements in optics technology and led the move towards observing birds in their natural environment and in many cases, continuing to document their observations (Moss 2004). This development led to the huge body of citizen-derived knowledge we now have about birds. By far, the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) were the pioneer societies for recreational birdwatching and continue to be the most populace and active birdwatching communities for recreation and leisure (Moss 2009; Steven et al. 2015a, 2017a).

Today, there are magazines (e.g. *Australian Birdlife*; *Birdwatching*, UK; and *Bird Watcher's Digest*, USA) dedicated to birdwatching and the appreciation of birds, as well as an extensive array of 'where to find' and identification (field) guides for birds that cover virtually every country in the world (Connell 2009; Biggs 2013; Newsome and Rodger 2013). A search of news articles online using the key word 'birdwatching' confirms this, with stories from the UK and USA dominating search results. Subject matter in these articles ranges from tips on how to get started in birdwatching, the health and wellbeing benefits of birdwatching, how to create gardens that are habitats for the birds we watch, how to join in census and public engagement events centred on birdwatching, personal reflections on what the pastime means to its participants and even commentaries on celebrity birdwatchers seen in the field watching birds around the world. One such celebrity bird watcher is the British comedian and TV personality Bill Oddie who has done a great deal to promote birdwatching as a useful pastime alongside encouraging people to take a deeper interest in conservation. In regard to this latter point there are magazines devoted to reporting on and fostering the conservation of birds and their habitats. On such publication is *Birdlife*, an output from the conservation organisation *Birdlife International*.

Birdwatching participants and enthusiasts can also find and share on-line and printed in-depth reviews and trip reports (e. g. Bedfordshire Bird Report 2017; e-bird 2019; WA Bird Notes 2019) which strongly reflect a sector of the population that take their pastime seriously and often on holiday; and in some cases, making it the sole purpose for international travel. This sector of the broader nature-based tourism market is often termed 'avitourism', a term first used in the late 1990s by authors publishing accounts of birdwatching tourists in Texas (Eubanks Jr and Stoll 1999).

In this chapter, we present an overview of the transformation of the activity of birdwatching in a domestic setting to a niche tourism market. We describe how each birdwatcher can commence their birdwatching journey from diverse origins, with

equally diverse destinations. Birdwatchers as tourists can be considered a 'super-tribe' in niche tourism, with several uniting attributes that we will explore. However, within that super-tribe there are sub-tribes that exhibit preferences and attributes unique to them, including, but not limited to: their dedication to the pastime of birdwatching, their perspectives on conservation of birds and habitats and how potential birdwatching destinations attract members of each sub-tribe.

In relation to the context of avitourism 'tribes' we refer to the work of Goulding and Shankar (2011) who discuss neo-tribes as having particular rules of engagement with a collective pursuit. Cova and Cova (2002) also argued that the visible aspects of tribes include people coming together for shared rituals. This would be the case of groups of birdwatchers attending meetings, sharing information about rare birds and participating in identification workshops. Further, in the birdwatching context, this would also be expressed as gatherings at bird fairs, organised bird group meetings and sharing information on the Internet. Costa et al. (2012) mention the tribe as having a collective pursuit (e. g. seeing and listing birds). Bennett (1999) considered shared emotions (the delight in seeing new birds), new beliefs (knowledge about birds and the pleasure derived from that) and consumption practices (the purchase of binoculars, telescopes and cameras). Some authors have expressed the view that neo-tribes can exist in a state of flux (e.g. Foster 1986). In the case of the birdwatching tribe this might be expressed as the development of sub-tribes that participate in different levels of engagement and interest in birdwatching. For example, as in the case of casual versus highly engaged and motivated bird watchers as described by Green and Jones (2010). New tribes can also emerge and a pertinent example is the case of competitive bird photography in recent times. Finally, we discuss how birdwatching tourism in the natural environment must be managed for each of those sub-tribes to ensure sustainability of the industry and conservation of the birds so enthusiastically sought after by many.

8.2 The Birdwatching Super-Tribe and Its Respective Sub-Tribes

The super-tribe (Table 8.1) of birdwatching tourists (aka avitourists) are united by several key attributes: they seek birdwatching experiences during travel, they want to see birds in the natural environment (as opposed to captive birds) and they will have a goal of some sort they want to achieve through their avitourism activities (e.g. a species [or suite of species] they are hoping to see or seeing as many species as possible that are unique to the destination) (Steven et al. 2015a, 2017b). Despite the general public and tourism community frequently aggregating all birdwatchers into this super-tribe there is variation among the avitourist population, and different marketing and management implications require acknowledgement to ensure long term viability and sustainability of the avitourism industry.

Table 8.1 The birdwatching tribe and expression as sub-tribes

Sub-tribe	Level of interest	Specialist knowledge	Commitment to locate and record species	Expression
Casual/incidental	Notices birds around them	Low	Low	No dedicated expression
Mild interest	Takes note of birds around them. Visits sites where birds are present	Low	Low	No dedicated expression but has the potential to evolve into another sub-tribe
Strong interest	Frequent visits to bird watching sites Likely membership of organised groups and/or organisations Likely to hire specialist guides	High	High	Various approaches and sits on a spectrum depending on age, income, location and interaction with other sub-tribes
International destination bird listing	Highly organised and structured visits to bird watching sites Likely to hire specialist guides	High	High	Targeted domestic bird watching activity. Use of international bird watching tour companies. Freelance bird watching activities in various countries
Specialist	Highly organised and structured visits to bird watching sites Likely to hire specialist guides. Tends to focus on a particular bird family or group of birds such as seabirds, raptors or cranes	High	High	Targeted domestic bird watching activity. Use of international bird watching tour companies. Freelance bird watching activities in various countries

Table 8.1 (continued)

Sub-tribe	Level of interest	Specialist knowledge	Commitment to locate and record species	Expression
Twitcher	Highly organised and structured visits to bird watching sites Likely to hire specialist guides. Interested in seeing rare and difficult species	High	High	Targeted domestic bird watching activity. Use of international bird watching tour companies. Freelance bird watching activities in various countries
Photographer	Highly organised and structured visits to bird watching sites Likely to hire specialist guides	Moderate to High	High	Targeted domestic bird watching activity. Use of international bird watching tour companies. Freelance bird watching activities in various countries

Birdwatching can be taken up at any time in a person's life, but there are a few triggers that stand out for many. Some have their first birdwatching initiation as children as part of a naturalists' club or similar nature-focused outdoor group (Fig. 8.1; McFarlane 1996; Moss 2004; Dooley 2005). After this initial childhood experience, there may be a hiatus during the juvenile and later formative years, and a revisiting of birdwatching later in life. Others may continue with the hobby right through into adulthood. The cultural acceptability of birdwatching among children varies extensively around the world. The UK and USA have such strong historical context for birdwatching that the hobby is at the very least familiar to a large proportion of the community albeit viewed with some bemusement by non-birdwatchers. This latter point being illustrated by the feature film, 'The Big Year', based on true events related to the competitive side of birding in the USA. Moss (2004) explains that the origins of birdwatching arose out of an aesthetic appreciation of birdlife in the UK in the 1790's and comprised a switch from what had been previously dominantly exploitative attitudes. Although, at the time, the interest in birds continued in the form of collecting eggs, skins and body parts, attitudes towards birdlife gradually evolved into appreciation and conservation. This trend was mirrored in the USA and conservation groups, with a strong interest in birds, such as the Audubon Society formed in the USA in 1905, while the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was founded in Britain in 1889 (Moss 2004). Although the situation is changing in Australia, despite very high levels of diversity and endemism among the avifauna,

Fig. 8.1 Birdwatchers of a naturalists' club / nature-focused outdoor group (*Source* authors)

birdwatching remains a rather foreign concept among those that are not directly participating in the pastime (Dooley 2005, Personal observations Rochelle Steven).

Some people come to birdwatching through observing birds in their own backyards, often as part of an annual event such as the Christmas Count (USA), The Big Garden Birdwatch (UK) or Great Aussie Backyard Bird Count (Australia) all of which are targeted at the birding and non-birding population alike. This may progress into birdwatching activities beyond the participants own property. Finally, there may be a social driver that catalyses a person's first encounter with birdwatching, where they are seeking an opportunity to make new friends or meet people (Sali et al. 2008). This is often the case for female birdwatchers (Lee et al. 2015) or those that come to birdwatching later in life, as retirees. In this instance, the act of birdwatching can act as a means to maintain social interaction with fellow birdwatchers, through membership in birdwatching clubs and regular field outings (Strycker 2016).

The social science research community has invested a significant amount of effort studying birdwatchers as a subset of the human population. The reason for this is the scale of commitment and dedication shown towards birdwatching by a number of its participants. Within the recreation and leisure research discipline, birdwatchers have made very convenient subjects to examine 'recreation specialisation', whereby participants in birdwatching are placed on a gradient or spectrum; from casual through to the most committed (Hvenegaard 2002; Scott and Thigpen 2003; Burr and Scott 2004; Maple et al. 2010). Recent research in this area has also examined the birdwatcher from a socio-demographic perspective, with education, gender and economic position yielding interesting patterns in the nature and type of birdwatcher an individual may become (Lee et al. 2015; Goodfellow 2017). Lee et al. (2015) found equal levels of seriousness between genders among American bird watchers, but

males were driven by the sense of achievement attained in illustrating their skilfulness in their birdwatching pursuits. Conversely, females derive fulfilment from the enrichment birdwatching brings to their life. Interesting findings were also revealed by Goodfellow (2017), where couples that engage in birdwatching together exhibit a great level of commitment to their pastime in tandem with being highly supportive of their spouse's birdwatching experiences.

The transition from birdwatcher to avitourist can occur for several reasons: Firstly, a casual birdwatcher sees the act of watching birds in a travel destination as part of the broader tourism experience where birdwatching can add another dimension to their travels (Maple et al. 2010). Casual birdwatchers may add birdwatching to cultural, historical and other nature-based tourism products.

Secondly, an intermediate or advanced birdwatcher may feel that they have seen as many bird species as they can within their local area and are seeking the opportunity to see new species in new habitats either domestically or internationally (McFarlane and Boxall 1996; Scott and Thigpen 2003; Maple et al. 2010). The intermediate to advanced birdwatcher may be more likely to choose a birdwatching tour, where they are part of a group of birdwatchers that select a destination and participate in a tourism experience largely centred on birdwatching activities, but with the additional facet of a social experience (group travel) and often including other tourism products, although these are ancillary to the main activity of birdwatching.

Finally, the most dedicated birdwatching population actively seek destinations where they can target specific types of birds they have not yet seen (McFarlane and Boxall 1996; Scott and Thigpen 2003; Maple et al. 2010). These birders differ from the first group in that they will plan trips and activities specifically to observe their 'target' species in a travel destination (Steven 2015). Furthermore, the most serious avitourists will either undertake these trips independently or they may engage the services of a specialist avitourism guide, whom has the local knowledge to deliver the specific types of birds the avitourist is seeking. In some instances, these most well-travelled avitourists may have all but abandoned birdwatching in their own local area and are interested only in adding new species to their 'life lists'—a metric sometimes used to measure dedication in the pursuit of birdwatching among a birders peer group (Kjølsrød 2019).

From the brief descriptions considered above, it is evident that there are various motivational factors among the sub-tribes of avitourists (Table 8.1). Generally speaking, we can potentially split the avitourist population in yet another manner centred on motivations. The avitourists who would be inclined to book a pre-organised tour focused on birdwatching are possibly motivated by the social context in which that tour takes place. They enjoy spending time with a group of relatively like-minded people sharing the experience of seeing birds in a new or favourite place (Fig. 8.2). They are thus motivated by both the viewing of birds and sharing of experiences with other people (Glowinski and Moore 2014). Avitourists who undertake birdwatching activities independently are less likely to participate based on these social factors. Here is where there is another potential split in motivations. Avitourists may travel independently because they are actually most interested in their own personal experience of viewing birds in a travel destination (Fig. 8.3).

Fig. 8.2 Birdwatchers on an organised tour in Brazil

Fig. 8.3 Viewing and Photographing Japanese Cranes at Tancho Village, Hokkaido, Japan

They want the encounters with the birds themselves to be more private or even inti-
mate. They derive much fulfilment from this person to nature experience. Conversely,
avitourists may travel independently because they want as little amount of distraction
from their 'goals' as possible (Glowinski and Moore 2014). These are the twitcher or
ticker birdwatchers whose main goal is to grow their life list, often through viewing
some of the hardest to observe species (Moss 2004; Dooley 2005). The avitourism
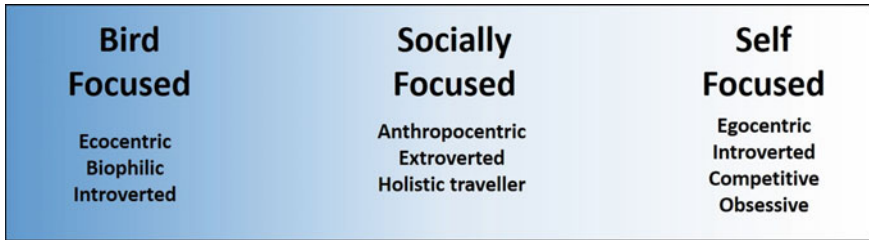
Fig. 8.4 Gradient of motivation in Avitourists

experience has almost no social importance to them and is almost entirely motivated by their own personal drive to see their target species. Put bluntly, it is less about the birds themselves and mostly about them as the pursuer of those species, which may or may not be resident to the area being visited (i.e. vagrant twitching) (Callaghan et al. 2018; Butler 2019).

The sub-tribes and motivational contexts described above are not necessarily as mutually exclusive or discreet as this commentary may allude. In fact, there is potential to view this as another spectrum or gradient, with interests in birds at one end of the spectrum and interest in one's own goals at the other (Fig. 8.4). This continuum is also applicable to many birdwatchers outside of the tourism context, but especially relevant when thinking about how to market and manage various avitourism products and destinations. Additionally, whether we examine birdwatchers or avitourists or both, there is a growing body of evidence that documents significant variation between male and female participants, further illustrating the complexity within the market segments and how we approach birdwatchers as a human community (Lee et al. 2015; Goodfellow 2017).

8.3   How is the Tribe Evolving: Implications for the Future of Avitourism Industry?

Whether birdwatching is viewed as a consumptive activity or not is fraught with an inconsistency of views. As per existing definitions, birdwatching purely for non-commercial leisure and without removal of the bird from the environment would deem it non-consumptive (McFarlane and Boxall 1996). However, as soon as a birdwatcher makes the transition to avitourist, the activity becomes consumptive for several reasons. Firstly, a product has been sold and an exchange made for access to that product. The product may be a specialised bird tour or for independent avitourists, the purchase of flights and accommodation to their chosen destination. In the case of the latter, it could be said the destination itself is the 'product', whereas in the case of a specialised tour, the destination and the service provided by an operator are a tour package product (Newsome 2015; Steven et al. 2015b).

Fig. 8.5 Photographers waiting for a sighting of a pygmy wren babbler at a user created photography station at Fraser's Hill, Malaysia. Vegetation has been trimmed, a perching stick arranged and playback is used to 'bring the bird out'. *Source* D. Newsome

Like many human activities that take place in natural areas (e.g. Newsome et al. 2013), there are environmental costs associated with birdwatching and travel, and these can occur in the form of direct and indirect impacts (Newsome et al. 2005; Steven and Castley 2013). Direct costs include disturbance of birds due to access displacement, food provisioning, use of playback and modification of vegetation (Biggs 2013; Marasinghe et al. 2019; also, see Fig. 8.5). Indirect costs arise because air travel for avitourism carries a significant carbon footprint (Straka and Turner 2013), even over short distances as well as the need to build infrastructure to cater to the tourists themselves (Steven and Castley 2013). Despite the ability to offset this negative by-product through voluntary payments at the time of flight booking, these offsets suffer from inconsistency in effectiveness and credibility in reducing net carbon emissions (Gössling et al. 2007).

Tribes in avitourism are evolving for a suite of reasons. The source markets are becoming more diverse with a growth in the Asian market, especially China. Recent research documents the growth of birdwatching in China (Ma et al. 2013), current status of birdwatching as a pastime and examines birdwatchers themselves in terms of their socio-demographic profiles and environmental concern levels (Ma et al. 2013; Walther and White 2018). Understanding how these characteristics vary in a growth market like China is important, given its unique political and cultural climate and the potential for significant positive and or negative impacts related to avitourism. In a country that has tended to not concern itself with biodiversity conservation policy, highlighting the value of birds and their habitats as the subjects of interest to a whole recreational and tourism sector may provide the incentive needed for Chinese government representatives to rethink this lower prioritisation (Walther and White 2018). Conversely, the ability for some of the most zealous photographer avitourists to arm themselves with modern technology presents some challenges related to the ethical use of that technology. This is especially concerning given the concept of animal rights and welfare were foreign to the Chinese population until the 1990s when it was first introduced by Westerners in China (Deng et al. 2006; Li 2006;

Chen et al. 2018) and remains geographically and culturally heterogeneous in its supporter base (Meng et al. 2012; Wang et al. 2018).

Advancements in technology bring a new facet to avitourism, and birdwatching more broadly. Technology has transformed how birdwatchers physically view birds, how they capture their observations and how they share that information (Watson et al. 2019). While the use of technology, to connect birdwatchers, has been around for some time (e.g. the use of pager networks to alert British birdwatchers when vagrant species arrive in the UK), the digital world has provided the tools and mechanisms to connect birdwatchers and avitourists unlike ever before. Social media and bird-watching forums provide a platform for avitourism activities to be shared within the birdwatching world as well as being generally accessible to the general public. In fact, trip report websites such as 'cloudbirders' (i.e. https://www.cloudbirders.com/tripreport) present an opportunity for researchers in the nature-based tourism and recreation field to learn more about birdwatcher practices and preferences through the sharing of trip details, specific location information and species observed (Camacho 2016; Vas 2017). Ease of access to digital Single-Lens Reflex cameras and pre-recorded bird calls can enhance the birdwatching experience for many avitourists. However, if used inappropriately, these tools present a further consumptive element of avitourism and may carry other direct risks to birds. The temptation to use tools like call playback to provide the opportunity to capture images in an unethical manner may be too great for some avitourism guides, especially when paying clients have an expectation that a certain species will be delivered (Personal observations, Rochelle Steven).

Birds may also be fed to attract them to observation sites for ease of identification and photographic purposes. This is a widespread activity at ecolodges around the world, for example, South America, Indonesia, Australia and Papua New Guinea (Newsome 2015; Naturetrek 2019; Rockjumper 2019). From a bird watcher's point of view many are content with successful identification and they leave the feeding station after a relatively short period in search of new birds to identify. In contrast photographers are likely to stay until they get the 'best' photograph. For example, there is a feeding station at Lung Sin Hide close to Kaeng Krachan National Park in southern Thailand. A hide is located in front of a feeding area (papaya, corn and mealworms are supplied) plus there is an artificial pond. Direct and remote controlled playback is utilised to attract birds (6 spp. at same time, e g. red jungle fowl early in the morning and oriental scops owl at night) to the site (Personal observations, David Newsome). Moreover, there is an increasing trend for feeding stations to be set up in the wider environment by photographers themselves. Fraser's Hill, one of the top birdwatching destinations in Malaysia, has four such feeding stations. In many cases, mealworms are provided and the site is modified to facilitate viewing of birds (Fig. 8.5). Regardless of the species targeted, provisioning of wildlife for the enjoyment of humans in a recreational or tourism context is a complex and contested issue (Newsome and Rodger 2008; Patroni et al. 2018a, 2018b, 2019). There are examples in other destinations where the in-field practices of guides exhibit higher degrees of caution in the use of technology. In Sri Lanka, birdwatchers (including photographers) are briefed immediately upon commencement of birding activities that the use of call playback is illegal; which is the case in all reserves visited under

the leadership of a bird guide, but this may be applicable to the whole national park network in Sri Lanka depending on one's sources (Personal observations, Nicolas Rakotopare). Furthermore, flash photography is also prohibited in at least some Sri Lankan reserves. Due to the volume of people that can visit these places, these policies are generally well received, albeit surprising for some bird photographers (Personal observations, Nicolas Rakotopare).

In general, the use of playback and flash photography is frowned upon by most bird advocacy groups and even some of the most accomplished bird photographers (Audubon 2019; BirdLife Australia 2019; Steytler 2019). In reality, the use of call playback in a non-commercial manner outside of breeding season and targeting relatively common species is unlikely to yield major negative impacts on birds at a species or population level (Harris and Haskell 2013; Watson et al. 2019). Indeed, some professional scientists and ecologist may need to use call playback as a means to confirm presence of a species in a certain location (Gregory et al. 2004; Hale 2006). However, in the avitourism context, one guide or company can exert a disproportionate impact on certain individuals or species, where the repeated use of call playback on one bird or pair's territory may have a deleterious effect (see conceptual diagram for disturbance in Steven et al. 2011). This could result in the species having failed breeding attempts (when conducted during breeding season) or even leaving the area due to chronic disturbance. In a global setting where ideal habitat nearby is rarely guaranteed, this presents a conservation challenge.

Some avitourism guides may go the effort of actively modifying the natural environment by removing vegetation that would otherwise screen the bird from prying eyes (or lenses) (Personal observations, David Newsome). For example, vegetation is cleared and perches are provided so that birds can be readily identified. The nesting season is a major draw card for bird photographers and the concealing vegetation is often removed for ease of photography. This exposes nests to potentially damaging weather conditions such as heavy showers as well as the activities of predators. In Thailand and Malaysia, playback is frequently used to attract birds into the open. Food provisioning also exposes birds to predation risk. During the breeding season highly sought-after birds can attract up to 40 photographers at a time, who congregate at a particular station, although usual numbers range from 5 to 10. In terms of managing this ever-increasing activity, Fraser's Hill does not have a management plan and there are no rangers to supervise these informal activities. However, a differing experience can be had in Sri Lanka, where there is no inclination to physically modify the environment and guides can only apologise to those seeking to photograph certain species where vegetation may be blocking their view (Personal observations, Nicolas Rakotopare).

Baits provided to birds may not be in the nutritional best interest of the species, and as mentioned previously, has the potential to lead to habituation of wild birds risking the attractiveness of those birds for avitourists that would otherwise object to counting birds in unnatural circumstances (i.e. captive birds). In a group avitourism setting, some avitourists find the use of playback by other group members or the guides themselves and any other activity that puts the welfare of birds and their habitats

secondary 'nauseating' (anecdotal perspective from member of a birdwatching tour group, 2014).

Not all avitourists put the welfare of the birds and their habitats after their own enjoyment. In fact, some birdwatchers participate in avitourism with the sole purpose of improving conservation outcomes for birds. This may happen via two key mechanisms, both of which are further examples of how the avitourism industry is evolving in response to the rapidly changing world around them.

Firstly, the avitourist may seek out the tourism operators (i.e. guides and or accommodation providers) with the strongest environmental credentials, and where tourism results in positive conservation outcomes (e g. Newsome and Hassell 2014). Despite generalisations, avitourism and ecotourism, which has sustainability as a key tenet, are not synonymous (Lawton 2009; Conradie and van Zyl 2013). As we have discussed above, there are indeed instances where birdwatching activities can (and do) have a net negative impact on the birds being targeted. This is in direct opposition to the long held accepted criterion for ecotourism to make a net positive impact on the natural environment (Fennell 2001; Newsome et al. 2013; Patroni et al. 2019), in addition to having positive outcomes for the social and economic communities involved in the activity or operation (Fennell 2001; Şekercioğlu 2002; Patroni et al. 2018b). The most environmentally mindful avitourist will do their best to ensure the choices they make in planning and undertaking their travels will not harm the birds they seek or the habitats where they live. Correspondingly, some guides actively seek ways to minimise their negative impacts on birds and the environment more generally (Steven et al. 2015b). Simple measures including providing catering in reusable containers and avoiding any single-use plastic items are becoming prevalent in many destinations (Personal observations, Nicolas Rakotopare, Rochelle Steven).

Secondly, avitourists may share their observations of birds in certain locations with the broader scientific community or participate in volunteer tourism activities focused on monitoring birds in their natural environment (Sullivan et al. 2014; eBird 2019). As part of the growing citizen science phenomenon (Bonney et al. 2009; Simpson et al. 2019) avitourists have an opportunity to use their skills and knowledge of the birds they watch to become valuable contributors to science (Sullivan et al. 2014; BirdLife Western Australia 2019). Birdwatching tourists on tours in Sri Lanka have been observed diligently keeping lists at all sites visited and subsequently uploading these data the citizen science data portal eBird (Personal observations, Nicolas Rakotopare). This serves a dual purpose of giving birdwatchers a repository for their own personal bird lists. In regions that are otherwise impoverished of scientific enquiry (for any number of reasons related to available expertise and funding or logistical barriers), this contribution becomes all the more important (McKinley et al. 2017). Avitourists that contribute to citizen science are also likely to derive a greater level of enjoyment and satisfaction from their tourism experience. In a happy coincidence, these socio-wellbeing enhancing benefits are key desired outcomes in the theories behind both ecotourism and citizen science (Simpson et al. 2019). Admittedly, not all avitourists are likely to be this environmentally concerned.

8.4   Conclusion

Despite the unanimous expectation among the super-tribe of avitourists to see birds in the wild, we have seen there is variation in whether the actions and choices of the various sub-tribes support the required bird conservation for this product to be sustained in availability. As such, the importance of environmental conservation for the avitourism industry cannot be understated. Without intact habitats afforded appropriate protections and management, the product on which the industry is based will become degraded and unappealing to potential avitourists (Newsome et al. 2013; Simpson and Newsome 2019). While there may be a minor sub-tribe for which seeing their target species trumps the relative importance of conservation, the majority of avitourists are aware of the need to minimise the potential negative impacts tourism can bring (Newsome et al. 2013). Furthermore, they are a significant potential source of revenue for protected areas providing refuge for birds (Steven et al. 2013). They are not opposed to making contributions whether it be in the form of a monetary donation at birdwatching destinations or collecting and sharing data about the birds they have observed during their travels (Steven et al. 2013, 2017a, 2017b).

Perhaps the biggest opportunity to shape the sub-tribes to foster more of these positive outcomes is the role of the super-tribe in exerting peer pressure on fellow avitourists and avitour operators. In a market where competition among the avitourists and operators is common, the ability for the more environmentally inclined bird-watcher to influence how and what their peers are doing in the field is an untapped opportunity. Similarly, the avitourism consumer has the power to drive change in the industry practices by selecting avitourism products that support bird conservation in any number of possible ways. Avitourism products are demand driven. As such, it is up to the avitourist to demand the type of product that will deliver an ethical and beneficial tourism experience for them, the industry and the birds themselves.

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Chapter 9
Geological Tourist Tribes

Ross Dowling, Mamoon Allan, and Nicole Grünert

Abstract Geological tourism has a long history. Certain groups of people have long been attracted to landscapes or landforms to see geomorphic features such as hills, mountains, plateaus, plains, deserts, canyons or glaciers. In addition, many are attracted to the earth surface processes which either build up the earth (such as tectonic or mountain building processes, volcanic activity or sedimentary processes) or tear it down (e.g. wind [aeolian], river or glacial erosion). These geological tourists are often regarded as being 'geo-experts' or 'geo-specialists' and often comprise professional or amateur geologists who have a good understanding of geology and a strong desire to place it at the center of their travels. At the extreme edge of geological tourist tribes are those who search or fossick for minerals, gems or fossils. Today these geological tourists form one segment of a wider group called 'geotourists'. Geotourists with a focus on 'geological' features form one end of a spectrum of geotourists with those having a more 'geographical' focus at the opposite end. Whilst starting with an interest in geology these geographical tourists are now much more interested in learning about the connections between geology, habitats and people. Their focus is on gaining a more holistic understanding of their travel destinations. A number of types of geotourists have been identified including incidental, accidental, serendipitous, intentional and purposeful geotourists. The last two types are emerging as tribes of geotourists having a keen focus on travelling to see and learn about landforms or geological phenomena. Thus, there is emerging a spectrum of geotourists which range from 'geological' to 'geographical' in orientation, and may be passive to active in their travels. This chapter contextualizes geotourism, geotourists and geological tourist tribes.

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9.1 Introduction

At its simplest, tourism comprises either mass tourism or alternative tourism. Traditional 'mass tourism' consists of large numbers of people travelling to'sun, sea and sand' holiday destinations. It is often characterised by people seeking replication of their own culture in institutionalised human-made settings such as large scale integrated resorts, with an absence of natural environmental and/or authentic cultural content. Alternative Tourism, an alternative to mass tourism, includes a large number of special interest tourism elements such as tourism to natural areas. Probably the best known type of natural area tourism is ecotourism with its focus on the biotic or living elements of the natural environment, that is, animals (fauna) and/or plants (flora). Allied to this, travel to areas of outstanding natural landscapes or unique landforms is not new. In recent times this is being referred to as 'geotourism' (Dowling 2013).

9.2 Geotourism

Geotourism is tourism based on geological features (Dowling 2011). Over time it has been variously described as being a type of tourism that is either 'geological' or 'geographical' in orientation (Dowling 2015; Dowling and Newsome 2018). Whereas the former view was that geotourism was a 'type' of tourism in a similar vein to ecotourism, the latter view has been wider thereby representing a new 'approach' to tourism. Depending on one's standpoint, geotourism is now viewed as either a 'type' of tourism (that is, a *geological* orientation) or an 'approach' to tourism (when viewed as a *geographical* orientation). Geotourism is thus viewed through multiple lenses along a geological spectrum which has geotourism as a type of tourism at one end and as an approach at the other. The major difference between the geological and geographical versions of the definition is that the former focuses on geotourism as a 'form' or type of tourism, whereas the latter views geotourism as an 'approach' to tourism, somewhat akin to sustainable tourism (Fig. 9.1). Neither view is mutually exclusive as geotourism when viewed as an approach to tourism naturally encompasses 'geological tourism'. The broader view of geotourism encompasses the application of sustainable tourism principles combined with an element of an area's 'sense of place'. Thus, geotourism is both a *form* of tourism as well as an *approach* to it, but one that firmly ties itself *first* to the geologic nature of an area's 'sense of place'.

   Geotourism is tourism which focuses on an area's geology and landscape as the basis of fostering sustainable tourism development (Escorihuela and Dowling 2015).

The Geotourism Spectrum A holistic approach to environmental interpretation			
The Environment	**Abiotic** Geology & Landforms Climate	**Biotic** Animals - (Fauna) Plants - (Flora)	**Cultural** People: Past & Present
Tourism	Geological Tourism Climate dependent tourism eg. Summer resorts or Winter Skiing	Nature Based Tourism Wildlife Tourism Ecotourism Wildflower Tourism	Cultural Tourism Heritage Tourism Indigenous Tourism
Geotourism	**A Type of Tourism** Here geotourism is viewed exclusively as 'geological' tourism	**An Approach to Tourism** Here it is viewed more broadly through a 'geographical' lens, still based on its 'geological' foundation, but also informing an area's Biotic and Cultural elements	
The Geotourism Spectrum	**Geotourism Viewed As** **A Type (or Form) of Tourism** ←————————→ **An Approach to Tourism**		

Fig. 9.1 Geotourism spectrum

Such tourism development generates benefits for conservation (especially geoconservation), appreciation (through geoheritage interpretation), and the economy (geoeconomics). Essential to the development of geotourism is the understanding of the identity or character of a region or territory. To achieve this, geotourism is viewed as being based on the idea that the environment is made up of **A**biotic, **B**iotic and **C**ultural (ABC) elements (Dowling 2013). This approach comprises the abiotic elements of geology and climate, the biotic elements of animals (fauna) and plants (flora), and cultural or human components, both past and present (Fig. 9.1). Geotourism argues that to fully understand and appreciate the environment, one must know about the abiotic elements of geology and climate first, as these determine the biotic elements of animals and plants which live there. By extension, the combination of these two components of the environment influence the cultural landscape of how people have lived in the area in the past, as well as how they live there today (Dowling and Newsome 2018; Olson and Dowling 2018).

Thus, geotourism is sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing the earth's geological features in a way that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation, and is locally beneficial. It has links with

ecotourism and cultural tourism, but is not synonymous with either of them. It is about creating a geotourism product that embeds geoconservation, communicates and promotes geological heritage, and helps build sustainable communities through appropriate economic benefits.

Geotourism may be further described as having a number of essential characteristics (Dowling and Newsome 2018). These elements combine to shape geotourism in its present form. It comprises a number of interrelated components all of which should be present for authentic geotourism to occur. Three principles are fundamental to geotourism: that it is geologically-based (based on the earth's geoheritage), sustainable (economically viable, community enhancing, and fostering geoconservation) and educative (achieved through geo-interpretation). All three characteristics are considered to be essential for a product to be considered an exemplar of geotourism.

The essence of geotourism is its geological base comprising plate tectonics, fossils and the evolution of life. It also embraces the understanding of geology interpreted through its components of **Form** (landforms and landscape), **Process** (how the landforms originated) and **Time** (when and how long these processes occurred) (Fig. 9.2). This forms the basis of a more holistic understanding of the environment and its component parts and thus provides the resident or tourist with a greater connection to the environment in which they live or are visiting.

9.3　Geotourists

Despite an increase in literature on the form, definition and nature of geotourism as well as geosite potential and development in recent years, empirical research remains scant (Boley and Nickerson 2013). For example, there is an apparent lack of studies in the tourism literature focusing on geotourists.

Early studies defined geotourists from the perspective of geological tourists. Segments included *geologists* (both professional and amateur), *visitors* (interested in one or more parts of geology), *academic and science groups*, as well as others such as *landscape photographers, artists and historians* (Hose 2005; Joyce 2006; Dowling and Newsome 2006). In this approach geotourists were seen as a segment of a broader Special Interest Tourist category (Dowling and Newsome 2006). A central element of geotourism which has remained over time is its emphasis on information, education, knowledge and learning. Other studies found that geotourist motivations include a 'sense of wonder, appreciation and learning' (Allan et al. 2015).

Qiumei and Zhenzjia (2006) stated that geological tourism attractions could raise the enjoyment of understanding and appreciation of the universe, broaden the visitors' minds, boosting their ego values by different tourism activities and sightseeing, and reduce or eliminate the feeling of agony. Hose (2008) argued that there are two main categories of geotourist groups. First, *educational* groups consisting of students of all educational stages 'from pre-school to postgraduate' who are studying geologically related topics, and a second *recreational* group which includes a range of recreational tourists from the beginner to the expert. These are individuals or
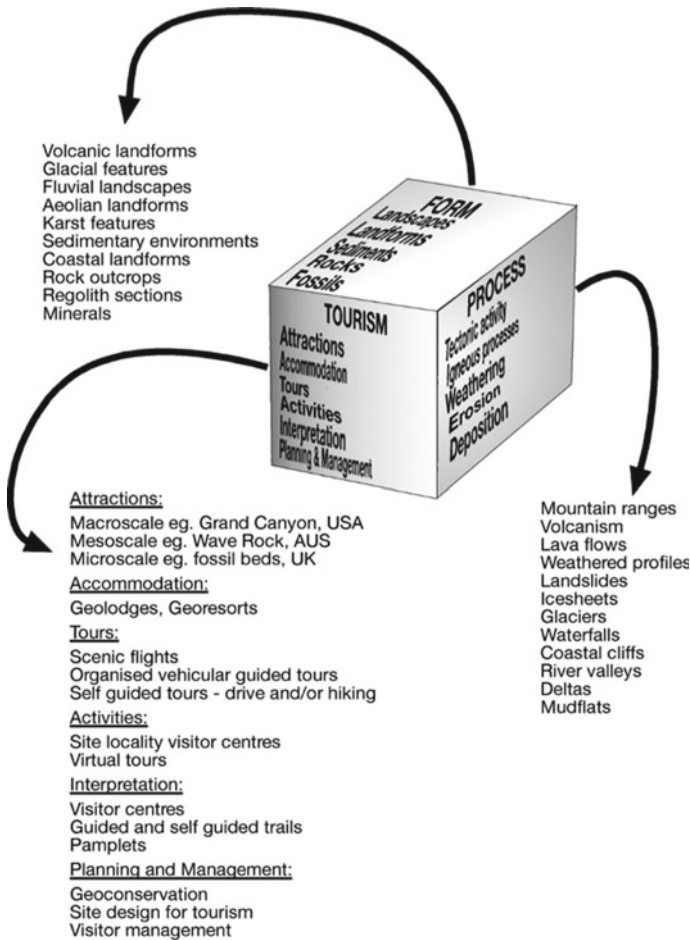
Volcanic landforms
Glacial features
Fluvial landscapes
Aeolian landforms
Karst features
Sedimentary environments
Coastal landforms
Rock outcrops
Regolith sections
Minerals

FORM
Landscapes
Landforms
Sediments
Rocks
Fossils

PROCESS
Tectonic activity
Igneous processes
Weathering
Erosion
Deposition

TOURISM
Attractions
Accommodation
Tours
Activities
Interpretation
Planning & Management

Attractions:
Macroscale eg. Grand Canyon, USA
Mesoscale eg. Wave Rock, AUS
Microscale eg. fossil beds, UK

Accommodation:
Geolodges, Georesorts

Tours:
Scenic flights
Organised vehicular guided tours
Self guided tours - drive and/or hiking

Activities:
Site locality visitor centres
Virtual tours

Interpretation:
Visitor centres
Guided and self guided trails
Pamplets

Planning and Management:
Geoconservation
Site design for tourism
Visitor management

Mountain ranges
Volcanism
Lava flows
Weathered profiles
Landslides
Icesheets
Glaciers
Waterfalls
Coastal cliffs
River valleys
Deltas
Mudflats

Fig. 9.2 Form, process and time

groups who visit the different geological and geomorphic attractions at a geosite or a geopark. Robinson (2008, p. 2) supports the educational role of geotourism describing the role of geotourism in geotourist learning as extra information which doubles the value of a tour. This view is also supported by Farsani et al. (2011, p. 68) who noted, "at present, geotourism is a new movement helping travellers to increase their knowledge about natural resources, the cultural identity of hosts and ways of preserving geosites".

Thus information, education, knowledge and learning have been central elements of geotourism sought out by geotourists, whether they be specialised geological tourists or the more broadly based geotourist interested in the environment's abiotic, biotic and cultural segments.

A 2008 survey of 154 geologists who were members of the Geological Society of Australia discovered that most of the respondents were highly qualified, having a first or higher degree, had a high level of income and preferred to travel independently rather than on group tours (Mao et al. 2009). The reasons they undertook geological travel was to increase their knowledge of geological sites and landforms; to satisfy their curiosity; to have a memorable experience; to obtain intellectual stimulation; and to visiting destinations offering natural environmental and cultural attractions. This study was seminal in realizing that geologists who undertook geotours for their geological content also wanted to include natural and cultural attractions and activities. Grant (2010) identified several types of geotourists—those, who could be unaware, aware or interested in geological tourism as well as interested visitors, who are geo-amateurs, geo-specialists and geo-experts. Yalgouz-Agaj et al. (2010) asserted that the type of tourists who were visiting geotourism sites were different from other types of tourists because geotourism had distinctive characterstics. For example, geotourism was viewed as relying on scientific, educational and historical values, geotourism appeal, international importance, social and cultural structure, biodeveristy, and appearance.

At the beginning of this decade geotourists were still being viewed through the geological lens as individuals who visited sites with significant geological or geomorphic characteristics to view it and gain knowledge about its features (Allan 2012). The addition of geotourism being able to take place in urban settings, that is, wherever geological interests lay, was a clear separation from ecotourism which by definition could only take place in natural settings.

Jordan has a number of geological sites of interest to tourists. In 2011–2012 a study was undertaken of 200 tourists who were visiting Wadi Rum (Allan 2012; Dowling and Allan 2018). Almost two-thirds of the respondents at Wadi Rum (66%) were from Jordan. Other international tourists were Dutch (13%), Syrians (10%) with other respondents being from a variety of locations in the Middle East, Asia, North America and Europe. When asked how they gained information about Wadi Rum before their visit, their sources included the Internet (48%), brochures (12%) and friends or relatives (10%). What is interesting in this data was that only one respondent had used the local tourist office to source information about Wadi Rum. The study found that the geotourists were young to middle aged and well educated and that their main reasons for visiting the area were to explore new places, for enjoyment and for education. The key variable underpinning their desire to explore new places was their desire to undergo a 'sense of wonder'. Motivated by a high level of intrinsic motivation they want to learn about geosites and be given sound information about the attraction they are visiting.

Around this time it was claimed that geotourists visited geological attractions in either 'natural areas' or 'urban/built areas' (Newsome et al. 2012). In addition, the 'ABC' approach to geotourism was advanced as noted earlier (Dowling 2013). This now broadened our understanding of geotourists from the narrow geological tourist to the more holistic geographical tourist seeking not only geological information but how this has shaped its related living and cultural environments. This finding was later supported by Nita and Myga-Piatek (2014) who asserted that geotourist

attractions can occur not only in the natural environment but also in the anthropo-genetic transformed environment, and such attractions are linked to the products of the material culture of humanity.

This wider application of geotourists was investigated in a case study of tourists to Crystal Cave in Yanchep National Park, Australia (Hurtado et al. 2014). Based on the cultural tourism typology model of McKercher (2002), the Australian study found a number of geotourist 'types'. These include *purposeful* geotourists whose main motivation for travel is to visit a geo-site. They generally had a positive experience based on their interest in the geo-site and desire to learn more. The *intentional* geotourists are influenced by the geo-site but they are not as purposeful as the former category though they do seek information about the geo-site they are visiting. A third category is the *serendipitous* geotourists who do not actively seek geo-sites but when they do, they have a positive experience. *Accidental* geotourists may not even be aware of the geo-site prior to visitation, however, once on-site, their experience is positive. Finally, *incidental* geotourists are tourists where geotourism plays no meaningful role in their destination choice and their experience encountered is negative.

Nowadays there is a clear understanding that geotourists seek learning experiences and expect to have geosites interpreted well so that the visitor can acquire education about the geology and how it supported and created the surrounding environment. A study in Mt Kinabalu National Park, Sabah, Malaysia, a World Heritage Region based on mountain hiking and geotourism, found that there was increasing demand among tourists to learn more about the park and its features during their visit, than was currently offered (Goh and Rosilawati 2014). A similar survey of the segmentation by motivation of visitors to a geopark in Hong Kong, China found a close link between interpretation and satisfaction (Fung and Jim 2015).

An investigation of the effect of visitors' travel motivations on their willingness to pay for accredited geo-guided tours was conducted in Hong Kong's UNESCO Global Geopark (Cheung 2016). Of the 310 visitors surveyed the results indicated that the visitors were willing to pay a premium price for the accredited geo-guided tour. Tourists were willing to pay an average HK$165.3 for the accredited tour, which is HK$34.5 higher than the price that they were willing to pay for the non-accredited counterpart. The results suggested that geopark visitors are motivated by four factors—'novelty seeking', 'enjoyment', 'social interaction' and 'escaping'.

An Egyptian study investigating the factors predicting the behavioural intention to take geotours among international tourists discovered that they are environmentally oriented travellers interested in nature and local cultures and prefer staying in a small-scale accommodation (Soliman and Abou-Shouk 2017). Geotourists find these tours useful and helpful to them to learn new things and gain new experiences. Geotourists travel to gain new experiences and their travel is motivated by the desire to explore new places to 'escape' from daily-life and re-fresh their mental and physical states. They are also environmentally oriented and they care about the environment in their choices for holidays. They see that visiting historical attractions, learning about new cultures and living in harmony with nature enhances their quality of life. In

addition,Soliman and Abou-Shouk found that geotourists are interested in remote areas, local restaurants and foods, community festivals and art galleries.

Geotourists as visitors with a specific preference for geoheritage and attractive geodiversity have been identified and typified by many studies across the world (Dowling and Newsome 2018). Up until now geological tourism tours for people with special needs are still very scant. This is commonly due to several barriers that hamper the supply and demand sides for geotourism experiences (Allan 2020). Accordingly, it is essential to create accessible geological tourism sites for children, seniors and those with disabilities (Lima et al. 2013).

A survey of tourists undertaken in Vojvodina Province, North Serbia was carried out in a region with a lack of geotourism terminology and where the general public is not familiar with the term (Vasiljević et al. 2018). 198 people were surveyed to discover their travel preferences and environmental attitudes including their relationship with landforms and geology. Exploratory factor analysis revealed that tourists fell into five categories. *Local community oriented* visitors respect the local community of the visited destination and want to know more about it both before and during their travels. They seek authentic destination tours and experiences through small group tours.

Environmentally aware travellers are aware of the environments in which they travel and prefer their experiences to have minimal adverse impact on the environment. *Nature-based travellers* appreciate nature and seek travel to natural areas in order to see nature including landforms and geological attractions. *Eco-responsible* travellers embrace conservation activities in their own home and environment and choose tourist products which foster conservation principles. *Plog psychocentric* travellers prefer to travel in organized groups to well-known and visited destinations. They enjoy learning about their destination as opposed to experiencing it through physical activities (Vasiljević et al. 2018).

Other significant findings which can be linked to the geotourists' profile is that women pay more respect to the community and are more local community oriented on travel. Also, individuals who have a higher degree of education are more environmentally aware and individuals from rural areas are more interested in the environment and are more eco-aware than people from urban areas.

A study of Australian geology alumni and professional societies estimated that the market size of geologists in this age-group is around 3000–4000 and presents a growing opportunity for geotourist offerings (Robinson 2018). Whilst an earlier study found that geotourists were mainly in the 45+ age bracket (Mao et al. 2009), it is suggested that the geotourists of the future will extend to embrace a wider group of demographics including those aged between 18 and 25 years. In addition, it will be more broadly defined globally supported by the UNESCO's Global Geopark program where national geoscientific assets are better understood, interpreted and marketed by both destination managers and tourism operators (Robinson 2018).

A different outcome was found in a study of tourists to Kandovan Village, Iran,one of only three ancient stone villages in the world. It is located in the Sahand Rural DistrictEast Azerbaijan Province, northwestern Iran at the foothills of Mount Sahand. The village has many human-made cliff dwellings which are still inhabited. The

homes are excavated inside volcanic rocks and tuffs and have been cut into the lahars of Mount Sahand. Tourists attracted to the village for its geological and historic attractions were mainly males aged 18–49, undergraduate, employed and married (Allan and Shavanddasht 2019).

A survey of 543 Slovak Republic geotourists found that the five most important criteria preferred by tourists to a geotourism attraction are visual attractiveness of locality, access, tour/visit safety, uniqueness/rarity, and information availability (Štrba 2019). A vast majority of respondents (91%) sought information about the geosite before their visit with the most frequent source of information being the internet followed by family and friends. Safety during the visit and comfortable access to the site or destination have a significant positive impact on the selection of geo-destination. Finally, an interesting finding is that while members of the general public place a high level of importance on geosite attractiveness, access and safety, visiting professionals are more motivated to visit by the geo-sites scientific and environmental features. This supports the recent findings in Australia of geological groups by Robinson (2018).

A study of six representative caves in the karst region of Eastern Serbia found that geotourists are seeking greater promotion of the caves, a tour guide service, interpretive panels and increased tourism infrastructure (Tomic et al. 2019). The authors suggest that better marketing activities are needed, including both national and international promotion through websites, virtual tours, brochures and maps. It is also suggested that there is a need for a multi-lingual tour guide service provided by geologists. By undertaking these actions it is suggested that the caves would attract a larger number of tourists thus benefitting the local economy through higher revenue and additional jobs.

9.4 Volcano Tourists

Volcano tourism involves the exploration and study of active volcanic and geothermal landforms (Erfurt-Cooper and Cooper 2010). Volcano tourism also includes visits to dormant and extinct volcanic regions where remnants of volcanic activity attract visitors with an interest in geological heritage (Lopes 2005, 2011, 2014).Volcanos have always attracted tourists to extinct, dormant and especially also tohighly active volcanic environments such as Iceland (Dowling 2010), Reunion Island (Dowling and Margueritte 2014), Galapagos, Ecuador (Dowling 2014), New Zealand (Dowling 2018), Japan (Erfurt 2018) or Hawaii, USA (Erfurt 2018). Volcano tourism is grouped into at least three categories, day trip visitors, field trip excursions, and adventure or scientific expedition visitors. Reasons for visiting volcanoes include sightseeing, curiosity, scientific interest or taking photos (Erfurt 2018). Visitors to volcanic regions often combine their visit with outdoor activities such as climbing, hiking, trekking, skiing and camping.

A study of visitors to the world's leading volcanic regions estimated that there were approximately 134.5 million people visiting a volcanic environment on an

annual basis (Erfurt-Cooper 2011). A more recent study investigating the motivations of 174 visitors undertaking a volcano tour at Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines identified a range of push and pull motives for visitation (Aquino et al. 2017). These included four push motives, namely escape and relaxation, novelty-seeking, volcano knowledge-seeking and socialisation, and two pull motives, namely disaster and cultural heritage-induced and volcanic and geological attribute-driven (Aquino et al. 2017).

Thus within the broader ambit of 'geotourism' there appears to be a number of neo-tribes where geotourists groups are bound together by shared sentiment, rituals and symbols. A central element is the symbolic element of a shared sense of interest in and accountability for the earth. This is supported by the behavioural element of viewing and experiencing the world together (Hardy et al. 2013). This is especially true of geological tourists who, whilst on a geological tour, share their geological passion and understanding with each other. This is carried out by a shared sentiment and empowerment which envelopes the group.

9.5   Geological Tourist Tribes: Cases from Namibia

Namibia is a geological treasure box (Grünert 2015). Most of the well-known attractions of the country are based on geology. These include the Fish River Canyon, which is one of the largest canyons in the world (Fig. 9.3), the Namib Desert with

Fig. 9.3   The Fish River Canyon, Namibia. *Source* Nicole Grünert

Fig. 9.4 The Namib Desert, Namibia. *Source* Nicole Grünert

stunning dunes visited by thousands of guests every year (Fig. 9.4), the Brandberg, the highest mountain in the country and home to thousands of rock paintings, Spitzkoppe and the Erongo Mountains, which exhibit fascinating granite weathering, the Hoba Meteorite, which is the largest single iron meteorite in the world or even the Etosha Pan within the famous Etosha National Park. All of them are well-visited geological phenomena (Grünert 2014).

Therefore, it is argued that all visitors to Namibia are geotourists, although they are not aware of it (Dowling and Grünert 2018). Nevertheless, there is a particular group of travellers who join specialised geological tours. These special interest tours can cover several aspects of geology and hence different geotourism tribes exist.

The first and oldest tribe of geotourists travelling to Namibia were *mineral collectors*. Due to the stunning wealth of world-known mines and mineral sites, such as the Tsumeb Mine, Namibia was and still is on top of the list for mineral collectors from all over the world. The tribe of mineral collectors however is quite diverse. On the one hand it is a group of people who want to purchase first class specimen from famous places or even buy cut gemstones such as tourmaline or diamonds. The second group is more active and wants to hunt for specimen themselves. Amongst this group of travellers the quality of the finding comes second, as the adventure of having found it themselves is more important. In their home countries most of the mineral collectors are organized in mineral clubs. Their members have regular meetings and visit public talks. Together they set up mineral shows and sales events. The bigger organizations even publish mineral magazines with articles from all over

the world. These magazines are also suitable media to advertise for mineral—and geo-tourism.

Mineral collectors can join specialised mineral collecting safaris. On such organised trips a local knowledgeable guide accompanies the group. The guests visit well-known and secret mineral sites where they can dig for their own specimen (Fig. 9.5). Sometimes even mine visits to operating mines can be organised. Besides this the guests have the opportunity to purchase specimen from local vendors at reasonable price. Visits to mineral museums can also form part of the program. At the end of the trip shipping of the findings is organised by the guide and weeks later, big treasure boxes arrive at home. Of course, most well-known Namibian tourist attractions along the route will be visited as well, however for this specific geotourism tribe the main focus of such safari is mineral collecting.

The second tribe of geotourists are **hobby geologists**. The aim of their holiday is to get a deeper understanding of the visited geo-sites and not just tick off well-known tourist attractions. This group is very diverse as the basic understanding of geological processes differs a great deal. It is the challenge for the geological guide to put often very complex and scientific facts in easy terms for the laymen to understand (Fig. 9.6). Hobby geologists visit well-known Namibian tourist sites where most people travel to, but also get to see secret places, which are not even described in travel guide books. In their home countries hobby geologists are often organized in special interest groups. They visit public lectures about geologically relevant topics and attend fossil preparation and identification seminars. Some of

Fig. 9.5 Mineral collectors, Namibia. *Source* Nicole Grünert

Fig. 9.6 Hobby geologists, Namibia. *Source* Nicole Grünert

the elderly are even enrolled as retired senior students at university where they are allowed to attend university lectures.

Hobby geologists as well as mineral collectors often travel to many interesting parts in the world to either collect specimen or gain knowledge about fascination geological phenomena.

Guiding **professional geologists** including academics has different challenges. These specialist travellers not only want to deeply understand the geological formation of individual sites and get to know the geological evolution of the country, but also put the geology in a regional and even global context. Therefore, a geological guide must not only know his home terrain but at least have a basic understand of fundamental geological processes and world-wide events.

A more specialist group of professional geologists are **university student groups**. Nowadays students undertake their compulsory university excursions not only in their home countries, but rather chose exotic places abroad. Sometimes their professors have worked in a specific country and thus have a particular link to that place. More often, however, popular tourist destinations with outstanding geology are chosen to undertake a geological student excursion. Namibia is the ideal locality for such an event. Besides stunning geology Namibia offers a perfect tourism infrastructure. In preparation for the excursion students often have to attend seminars at university and prepare speeches to relevant topics which they have to present during the trip. Students as well as professional geologists normally take notes during the field trip

and compile an excursion guide which summarises the geological topics and formations discussed along the route. Gaining in-depth geological knowledge is the main focus of such tours, rather than having a holiday.

It is not uncommon during such excursions that students raise such an interest that they find a topic for their final thesis and return to the country visited for professional work at a later stage in their career. The professional tribe of geotourists normally chooses tailor-made camping excursions. This is not only for keeping costs low for student trips, but also enables the group to access sites which are much off the beaten track, often in remote areas. This not only has the advantage of being at places alone without other tourists, but also having the challenge to encounter big game which roams freely in some geologically interesting places in North-western Namibia. Camping tours are not limited to student groups, but are essential if remote sites are visited which do not offer accommodation establishments in the vicinity.

Besides all the different tribes of geo tourists in Namibia they have one thing in common: a deep love for nature and the desire for deeper understanding of fundamental geological processes, which eventually have also made human life possible on this planet.

9.5.1   A Spectrum of Geotourist Tribes

While geotourism may be able to be defined, it is harder to say exactly who is a geotourist. An early attempt at classifying geotourists divided them into 'educational group tourists' and 'recreational group tourists' (Hose 2008). A study in Australia of geologists discovered major geotourist segments amongst 'baby boomers' and 'alumni groups' (Mao et al. 2009). Another typology suggested that there is a spectrum of geotourists from general 'visitors' who are either unaware, aware or interested in geological tourism, to 'geo' tourists who range from geo-amateurs and geo-specialists to geo-experts (Grant 2010).A study of visitors to a national park cave in Western Australia discovered a number of geotourist types from 'incidental' (that is, indicating that geotourism was not their main focus for their visit) to 'purposeful'(where geotourism was their main motivation for travel) (Hurtado et al. 2014). Another group of geotourists are those interested in 'geoheritage and geodiversity' (Newsome and Dowling 2018). These are 'hard core' geotourists with a strong geological background. Finally, this paper suggests that geotourist tribes can be segmented into mineral collectors, hobby geologists, professional geologists and specialist groups such as university student groups (Fig. 9.7).
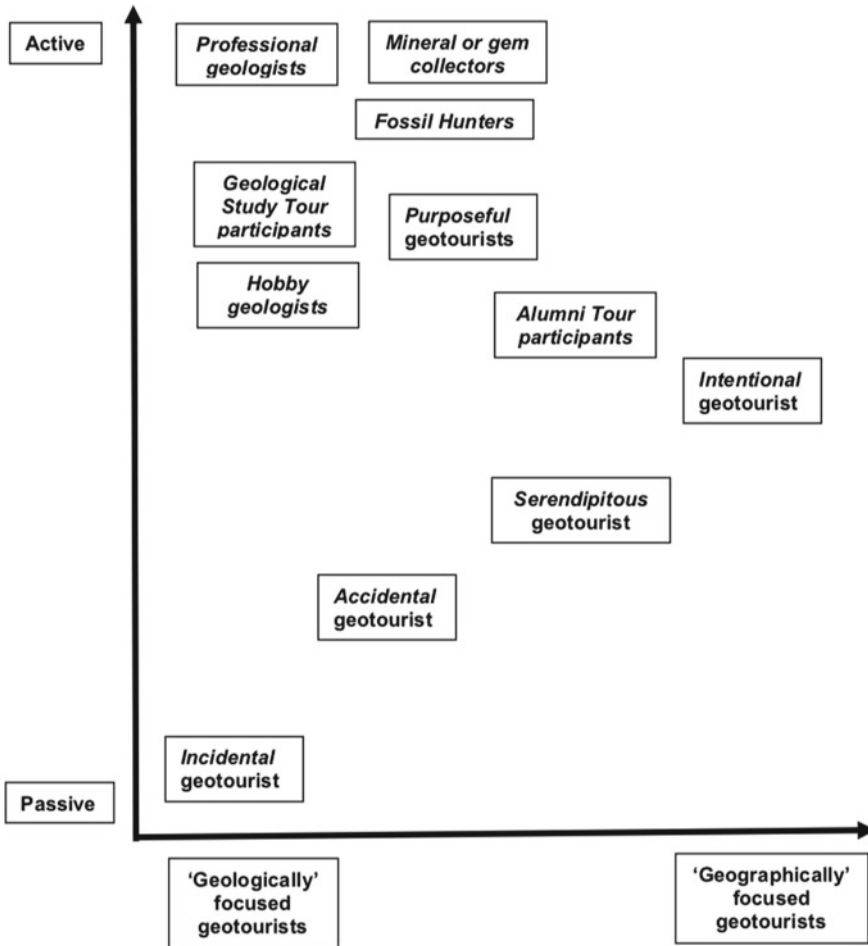
Fig. 9.7 Geological tourism tribe

9.6   Conclusion

There is probably only a very small percentage of the world's tourists who actually identify themselves as 'geological tourists'. Most probably they would identify themselves as being general tourists with an interest in geology. Such people are most likely to be 'geological tourists' who are either professionally or personally interested in the Earth, its landforms and processes. They could also be mineral collectors, gem collectors or fossil hunters who travel to collect specific geological items. 'Geographically' oriented geotourists have a broader ambit for travel and are more likely to be interested in gaining a 'sense of place' in relation to the places they visit. These tourists are more interested in trying to understand, appreciate and

engage with the land, habitat and people who live there. However, as geotourism is growing around the world, especially through the rapid growth of the UNESCO Global Geoparks network, so too are the numbers of geotourists. These tourists are exploring their travel destinations through the lens of a more holistic view of the environment which starts with an understanding of the geologic elements of the landscape to explain the surrounding habitats and cultural attributes of the environment. Parallel to this growth in geotourists with a 'geographic' viewpoint is a similar growth in the numbers of 'geological' oriented geotourists who are now forming distinct and growing 'tribes'.

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Chapter 10
Freedom Campers: A New Neo-Crowd (-Tribe) Breaking Tradition with Planning Boundaries

Rodney W. Caldicott

Abstract The ephemerality of freedom camping presents complex problems at community and policy scales. Freedom camping's mobility impacts planning and policy settings for local communities (some becoming very popular though not always welcoming) as places of tourism and recreational vehicle (RV) consumption. Research on planning and policy-making around freedom camping, and further, freedom campers as a 'neo-crowd' in residential communities, requires escalation in anticipation of freedom camping's increasing and future consumption. This chapter presents freedom campers as a particular case example of an emerging tourism micro segment. The specific research objective of this Australian case study is to explore the variation in camper characteristics and campsite preferences, and the effect of this variance on the future management of freedom camping in local communities. It explores the group culture of freedom camper tribes by describing the niche segment and identify shared identities as well as analysing their collective mechanisms. Through this neo-tribal lens, and framed within conceptualisations of gaze theory and social interactionism, 41 interview informants were contacted through gatekeepers of the caravanning sector and further theoretical sampling. Each shared their perception, experiences and understandings of the main factors influencing developments in freedom camping, and camper segmentation. The findings reveal: first, freedom campers often seek to set themselves apart from the wider tourism cohort and define themselves in opposition to the mainstream caravanners. Second, campers self and peer identify through a spectrum of neo-tribes, of commercial through to freedom campers with an emerging sub-tribe as 'swingers' that alternate in between. Third, in acknowledging the macro to micro identifying determinants that help to shape the neo-tribes, caravanning site selection (camping consumption) is likewise bounded from fully 'hooked-up' to totally 'laissez faire' environments. The chapter's originality lays in the author's liminality within RVing neo-tribes, between insider and outsider, to bring a perspective that others may not see. The narrative

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takes a deliberate route to acknowledge the heterogeneity of freedom campers while still exposing examples of 'common' identifying determinants and behaviours of various sub-tribes. It seeks to bring enlightenment to 'others' in caravan and camping management, to move the freedom camping debate towards enriched and workable solutions and increase camping production through regenerative and creative planning and policy environments. Hence, the chapter's focus is not solely on any one neo-tribe at the public-policy-level, and conceivably, others may see different narratives. However, as a forerunner, the chapter paves the way for others to continue the story of freedom camper tribes, to tease out, expand, critique or reject numerous threads, and/or to take the neo-tribe conversation across to other disciplinary areas of research.

Keywords Local government · Planning and policy · Caravan tourism · Recreational vehicles (RV) · Camper segmentation · Neo-tribes

10.1 Introduction

Through the neo-tribal lens, this chapter aims to demystify freedom camping aiding international understanding of the 'other' in the broader caravanning policy arena. Caravanning herein is synonymous with RVing, and vehicle based camping, though as a neo-crowd it presents in varying sub-crowd forms; those from tradition-bound commercial caravan park campers through to die-hard freedom campers, those that avoid caravan parks. Framed within the broad conceptualisations of gaze theory, and social interactionism (Blumer 1969; Foucault 1975; Urry 1990), the narrative explains the emerging, and indeed multiple, camping micro-segments as neo-tribes.

During the writing of this chapter, considerable international interest continues around freedom camping, that premised on consumers using a recreational vehicle (RV) to occupy living space in public places, not least is its symbiotic relationship to caravanning as a positive lifestyle development and form of nomadic urbanism (Caldicott et al. 2018). However, a negative shadowing debate ensues. It echoes the very sobering 2015 message from Andrea Ferris, editor of Australia's *Go Camping & 4WD Adventures*. Campers hear this:

> If you continue to use campsites as toilets and waste dumping areas and have little or no regard for either the land managers, environment, wildlife or fellow campers, the next generation will have very few places to bush camp, and next to nowhere that's free to camp (Ferris 2015, p. 1).

Prompting Ferris's plea for responsible camping, adverse media highlights the uneasy situation existing between freedom campers, traditional camp operators, local communities, and governments managing land-use planning. The former, represent a new neo-crowd (-tribe) breaking tradition with mainstream planning boundaries for tourism consumption while 'other' stakeholders within the specific communities of traditional caravanning production are scrambling to maintain a status-quo; market dominance and planning and policy protocols.

To the uninitiated, caravanning may appear a homogeneous and mundane activity, though deeper scrutiny by Southerton et al. (2003) reveal differentiated sets of cultural ideas, values and practices among caravanners. These differences influence wider patterns of social life, distinguishing caravanners between their familiar 'selves' and between themselves and unfamiliar 'others' (Blumer 1969). Such distinctions fuel conflicts and (dis)positional power struggles within national through to local caravanning communities as markets diversify and interest groups, opposed in camping-rights ideology, contest the position of the 'other' (Caldicott et al. 2014a). These experiences transpire in a range of international settings, not least Australia (see algarvedailynews.com 2019; Echonetdaily 2019; Iceland Magazine 2019; Mirage News 2019a, b; stuff.co.nz 2019b).

A sensationalising media portrays freedom camping as a form of street camping with contested use of public places, spaces and resources, sometimes raising a moral panic (Purnell 2019). The feelings of campers, caravan park (camp-ground) owners, community residents, and local government representatives often conflict. Simultaneously, influencer blogs awash with Instagramable moments akin to the 1970s hippie-campers "#vanlife" (Gretzel and Hardy 2019) ushers in the new millennium that has spawned a neo-crowding of caravanning, and specifically neo-tribes of campers, including freedom campers. The number of freedom campers travelling in Australia continues to rise (CIAA 2019a; Tourism Research Australia 2016). Not least are those identified as grey nomads (Patterson et al. 2011), young families (Llyod 2019) and international vanpackers (stuff.co.nz 2019a). Temporary consumption of freedom camping space is growing at a slightly faster rate than the drive market as a whole—6% versus 5.4% per year—triggering consideration in the planning provision for camping production (DTESB 2014).

This chapter acknowledges the compounding feelings of community stakeholders, concurring that a certain amount of opportunity to free camp is, more-or-less, an Australian entitlement (Ferris 2015; Garner 2013). Notwithstanding, a moral commitment exists among responsible campers to discipline oneself without any wilful coercion from 'others'. Hence, the seriousness of the freedom camping debate in Australia and its implications on the Australian camping culture is exposed. The chapter is thus timely, particularly if the right to publicly camp was taken away through future policy action. However, the chapter does not purport to present a treatise to the cause to some of the unfavourable politics over freedom camping in Australia (for such an exposition see Caldicott et al. 2014a). Rather, it describes a transitioning of camping from commercial to freedom, a paradox of everyday living usually conducted in controlled environments with the formulation of perceived freedom as the art of not being governed quite so much (Foucault 1984).

10.2   Literature Review

A scan of the literature reveals just how patchy the freedom camping reference remains despite Kelly's (1994) specific observation that many caravanners were "making use of road-side rest stops, national parks and vacant land for short-term stays" outside of traditional caravan parks (p. 44). Twenty-five years on, councils across Australia still find themselves in vexed situations on freedom camping—on the one hand, trying to attract visitors to bring new revenues into communities; and on the other hand, looking to support or protect the economic interests of the commercial caravan park operators within their towns (Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance 2019). Existing literature remains fragmented with an emphasis towards tourism markets, motivations and segments (Wu and Pearce 2014) while studies on tourism planning, policy and political leadership are noticeably inadequate (Blichfeldt et al. 2014). Hardy and Gretzel (2011) reinforce that the practice and policy needs of RV travellers are not currently being met with Caldicott et al. (2018) exposing the forcing of a 'market-failure' debate into bureaucratic and political arenas. However, it is important for policy-makers to balance up the need and net benefits of attracting freedom camping as a type of tourism before launching into the provision of infrastructure that the private sector may be willing to offer, albeit under amended legislative opportunity.

Freedom RV camping complements a strong sense of independence, adventure, challenge, anonymity, and social release, for partakers outside of their perceptions of physical and bureaucratic confinement of other static accommodation forms. Freedom campers reject physical and constructed bounds and economic norms of the traditional, regulated, and fixed caravan park environments (Caldicott et al. 2018). Subsequently, local to international media run stories with reoccurring themes of commercial caravan park operators angry with the hordes of freeloading freedom campers purportedly stealing their way around various countries by avoiding the payment of accommodation fees (RV Daily 2019). The campers hit back, defending their claimed democratic right to choose where they camp and to choose where and how they spend their travel dollar (Caravanning News 2019e). Campers threaten to boycott towns and regions that do not share their principles of freedom of choice nor value their considerable camper spend (Advocate 2018). Caravan park operators threaten that fiscal closure of parks will occur if unfair practices are allowed to continue, predominately attacking councils with loose regulatory controls (Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance 2019). Governments; federal, state, and local, each contends with the asymmetries in policy-making every day. For freedom camping, they administer the divide between those that want, those that don't want and those that are impacted by the phenomenon (Caldicott et al. 2014b)—who gets what, where, when and how,—a process commonly requiring amendment to regional planning schemes (Rockhampton Regional Council 2019).

Each stakeholder group uses their respective power attempting to influence government agenda setting and decision making (thevoiceofthesouth.com 2019). The indignation of freedom camping extends from banning "Wicked" campervans

painted with slogans (those that communities are finding offensive) from entering public caravan and camping grounds (Caldwell 2016) to protests over grey nomads using road-side rest areas, parking lots and local showgrounds as alternate camping places (Chlanda 2019). Garner (2013) as the author of *Born in a Tent—how camping makes us Australian,* advocates for camping as part of that nation's culture and national heritage claiming it is one of the most profound ways Australians interact with their environment. However, the controversy of freedom camping continues to extend across communities, across international borders, across agencies, and across traditional camping market segments, a position Hardy, Gretzel and Kirkpatrick (2014) went so far as to argue "is one of the greatest challenges facing the RV industry" (p. 7).

Freedom camping requires a space where individuals are vehicles of power, not its points of application. It is imperative that the camping public comes up with novel, innovative or simply common sense ways to self-regulate, to educate all campsite users, to effectively self-police and punish those that do the wrong thing before the state takes their camping 'choices' away. The rally is for a balance; that of preserving freedom of choice camping as a way of life and that of preserving natural and economic ecosystems through a legislative disruption supported by self-regulation and peer policing—the panoptic gaze (Foucault 1991). Rather than relying on explicit rules and punitive systems, neo-tribes establish and enforce their norms through disciplining neo-tribal gazes (Dinhopl and Gretzel 2018). The neo-tribal approach advocates for change: it seeks mutual and incremental upward (peer) social control and downward (government) policy adjustment reflecting Ferris' (2015) call for camping stakeholders not to forsake their way of life through inappropriate action; civil, social and environmental disregard or inaction; sitting on their hands and being apathetic to the political melee.

Several authors (Hardy et al. 2012; Hardy and Robards 2015) have seen fit to contextualise RV tourism within neo-tribal theory while Caldicott et al. (2018) re-conceptualise RVers as lifestyle travellers, or 'mobile residents' thus setting them apart from the "madding [tourist] crowd" (Gray 1751, p. 1). Neo-crowdism (-tribalism) evolves from lifestyle choices or consumption practices that allow for emotional connections with others when engaging in related activities (Mitchell and Imrie 2011), and is distinct from cultural-tribalism, into which one is born and retains scripted positions to traditions validated as historical and more-or-less stable (Maffesoli 1995). On the contrary, modern nomadic RVing crowds imbue fleeting ephemerality and lack of permanence. They seek the opportunity to break with their more usual everyday routines and move beyond their established family networks and circles of friends (Caldicott and Harris 2015). Be it across the campground, or across the other side of the world, freedom campers create new connections through common interests, lifestyles, rituals and language as they choose to be among or identify with such fluctuating compatriots. Their desire for social contact and opportunities for sociality is not lost, but rather they seek to exercise their freedom of choice to develop alternate senses of agency and emotional bonding, facilitating identities that separate them from dominant forces and labels of domesticity.

The face-to-face and virtual social media are both highly valued among RVers (Harris 2014). Typically, campfire exchanges at RV campsites provide opportunity for travellers to bond "…around 5 p.m. every day, at thousands of campsites and motor home parks across Australia, travellers gather for an informal 'happy hour' to share a drink and swap tales about life on the road" (Hiscock 2016, p. 1). It is a neo-tribal ritual RVers enjoy as they "undertake the 'Big Lap'—the 15,000 km circumnavigation of Australia by road taking anything from a couple of months to a year or more; RV living on Highway 1" (Caldicott 2017, p. 63). When an RVer first comes to a new site the campers nearby often offer assistance, helping the new-comers to get their camp set up before inviting them to the campfire (where open fires are permissible) to maybe have a drink or even a pot-luck dinner (Zane 2014). An additional tangible staging arena of RV communities has traditionally been RV clubs and RV rallies where attendance motivation is "strongly linked to the importance of making new friends and being part of a social group" (Patterson et al. 2015, p. 539). However, technological advances are changing the face of this public sphere. Mobile and on-board RV communication equipment including two-way radio and internet technologies allow individual vehicles to act as nodes in a circuit of web-based communication (Simpson 2008). Satellite systems have expanded instantaneous and remote communications from nomadic vehicles leading to increased access to, and 'online-isation' of, the social networking of neo-communities. Instant connectivity for RVers, particularly those at a distance from each other, "has radically increased social coherency to the point where it may be understood to be as socially dense as it is physically sparse" (Simpson 2008, p. 38).

The freedom camping mode allows RV users across multiple neo-tribes to experience independent RVing and to 'identify' or be 'identified' through their RVs and their associated practices, behaviours and lifestyles. Each neo-tribe imbues their own identity in a way that takes on new social and experiential meaning for them (Blumer 1969; Martin et al. 2006). An example of such sub-cultural meaning in the RV world is the symbolism created by the luxury vehicle brand of Winnebago (Fig. 10.1). Generally catering to the mature markets, the luxury extends beyond internal amenity. It provides luxury of mobility and freedom from the constraints of fixed commercial
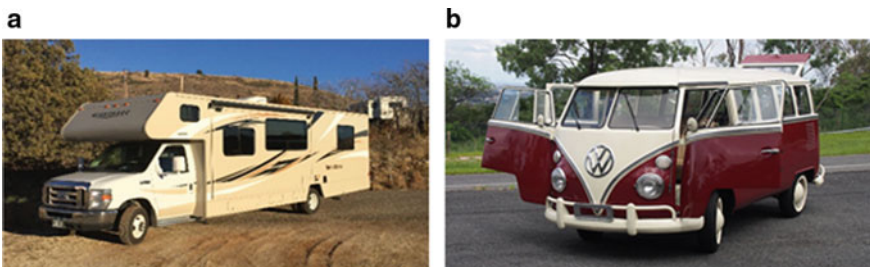

Fig. 10.1 **a** A luxury Winnebago versus **b** a minimalist Volkswagen Kombi camping vehicle. Photo credits: Author

sites further promoting freedom of choice sites. This brand culture exudes experiential meaning for RVers similar to that of Harley-Davidson for motorcycle enth**us**iasts and members of the Harley Owners Group (HOG) (Schembri 2009). Schembri argues, "the personal experience of Harley-Davidson embedded in a collective social act (in this case, the Australian HOG community) is a spectacular (postmodern) symbol of freedom, where the rebel image of the bike and the brand is consumed by (predominantly mainstream) consumers, thus highlighting the co-construction of the consumer's brand experience" (p. 1299). In contrast, vanpackers driving converted minivans reminiscent of the 1960s VW Kombi (Fig. 10.1) symbolise freedoms of a youthful laissez-faire experience (Harding 2013; Sri 2015). The less self-contained nature of the Kombi, particularly its lack of on-board ablution amenities, could cause vanpackers to be stereotyped as commercial, and fixed site reliant, campers.

However, evidence abounds demonstrating an experiential preference of some vanpackers to avoid commercially serviced sites wherever possible. Such practices do bring strain to the political debate with arguments presented over environmental, social and economic costs to host communities (Himmelreich 2013; Kinninment 2014). "Vanpackers often preference 'street camping' as site choice, breaching social boundaries around camping norms as projected by the 'other'" (Caldicott 2017, p. 66). Such 'separating' choices between sub-tribes, that otherwise may be perceived as 'the same' because they look 'the same' are reinforced by various studies. For example, Canosa (2018) describes sub-tribes of youth in Byron Bay, Australia. The precinctive youth carve out their own 'locals-only' space in a region which is dominated by tourism; clearly defining themselves in opposition to tourists. Cohen (2004) identifies self or peer segmentation of sub-classes (-tribes) of backpackers as travellers versus explorers; Dolles et al. (2018) emphasise the sub-tribes that exist within the group culture of motorcycle racing; and distinctions are drawn by Bertella (2018) when using the context of vegetarian food festivals to explore the notion of tribal boundaries. Notably, members of sub-tribes who exist on the periphery are viewed as less dedicated tribal members, or "flexitarians" (Bertella 2018, p. 34) by those who are far more dedicated and involved in the neo-tribe behaviours. Each sub-tribe holds independent identities as well as analyse their collective mechanisms to the neo-crowd.

10.3 Methodology

The specific research objective of this Australian case study was to explore the variation in camper characteristics and campsite preferences, and the effect of this variance on the future management of freedom camping in local communities. Concerning the relevance of this research and its methodology, a study in the US—*The average camper who doesn't exist* (Shafer 1969)—was a fruitful guide. Shafer wrote:

> If you study campers by sampling at random at several campgrounds, you may find that your data describe an 'average' camper who simply does not exist. Such information is not good enough for recreation planners who need reliable information for making decisions (p. 1).

Rather, instead of sampling campers for this study, a pragmatic, grounded approach guided qualitative multi-method data collection (Bryman 2004). Reflexive praxis (Gibbons et al. 1994) guided forty-one semi-structured interviews with constant comparative reference to the academic and grey literature. The author's life-long personal engagement with the RV industry and its many stakeholders additionally brings unique contextual awareness of the multiple practitioners and their problems. Such immersion into the field is consistent with the Van de Ven (2007) argument that engaged research brings many sources of knowledge to bear on important problems and is likely to have the greatest impact on practice. Through deep immersion and crystallisation of data from different collection modes (Denzin and Lincoln 2005), critical observation and thematic analyses allowed exploration of the phenomenon of freedom camping, its stakeholders, politics and praxis, from different angles.

Applying the principles of theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss 1967) informants on the macro level were senior policy-makers, governmental department staff, and peak caravanning industry and consumer association leaders. The latter represented the individual RVers (campers). Informants at the micro level were similarly represented by political, bureaucratic and community (business and resident) interests, though within select local government area (LG) case communities of eastern Australia. Four shires were purposively selected as freedom camping 'hot spots', not for their specific profiling but to enhance "analytical generalisability" (Yin 2014, p. 40).

Informants from various scales (policy, operations, community) were asked to describe the main factors influencing developments in freedom camping, and camper segmentation, based on personal and professional (they often differ) perceptions, experiences and understandings. Further, informants shared how they anticipated likely future trends developing. The findings were corroborated through the use of other sources such as newspaper articles, policy documents, published statistical data, and the voice of other participants engaged with the phenomenon at different scales.

10.4   Findings and Discussion

Following the sound advice of Elwood L Shafer Jr., this chapter recognises the highly heterogeneous nature of freedom campers and freedom camping. It proposes a caravanning site-preference pendulum (Fig. 10.2) in acknowledgement of the micro to macro identifying determinants helping to shape caravanning site selection via neo-tribes of commercial campers to freedom campers with an emerging sub-tribe as 'swingers' that alternate in between (Fig. 10.2).

At one extreme, commercial campers enjoy constructed, physical and psychological, comforts that traditional caravan parks afford. The campers can 'hook-up' to fixed services for water, electricity and TV and have access to a range of on-site amenities like, pools, fitness centres, restaurants and children's play centres. The
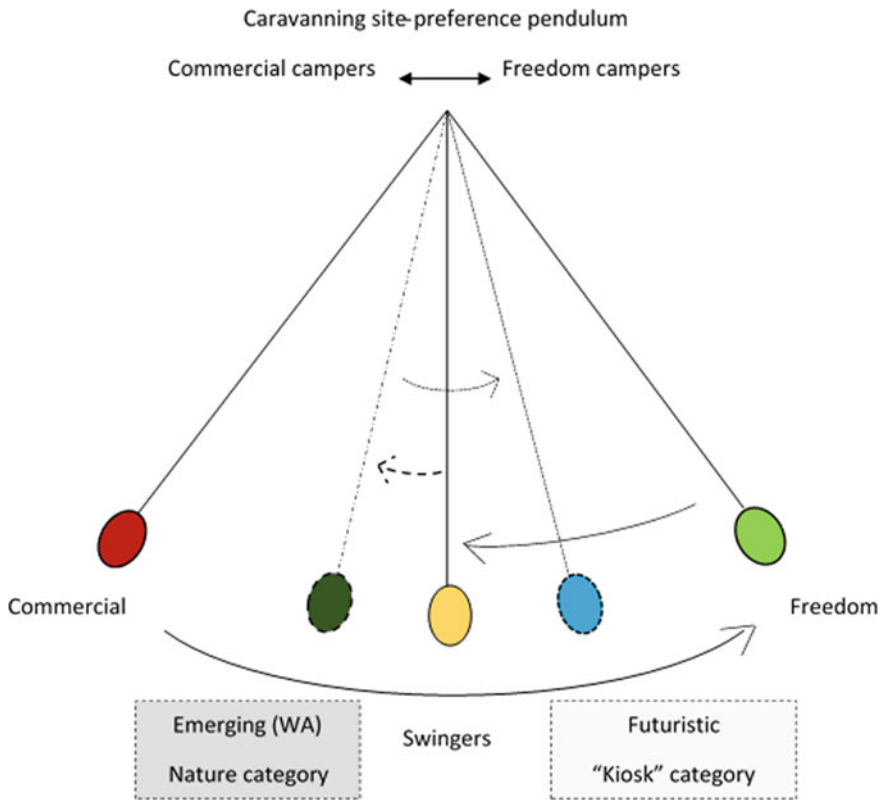
Fig. 10.2   Pendulum of camping space preferences. *Source* Author

privilege of such access comes with the cost of a market-based commercial camping fee. At the other extreme, freedom campers prefer to avoid the structures and rules of modern society that require conformity to the masses. As independent traveller they cruise the highways as a way of life—the Utopian lifestyle. They try to avoid the impersonal city and the mass societal routines that dominate urban life. Freedom campers pride themselves on their self-reliance from mass society and their ability to act independently of organisations, and institutions, having acquired the skills and resources to operate more-independently of modern society (McFarlane 2004). The privilege of such laissez faire comes with the bonus of not paying a nightly market-based commercial camping fee. Though very different in some respects, and thus in definition, the seemingly opposed neo-tribes also display some commonalities.

First, the choice of travellers to use an RV as a form of accommodation; second, the choice of the vehicle itself; and third, the choice of site, or camping space to match the experience and identity desired; are all *deliberate* choices. Freedom camping is not a haphazard by-product of mainstream tourism. It is a deliberate expression of choice. As the demand for freedom spaces grow, in line with current and projected RV sales

Fig. 10.3 Pay-wave
camping check-in kiosk.
Photo credit: Author 2012

growth in Australia (CIAA 2019a) the study unveils new modes of camping space
emerging i.e. the 'nature' category, particularly in Western Australia (Department
of Local Government and Communities 2015) and the futuristic 'kiosk' category
(Caravanning News 2019a), already available in some international destinations. RVs
can be catered for through kiosk style (Fig. 10.3) overnight parking arrangements
with variation to physical amenity, accompanying regulation, entry price-points, fee
collection (or not) mechanisms, boom-gated (or not), and various future services
technology platforms as dictated by emerging prototype vehicles (Fig. 10.4).

Tourism Research Australia (2016) reports that approximately one-third of total
caravan nights and half of the motorhome nights are spent freedom camping
(Fig. 10.5). The total volume of campers across all camping modes is rising propor-
tionately to the RV sales growth. However, the percentage of market share for each
mode, distinct from that already known, i.e. commercial (34%), freedom (16%), and
swingers (50%) (Caldicott 2017) will fluctuate according to societal influences and
individual preference. For some campers, it is a lifestyle; for others, it exhibits as a
protest to everyday living conducted in controlled environments.

As contemporary travellers, freedom campers continue to seek both the exhila-
ration of breaking away from the rigour of the identities performed in the sedentary
world while looking for emotional bonding to be found through the mobility of their

Fig. 10.4 Vertically expandable RV prototype. *Source* Caldicott (2017)

Fig. 10.5 Caravan and motorhome nights ('000) by commercial and freedom locations. *Source* Caldicott (2017) adapted from Tourism Research Australia for year-end September 2016

RVing neo-tribe communities. It is about freedom of choice for freedom campers—the freedom to choose the constraints that they are prepared to accept. That is to take a critical distance to the type of subjectification that links to the state; the dominant subject positions (Foucault 2002). The key demands that drive an RVer's utopian ideals are a keen sense of their *power*, to take charge of their own lives and destiny, building self-reliance and independence (Caldicott et al. 2014b).This sentiment is nicely expressed by one local government informant:

> People want experiences. They don't want a package holiday. People want something different and they want to be seen to break the mould. Those coming in a caravan don't necessarily want to go to a nice clean caravan park any more or at least all the time. They have the technology in their RVs to be independent (Brian, LG, operations).

By exercising their expressions of freedom within a regulated society, some campers swing like the metaphoric pendulum as they move fluidly in and out of their neo-tribe and also across the liminal bounds between commercial and freedom accommodation zones. As 'swingers', sometimes they freedom camp, sometimes they commercial camp, and sometimes they seek the non-techno solace in 'nature', or, the convenience of technology through 'kiosk' check-in thus maximising the inherent values that each mode provides.

The pendulum-effect mirrors a notion Robards and Bennett (2011) introduce as 'temporal wandering', or "a process through which individuals in late modernity experience multiple and varied instances of temporal social bonding as they strive to connect with and engage in a more permanent form of the social bond" (p. 314). Freedom campers value private and personal camping space and reject centralisation, especially the *power* of dominant models of commercial park-based commodification. Campers engage in alternative use spaces which facilitate and satisfy their desires for self-creativity, self-sufficiency, self-containment, and public rejection all at the same time, crafting the contest of that space across continuums of freedom to commercial and primitive to luxury (Fig. 10.6).

Exploring the range of camping site choices, represented as 'freedom' sites, particularly through the Australian camping site matrix, exposes two streams: first, destination venues; and second, transit venues. The latter is for overnight stays of short duration, usually accepted as less than 72 h, while RVers are travelling between home regions and destination regions. These stays are most often associated with bush camps, road-side rest areas, urban streets and car parks. In contrast, destination venues are places at which RVers spend considerable amounts of time across a season or trip, whether as part of a multi-destination journey or as the target destination for a trip.

Acknowledging freedom camping abounds, and even that some property boundary access infringements occur, as mayor of Walgett Shire informant Maurice (LG, policy), did not think it was a contributing factor to the political debate:

> They do stay, the campers do stay near a bridge which is on the big wide-bore. It's on my territory [property] but it doesn't worry me. There hasn't been any complaints from neighbours. Whenever they camp on my place, they're usually pretty well behaved.

To further illustrate these points, participant Brian (LG, operations) spread open his Shire's glossy A4 tourism guide. He showed how none of their marketing and advertising materials portray people sitting in a caravan park next to a toilet block or a shower block or a swimming pool. "We never show people sitting on a concrete pad with a power cable hooked in to their RV. Instead, we show them parked there on the edge of the river with an easy chair looking over the water". Their stays are most often associated with venues such as vacant Crown lands, showgrounds and private properties like farm stays or staying with friends and relatives. Brian admitted to some
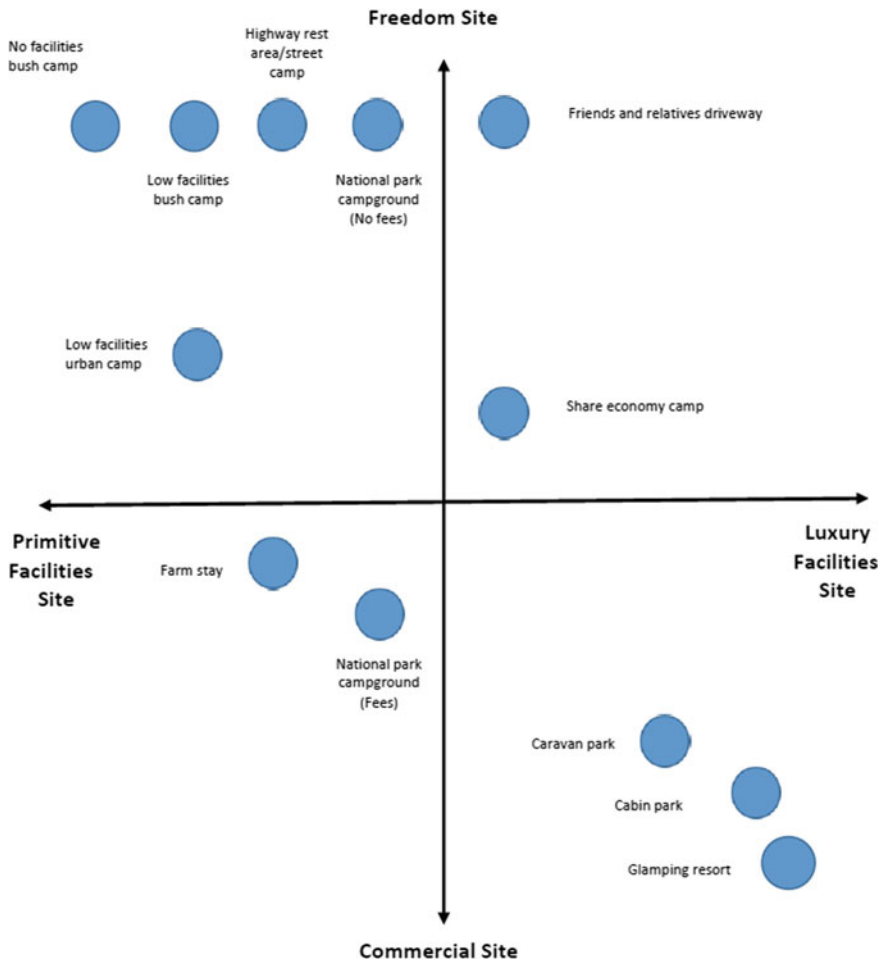
Freedom Site

No facilities
bush camp

Highway rest
area/street
camp

Friends and relatives driveway

Low facilities
bush camp

National park
campground
(No fees)

Low facilities
urban camp

Share economy camp

**Primitive
Facilities
Site**

Farm stay

**Luxury
Facilities
Site**

National park
campground
(Fees)

Caravan park

Cabin park

Glamping resort

Commercial Site

Fig. 10.6 Australian campsite matrix. *Source* Author

extent the industry, the government industry, his industry, had encouraged this type of camping. Tourism managers, or destination marketing managers "are encouraging people to freedom camp but actually we don't necessarily have the product in place or clear and consistent legislative guidelines of how consumers can properly and sustainably access it". In the void of clear guidelines, RVers engaging in freedom camping actively seek destinations that welcome their presence and embrace their participation within the host community (Bundaberg Now 2019; Echonetdaily 2019).

While the two venue types (transit and destination) are not mutually exclusive, the dominant shift emerging is the growing consumption of freedom camping and the social and physical movement from covert towards overt nature of camping. Figs. 10.7 and 10.8 encapsulate the special nature of the shift through venue posi-
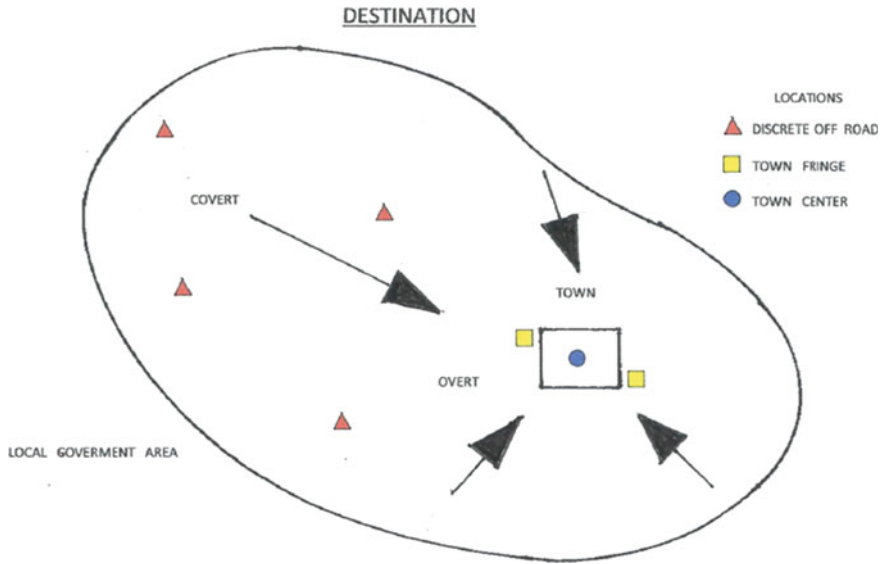
Fig. 10.7 Shift in destination-area freedom camping locations. *Source* Author
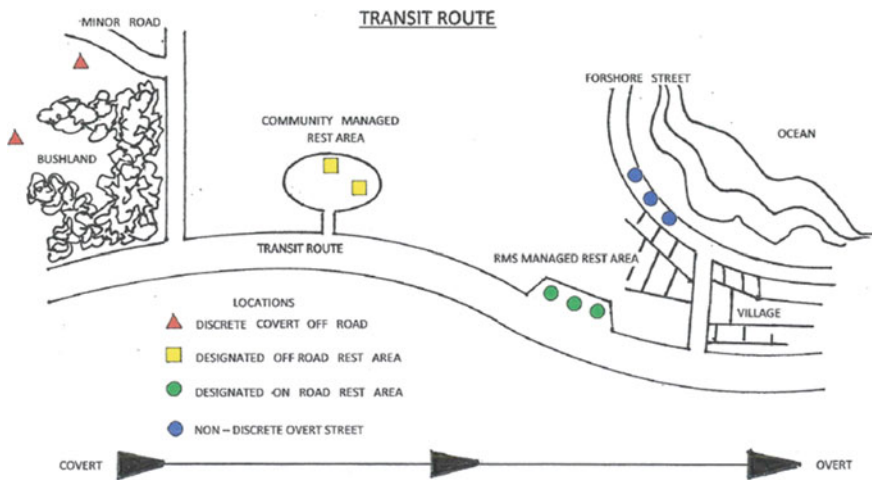
Fig. 10.8 Shift in transit-route freedom camping locations. *Source* Author

tioning (locations) in both the destination and transit modes. At the destination level (Fig. 10.7), freedom campers, that were once content to find secluded off-road sites in rural locations with no access to services, are moving towards unregulated camping sites closer to town boundaries and even within central business district (CBD) locations for some of their travel experiences (The West Australian 2019).

Reflecting on the street camping, informant John (LG, operations) of Byron Shire says, "Council now gets considerable complaint from residents about people who camp in their streets". He pointed out the camping was, "not you know pitch a tent and have the fire outside with a billy on it" but the problem was "mostly people sleeping in vehicles" contrary to visible signposting. This trend is emulating experiences and opportunities commonly available to self-contained campers, predominantly motorhomers, in the United States, Europe and New Zealand through camping caristes, aires de services and stellplatz camping (Caldicott et al. 2018).

At the transit level (Fig. 10.8), freedom campers show a propensity for more overt camping locations, particularly along major highways and in many popular coastal 'hotspots'. The highway venues can be dedicated off-road sites, often managed by a community trust or charity or be road-side park-rest-relax (driver-reviver) sites.

These sites sometimes service heavy haulage vehicles also. The dual-use often generates conflict among users (The Grey Nomads.com.au 2018) as the road-side places only provide basic services of toilets and bins often without adequate designated parking. However, as informant Chris (State, policy), explains, "Freedom camping at the rest areas is not the biggest problem we have got, not by a long way". For her Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) department to pay a lot of attention to policing the camping it would "only come when there is an operational issue, generally following a complaint". She acknowledges camping does happen at the rest areas, but weighing up the disadvantages over the advantages, Chris confirmed RMS has not moved to a policy-level position on camping as yet. Even so, she suggested:

> We have got an increasing use by RV vehicles and campers over the previous years. The issue is growing so we will obviously have to resolve that further down the track. The population is growing and getting older and more retirees are buying RVs and using the rest stops. Our people will be looking into this aspect at an interagency level in future.

A further move towards overt camping is at a street-level where campers park unlawfully on private vacant blocks among residential and industrial properties, and at curb-sides on residential streets even though parking in Australia is generally regulated to accommodate day use only.

The venues where freedom camping happens are now more visible (overt) to more people (industry, resident and regulatory), in more communities (rural, coastal and metropolitan) and used by more consumers (intrastate, interstate and international). This shift is noted within several stakeholder communities. Some welcome the shift while others are not so welcoming, to the point of hostility (Bundaberg Now 2019; stuff.co.nz 2019a). Not contained to, but by way of example, several prominent freedom camping rivalries surface. The opposing commercial caravan park sector versus their proposing RV consumer lobbies each raise concerns over principles of competitive neutrality (Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance 2019) and protectionism (Nagarajan 2002) respectively. Reflecting on the see-sawing conflict emanating from the warring factions, participant Brian (LG, operations) of Diamantina Shire, calls it "the banging heads approach". Instead of pitting councils

against neighbouring councils and industry association against consumer camping associations, he said "freedom camping needs to get on the agenda at a higher level". Intimating both lobbies need to turn their attention to "government organisations and agencies that can make a legislative difference—to move camping tourism forward in unity and not hold it back in the pre-technology, pre-platform age".

Environmentalists raise concern over sustainability; trampling, waste management, erosion and land management restorative practices (Ferris 2015). Resident communities and civic governance authorities raise issues of economic stimulation, volunteerism and cultural enhancement at one level (Caravanning News 2019b, 2019c) and host–guest conflict, social disharmony and law/regulatory enforcement on a different level (Caravanning News 2019d). Informant and mayor of Diamantina Shire, Malcolm (LG, policy) admits, "yes, we definitely see many more of them freedom ones these days". Whether they were choosing to "stay down by the river or up in the caravan park", Malcolm was confident his council and community would gladly accommodate them all. His liberal perspective was welcoming to visitors and his council was making innovative provision for them, regardless of their neo-tribal alignment to freedom, commercial, or swinger camping. Malcolm offered a challenges to other local governments across Australia to break free of the entrenched ideas of caravan and camping production and find new ways to support and facilitate their organisational capacities to deal proactively with the varying neo-tribes of caravanning consumption. Informant Robert (LG, policy) similarly representing Byron Shire as mayor, was very accepting of the challenge agreeing that multiple realities for the future of camping had potential and that his Byron community "simply needed to 'unlock' itself from the existing 'stuck' place of zero-tolerance to freedom camping".

The proactivity displayed by Malcolm and Robert reflects and facilitates a new public management outlook (see Luke et al. 2011) to an old problem. Free camping is the old problem of a contemporary society that has resurfaced in new clothes as freedom camping, though still camping in public places nonetheless. This tests rural and urban communities, particularly those that seek to maximise tourism economic receipts at minimum community welfare costs. When considering the ecological concept of humans in their environment, managing for freedom camping requires communities to think and act sustainably and with resilience. The latter considers the capacity of a system to deal with change and continue to develop (Sroypetch and Caldicott 2018). Subsequently, many councils now see the need to provide that 'alternate' space—a regulated space nonetheless (Petty 2017). Some rural and urban councils are now pooling resources and also seeking external support, i.e. via their local government or tourism associations, in managing their camping practice and policy environments. A demonstrated attempt at constructive collaborations was shown in New South Wales by the North Coast Destination Network (NCDN) through their forming of the Freedom Traveller Taskforce in 2015. By cobbling together the ideas and values of 21 local governments along with those of associated industry and agency support institutions the Taskforce hoped to show, despite the boundaries between the multiple stakeholders blurred in so many different ways, there

were in fact more similarities than difference between them. Destination marketing organisation informant Noelene (DMO, operational), acknowledged:

> Freedom camping is a complex problem and definitely a tricky issue but I am confident that a policy solution can be found to satisfy both transient travellers and local businesses.

Noelene was confident the Taskforce could harness the similarities and negotiate the differences to enable higher production in caravanning and particularly freedom camping in NSW. Summarily echoing the views of several participants, Brian (LG, operations) reflected:

> Perhaps there could be some direction or some answers coming forth with influence of the state government. I believe it is a state issue. It is certainly not a council issue alone.

Additionally, informant John (LG, operations) lamented:

> Without some stronger leadership from the state, like a real intervention, we have no option but to take our policy cue ultimately from the elected councillors.

Several informants also expressed their anticipation for this study to get to the root of where the problems lie and to make sure that these get onto the agenda of those that can make a difference, a policy difference in their treatment of the emerging freedom camping tribal-markets. Again, informant Brian (LG, operations) summed it up:

> I am hoping the outcomes that you can identify through your study show where the problems lie and that these are addressed or put on the agenda of those that can actually make a difference.

It was particularly those informants at the local government operations-level, at the freedom camping coalface dealing daily with the various neo-tribal demands, expressing desire for an end to the broader RVing stakeholder conflict. However, they did not believe that individually, nor through their LG institutions, did they possessed the capacity to bring about change. Instead, they sought assistance in the form of policy-entrepreneurship to bring the fractious political process to an outcome beyond the market-lead interests of the existing camping supply model. Their preferences were for business models capable of delivering wider public interests such as those offering flexible pricing and price-point choices. Such a model may emulate those delivered by early adopters within low cost airlines (Johnson et al. 2008; Ros 2016), hotels (Chen 2014; Radha et al. 2010), taxi transport sectors (Logue and Hollerer 2015; Morozov 2015) and Airbnb (CIAA 2019b) for example. Such outcomes, in the words of informants, would move the debate beyond the resource draining status quo. In their frustration many informants were looking for external policy direction. While Brian, John, and others were particularly looking to a higher state of political authority for leadership they also acknowledged that policy entrepreneurs need not necessarily be aligned to the state. They were each looking for help.

10.5   Contributions, Limitations and Further Research Avenues

This chapter is a pioneer study that sets as foundational the segmentation of caravanning in Australia through neo-tribal theory. It recognises the substantial differences in camper neo-tribes and the confusion over their camping practice all generically labelled as caravanning and more recently as RVing (Caldicott et al. 2018). It thus partially addresses Southerton et al.'s (2003) call for further theoretical analysis and empirical investigation into issues of caravanning. The process of clarifying camper positioning through neo-crowding alone presents an opportunity for practical and theoretical advancement of the caravanning literature more broadly, but particularly, provides a solid platform for enhanced understanding of freedom camping planning and practices for local communities. It does, however, present just one contextualisation and just one interpretation of caravanning as neo-crowding.

Cognitive awareness dictates that we each have our own mind's eye and the image/s of tourism that researchers hold in their mind's eye can shape and influence the engagement with the study (2010). Insight into the study approach and the source of the author's vision of RV tourism as a 'wicked' societal phenomenon openly reveal the researcher positionality; it is inescapable. However, arguably, author liminality (between insider and outsider) brings a perspective that others may not see. It aided unfretted access to a very broad cross-section of policy actors allowing participant and author perspectives to meld 'new' ideas, which ultimately steered the unfolding story. Conceivably, others may find different results and tell a different story.

The chapter took a deliberate route to understand before acknowledging the heterogeneity of freedom campers. However, while the analysis exposed examples of identifying determinants and behaviours of various neo-crowds, it did not focus solely on any one subset at the public-policy-level. There is a range of economic, social, demographic and technological factors driving the neo-crowding of the RV market and fostering disequilibrium between existing production and new consumption in caravan and camping. With continually moving population targets, though trending upward by both volume and percentage of the total RV market (CIAA 2019a), local authorities are continually in need of fresh evidence when making planning and policy decisions to manage for the phenomenon.

The 'emerging' freedom markets, in particular, are exposing a caravan and camping environment with a widening 'gap' between caravanning production and consumption. Within this environment, freedom campers spawn 'new' camping supply options through their sometimes spontaneous occupation of random spaces. They occupy places, particularly public spaces, not specifically zoned for tourism production or regulated for camping supply. Through this study, the complexity of caravan and camping networks, inclusive of the ranging neo-tribes, their language and connecting bonds, is now more advanced. Notwithstanding, the opportunity remains for further investigation of the separate needs of different freedom camping neo-tribes to support local governments in making informed planning and policy decisions for the future of camping within their communities.

Common dilemmas surrounding the freedom camping phenomenon extend to forms of nomadism where mobile resident lifestyles clash with sedentary resident lifestyles; forms of tourist versus resident consumption; sociocultural use of limited resources and space; and, challenges to the rule of the state. A potential future path for caravan and camping in Australia is through coordinated national and state planning and policy amendment as advocated by informant Brian (LG, operations):

> I think we need to look strategically as to how to resolve this. And I would suggest a coordinated approach with ARTN [Australian Regional Tourism Network] from a policy perspective and certainly from a signage point of view the NTSRG [National Tourism Signage Reference Group] and if not the Federal Department of Tourism needs to look at how to resolve this at a national level.

However, such a narrative is beyond the scope of this chapter, though the prospect is tendered as a useful foundation to promote dialogue and allow policy-makers to consider the same within any wider suite of scenarios. As a forerunner, the chapter paves the way for others to continue the story, to tease out, expand, critique or reject various threads. Within communities, those that scope future provision for affordable and innovative camping production and consumption will continue to build their resilience within caravanning's panopticon.

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Chapter 11
Enjoying Sunset: Successful Ageing and the Grey Nomad Community

Philip L. Pearce, Hera Oktadiana, John R. Pearce, and Tingzhen Chen

Abstract Grey nomads, an Australian term for older recreation vehicle travellers, are bound together by a set of common characteristics. This chapter initially identifies a number of issues associated with successful ageing; this discussion provides a somewhat novel perspective on the group's commonalities and mobility. Next, and as a basis for providing insights at a group level, the authors briefly review both social representations theory and social practice theory as ways to explore the value and significance of the grey nomads' extended holiday journeys. Studies of the behaviours and attitudes of members of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA), and its magazine, are used as the empirical basis for the commentary. From multiple data sources, the researchers examine the common concerns of grey nomads, and the language and normative behaviours which build in-group belonging. Both social practice theory and social representation theory, with their power to focus on the commonalities and key guiding metaphors of interacting parties, are employed to help finesse the discussion. Findings support the elements of the positive psychology framework known as PERMA –the acronym summarising the psychological elements of ageing successfully.

Keywords Grey nomads · Successful ageing · Social practice theory · Social representations theory · PERMA framework

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11.1 Introduction

There are multiple ways to conceptualise commonalities amongst tourists. Authors who mock international tourists often joke about their appearance (Pearce and Wu 2017); communities angered by overtourism may focus on their form of transport, such as short stay cruise ship visitors (Goodwin 2017); and destination marketers seeking to attract new customers frequently attend to tourists' nationality and demographics (Morrison 2019). In this chapter, a hybrid approach to classifying a special cohort of tourists is adopted. The focus of attention is on 'grey nomads', a niche segment in the Australian domestic tourism market who are defined not just by their age, appearance and travel style, but also by the social structures and activities developed to serve their collective identity.

It can be argued that the nomadic component of the grey nomads' designation has been quite well documented (Hardy et al. 2012, 2013; Hillman 2013; Pearce and Wu 2018; Prideaux and Carson 2011). In effect, this attention has been to the mobility portion of the phrase commonly used to describe the group. Less attention has been given to the description 'grey' and a major purpose of this chapter is to link contemporary writing about human ageing to the group commonalities and sector interests. By attending to the human lifespan development literature, as well as analyses of communities at the generic or micro-sociological level, augmented by contemporary work on positive psychology, the chapter seeks to provide some deeper insights into the shared identities and common concerns of this economically and socially important travel cohort. Industry data indicates a value of A\$25 million annually through expenditure (CMCA 2019).

Two different sources of information are used to provide an integrated account of the social, physical and environmental worlds of Australian grey nomads. Information collected at events known as rallies, a coming together of large numbers of individual grey nomads, form one part of the data base for the chapter. Rallies offer a collective experience for seniors who share the dream of touring Australia. The concerns of the recreation vehicle (RV) tourists, as evidenced by text in the publications of the major recreational vehicle club, CMCA (the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia), serve as further resources for the investigation. With 70,000 members, the CMCA group is the largest organisation providing a voice and communication forum for the grey nomads' common concerns.

Both social practice theory and social representations theory are used to provide insights about the data sources. The approaches support the orientation expressed throughout this volume of developing a neo-tribes perspective toward specialist markets. The choice of these two frameworks is influenced by the researchers' desire to provide a strong group level of analysis of the RV topic; that is, to adopt an approach which reaches beyond individual motivations and behaviours and considers the role of social processes as contextual determinants of the market being studied. In effect, this kind of work can be classified as sociological social psychology rather than individual social psychology (cf. Harre 1979). The key concerns of social practice

theory—materiality, skills of the participants, settings of interest, and meanings of the activity—are considered (Jin et al. 2019; Shove et al. 2012).

The social representations theoretical work is also used to explore in more detail the meanings of RV travel. This level of analysis, originating in the work of Moscovici (1988, 2001) and developed in tourism studies by Pearce et al. (1996), Quenza (2005), and Lai et al. (2016), focuses on the collective and group perceptions towards significant topics in the lives of the interacting members. The approach is especially powerful in identifying key metaphors and images that capture iconic ways of summarising group attitudes and perceptions. Getting older and travelling are the kind of grander scale topics where social representations theory assists in portraying how communities have a collective view (Noy 2007; Schliephack and Dickinson 2017). Like the key work on neo-tribes informing this book, these two conceptual approaches stress a group-oriented perspective where the language, rhetoric and badges of identity are very central to the insights generated about the market (Hardy et al. 2012; Hardy and Robards 2015; Hardy et al. 2013). In summary, the overriding aim of this chapter is to identify shared practices and representations held by grey nomads based on understanding their life stage, their participation in key integrative group activities known as rallies and their views as expressed in RV media.

11.2 Aspects of Human Ageing

The term grey, as a part of the expression grey nomads, is an explicit reference to the loss of hair pigmentation as individuals move into and beyond their 40 s. It represents a colloquial way of describing the group of older tourists of interest. A large number of the senior recreational vehicle travellers studied in Australia are actually in their 60 s and 70 s, though on both sides of this dominant age range there are scatterings of younger and older participants (Wu and Pearce 2017). Our target market segment is therefore largely in the age bracket which researchers refer to as the young old, 65–84 years, as opposed to the oldest-old, those who live to be in their late 80 s, 90 s and beyond (Jeon and Dunkle 2009).

There is an immediate need to avoid ageist thinking and stereotyping when contemplating and researching this group of tourists. There is now substantial literature which suggests that many older adults, specifically the young old in the designation just described, are physically active and mentally able members of their community. They can bring skills, experience and wisdom to the groups in which they live and work (Charles and Carstensen 2010). This view stands in contrast to the negative stereotypes which can cast older citizens as "frail, a burden on the health system, and irritating to their families" (Santrock 2011, p. 603).

It is of particular interest to the present topic that older citizens are criticised for their driving skills. Nevertheless, work in Australia by Rakotonirainy et al. (2012) revealed that 65–70 year olds were one of the safest age groups in terms of being responsible for crashes. Similarly, those aged 70–79, when compared to younger age groups, had only a mid-range level of crash involvement and culpability. The

example of driving ability is a good indicator of how (not) to think about ageing and the deficits and skills of senior citizens. Not only is there considerable individual variability, but the nature of the deficits or defining characteristics need to be identified in detail. For example, in the driving data it was notable that the senior groups had two specific problems where their skills appeared to be a problem; they were more likely to be involved in crashes at interchanges and be implicated in problem incidents when driving while tired. Researchers need to analyse age cohorts and their practices precisely, rather than relying on broad stereotypical assertions.

There is abundant literature in psychology and medicine about ageing successfully (Kim and Park 2017). Longitudinal and comprehensive reviews have revealed four categories of factors: (1) avoiding physical health problems including disability, (2) maintaining mental abilities and compensating for deficits in cognitive functioning, (3) pursuing life energetically and actively, and (4) being psychologically well adapted. The domain 'psychologically well adapted in later life' showed the strongest individual association with successful ageing, although the four categories identified work together rather than functioning in isolation. The studies on ageing successfully blend empirical data about the effects of growing older with remedial action for ameliorating negative effects and maximising positive outcomes. For the first category specified in Kim and Park's review, declines in physical health include wide-ranging generic concerns about less efficient immune systems, and some inabilities to build intra-cortical connections among neurones. There are also some losses in sensory systems, notable visual acuity and ability to adapt to glare as well as experiencing hearing loss. Susceptibility to a range of diseases plague many in the upper age ranges, with arthritis being the most common affliction in late adulthood. All importantly, there are some ways for senior citizens and travellers to compensate for these limiting issues; physical exercise including walking and engaging in weight bearing activities, restricting the amount of calories consumed, and avoiding substance abuse are highly recommended (Martin and Romero Ortuño 2019; Santrock 2011).

In a similar vein, there is evidence of ageing-related cognitive deficits including a slowing down in the speed of processing information and declines in both episodic (specific events based) memory and semantic memory (the recall of factual material), though for the latter a persistence in retrieving the items and using neat mnemonic tricks often overcome the problem (Leahy et al. 2018). Some cognitive deficits involving memory and judgment appear to be related to the time of the day when seniors are tested. Early morning testing produces superior performance to assessments conducted later in the afternoon or evening (Hasher et al. 2002). This kind of result resonates with the fatigue effects implicated in the incidence of crashes when driving while tired among older drivers.

These physical health and cognitive facets of ageing have to be related to the two other categories which shape the world of the grey nomads; their overall lifestyle and their psychological functioning, most especially their attitudes to this phase of their life. Four theories of socio-emotional development build a powerful base for understanding the psychological world of grey nomads. The approaches can be

briefly outlined. The first contribution—how to be content in the latter stages of life—was outlined by Erikson (1959). In documenting eight stages of human existence, he argued that for individuals to feel satisfied with their life overall, they needed to reflect on and believe that many of their years had been well spent. He termed it a period of integrity rather than despair. The ideas have been echoed and reinforced more recently by Zimbardo and Boyd (2008), who describe the importance of having a positive view of one's past, an engaged involvement in the present and some, but not too much, focus on the future.

A second social and cognitive theory assisting older people to function well is simply labelled activity theory, a conceptualisation somewhat similar to the everyday principle of "use it or lose it". The more refined applications of the approach embrace being mindful and mentally active (Langer 2009; Mallers et al. 2013; Riebe et al. 2005). The startling study by Langer and colleagues in which older men were asked to live for a week in a recreated earlier period of their lives, an activity which had positive consequences for their social and physical well-being, is a talisman research piece for the perspective that being active and engaging with the world is a strategy likely to confer multiple benefits. Two further notions add refinement to the ways successful ageing can be built. Socioemotional selectivity theory observes and suggests that older adults can and do become more selective in their social networks, thus finding support for their views and enjoying rewarding relationships (Carstensen 2006). Similarly, selective optimisation with compensation theory posits that older individuals do well when they focus on important goals, abandon side goals, persevere when the going becomes difficult, and remain unafraid to seek alternate routes and help from others to achieve the highly desired outcomes (Freund and Lamb 2011).

These mini-theoretical perspectives and conceptualisations about ageing successfully have arguably been brought together in the designation PERMA, an approach developed by positive psychologists and used in tourism study (Csikszentmihalyi and Seligman 2000; Filep and Pearce 2014; Pearce 2009; Seligman 2012). The term stands for being *positive*, *engaged* with the world, having quality *relationships*, ensuring that there is *meaning* to what people are doing, and enjoying and acknowledging *achievements*. The phrase 'psychologically well adapted' is a convenient summary for individuals and social groups who rate well on the PERMA dimensions.

Based on the preceding review about successful ageing, the aim of this chapter is to identify the structures and group thinking which grey nomads share towards the RV experience. This aim is pursued by assessing several interlocking forms of data using the interpretive frameworks of social practice theory, social representations and PERMA, all set in the context of contemporary views about successful ageing.

11.3   Data Forms and Resources

The first empirical resource to be considered for this chapter comes from a series of surveys and focus groups conducted at a typical RV rally in Townsville, northern Australia. Using a questionnaire-based survey with almost 200 RV users, five motivational factors were identified for rally participation (Wu and Pearce 2017). The clusters of items were grouped with the labels destination attractiveness, rally attractiveness, escape and achievement, knowledge enhancement, and building relationships. An overview of the activities undertaken was also obtained through the survey. Seven key categories of activities were identified. They were entertainment at the rally (e.g. happy hour, shows, and trading), learning opportunities at the rally (e.g. seminars, craft barn, exhibitions, vehicle maintenance), shopping in the community (e.g. malls, outlets), visiting natural environments, visiting tourism attractions and attending local events (e.g. the Townsville Show, the V8 super car event, sports games, and concerts). The most popular activity sets were the rally-based entertainment, and socialisation (group chats and shared drinks and meals). Shopping in the local malls and outlets was the second most favoured way to pass the time during the days spent in the rally location.

In a second study of this market, six focus groups using a sample of respondents drawn from the rally participants were conducted (Pearce and Wu 2018). Six focus group conversations, typically consisting of 8–10 people, were conducted outside the participants' camp/vehicle sites. Morning/afternoon tea was prepared to ensure a relaxing environment for the senior respondents. Importantly, it was stressed in each focus group that there was no need to reach a consensus, and open discussion was encouraged. The focus groups lasted from 57 to 82 min. Building on the work of Noy (2007), key phrases were closely monitored for their power to characterise the community views. The dominant and recurring expressions included 'RV lifestyle keeps the doctor away', 'not just watching TV', 'not waiting to die', 'we are like a family', 'it is a great country, we do not need to go overseas', 'we don't need jumping castles (complaints about caravan park charges)' and 'it is safer on the road than in my suburban city house'. Perhaps unusually for a tourism market segment, the rally participants enthusiastically endorsed their form of travel and tourism activity; there were no concerns about crowding or overtourism expressed in the interviews and group discussions.

In summarising the content of grey nomad conversations and public concerns, Pearce and Wu (2018) suggested that there were six common narratives. These dominant concerns were supported by expressions that can be taken as the shared and agreed on representations. As noted in that study, the representations can best be described as hegemonic with widespread agreement on the perspectives. The themes reported in the study were: *Freedom on the road, Our extended family, A healthier lifestyle, We help the visited communities, Living economically,* and *Improved personal safety.*

Another source of information developed for this chapter involved two experienced tourism researchers, both of whom were less familiar with the RV market,

reading and summarising themes from their close reading of 12 issues of the RV world as expressed in the CMCA magazine "The Wanderer". Each researcher produced a 1,000 word summary text highlighting what they considered to be the dominant themes mentioned in the articles and illustrated through the photographic images of the publication. These key concepts are presented in Table 11.1.

The researchers both noted one key image which prevailed across most of the magazines read. The stereotyped photograph used in many stories, as well as on the front cover of the magazines, was often of a couple relaxing in their chairs outside their RV, set against a picturesque scenic background. Further, both researchers noted the efficient layout of the magazines with regular sections devoted to the sale of vehicles and advertising products for the market.

In a further analysis of the RV magazine, the content letters to the editor for a six-month period were collated and analysed with Leximancer, a text-based software. The program produces a visual image of the concepts that co-occur in lines of text and offers an objective, non-researcher directed summary of common themes, albeit at a basic level of word use. In the Leximancer visual record, those circles closest to one another are the most directly linked and the word describing the key

Table 11.1 Dominant themes about the RV world identified by experienced researchers from reading 12 issues (2018 editions) of the RV magazine The Wanderer

Researcher A	Researcher B
Adventurous market	Seniors are diverse but share the excitement of travel
Nature based interests are strong	Love of interesting places (hidden gems), enjoy the nature and life—fresh air, and meeting people along the way
Enjoy the social life	Like meeting people along the way
Road safety licencing and government regulations are a concern	Driving skills and competency in manoeuvring vehicle a big issue in RV travel. Safety is a dominant concern—on the road and overnight
Slow tourism and local culture are important	Route planning and information widely shared
Cost conscious	New options for renting RVs through companies expanding rapidly. Cost consciousness driving this new option
Smart technology use is developing quickly	Use of GeoWiki, cyber security concern
Some physical limits to activities	Need to be mentally and physically healthy
Advocates for RV park development	
Argue for the benefits of their sector for communities	Contribute to the local destination
Believe in sustainable practices and community contributions	Rise in farm stay where farmers offering their farms to the RV market to experience farm life as well as to support the Australian farmers

circles are some of the most frequently mentioned in that set. This can mean that researchers have to use some judgment in focusing on the whole set of terms in any one circle to contextualise the bland meaning given by the single designated word. Further, it is important to note that the output images provided by the Leximancer can be produced at various levels of detail. For presentation purposes, such images can become unreadable if all the terms which make up a set are employed. The Leximancer analysis for the concerns and topics raised in the letters to the editor are displayed in Fig. 11.1 at a summative level, one which allows an overview of the dominant themes rather than the full minutiae of all the terms used.

Attention to the further constituent elements surrounding the designated terms is required to appreciate the richer meaning of the output provided in Table 11.2. This
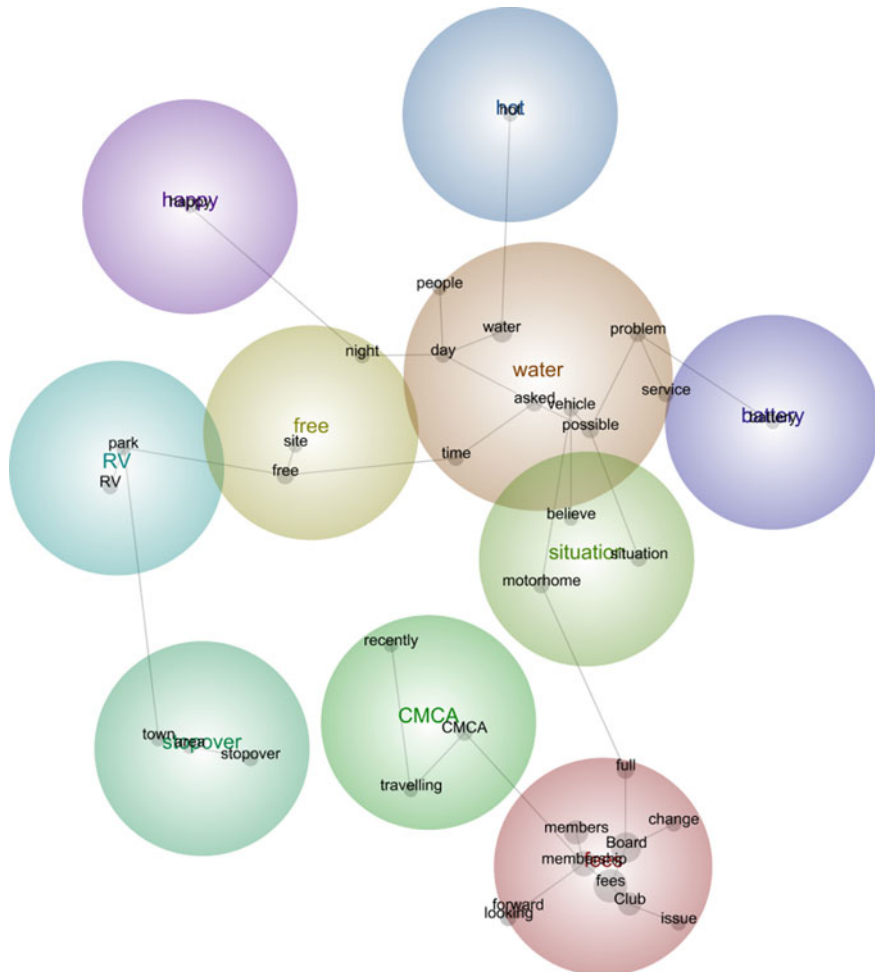

Fig. 11.1 A Leximancer analysis of the RV users' letters to the Wanderer magazine for 2019

Table 11.2 Supporting textual connections linked to the Leximancer results in Fig. 11.1

Designated key word	Supporting words/comments
Water	Availability, time of day, problems in service, needs of people,
Fees	Board issues and directions, membership costs, changes to club
Situation	Site, access for motorhome, belief in the style of travel
Free	No cost camping, clean site, time and overnight restrictions
Stopover	Town attitudes, feel of area, welcome
CMCA	Membership, support for travellers, club policies
RV parks	Good innovation, meeting needs
Battery	Battery failure and charging, mechanical support
Hot	Air conditioning needed, coping with conditions
Happy	Pleasure of RV lifestyle, well-being

material is provided by the Leximancer analysis and can be used to supplement the more visually appealing output. The dominant themes indicated through the writers' letters were about the quality of sites that were built on the need for water and other facilities, followed by a concern with the CMCA club activities and the management of the organisation. Additional concerns were with the desirability of there being more free sites, and praising welcoming local councils. For the special interests of this chapter the collusion of free sites, good facilities and welcoming communities were connected to the designation of happiness. The elements identified in the Leximancer imagery were closely aligned with the findings of a more comprehensive survey of members conducted by Colmar Brunton (2019). In that piece of work for CMCA the specific concerns about the management of the organisation and the preference for free camping were also highlighted.

11.4 Discussion

The first consideration in this social practices model is materialities; a term which embraces the physical objects and conditions that facilitate social life. In a theoretical sense, writers using social practice theory highlight that materialities actually structure and enable social life, they are in a way determinants of what groups of people do, not just passive tools. For the grey nomads, the key materialities are the parks, the sites, and the vehicles. Ample evidence exists in the focus group discussions supporting the importance of the sites and parking places. As reported by Pearce

Table 11.3 A social practices summary of the grey nomads' world

Social practices features	Description	Source of evidence
Materialities	Vehicles and their attributes, Free parking options, RV and caravan parks and facilities, dump points, water	Leximancer analysis, RV magazine summaries Wu and Pearce (2017)
Skills and competencies	Driving ability, social communication skills, positive orientation to Australia, finances	Focus group discussions, Pearce and Wu (2018)
Settings of interest	Rallies, RV friendly towns, routes and local attractions and services	Leximancer, magazine summaries, Rally survey results for activities
Meaning of the activity	Social value of the lifestyle	Focus group discussion, RV rally survey about motivation Pearce and Wu (2018)

and Wu (2018), there is often special concern and an advocacy for free parking as grey nomads discuss their needs and travel lifestyle. The repeated iconic phrase, in itself an insightful social representation of the attitudes to caravan parks is one of 'we don't need jumping castles'. This is the canonical voice of a tightly knit group, where individuals feel they can speak with a common authority (Noy 2007). It clearly provides a view that the material needs of the RV users do not extend to the playground equipment and child-friendly features installed in many caravan parks. The driving concern here is one of price, with the grey nomads in their self-contained vehicles feeling that they are being overcharged in the commercial parks for facilities they are not using. In terms of another facet of materialities, the content of the magazines offers repeated commentary on new models and features of the vehicles (Table 11.3).

For the second facet of social practice theory (Table 11.3), that of skills and competencies, it is possible to identify the grey nomads' driving ability, social communication skills and an attitude to life that is adventurous. As noted by the research commentators, a necessary attribute that might also be considered as a prerequisite for the grey nomads is adequate finances to participate in the extended holiday style, especially as the cost of the better vehicles (approx. A\$400,000) can be equated to a small apartment or flat in the source regions such as Melbourne or Sydney. The group skills also extend to sharing tips for cooking within the confines of a recreation vehicle. Advice on easy to prepare recipes and hints for budgeting are a feature of the magazine content and a part of the campfire chats noted in the work by Wu and Pearce (2017).

The search for a 'good setting' is pivotal to the grey nomad travel (Table 11.3). This is manifested in several ways. The photographic images noted by the research reviewers depict locational ideals; quintessential Australian landscapes with the RVs featured as the means enabling the dreams. The Australian theme underpinning this quest is an important one. In the focus group discussions, there was plenty of support

for social representations such as "Why go overseas, Australia has it all" and "See Australia first". At times, this pride merges into an almost defiant nationalism with bumper sticks suggesting that if you do not love Australia, then leave the country (cf. Holloway et al. 2011). A good setting is also a safe setting. Many grey nomads had some levels of anxiety about free camping by themselves and there were occasional tales of being harassed by local youths in remote locations. A counterbalance to this anxiety was also noted. Several focus group participants reported that they felt safer on the road and being with other grey nomad travellers than in their own suburban homes where, as older citizens, they felt somewhat vulnerable to house break-ins, burglary and assault. Additionally, a pleasant setting was also seen as one which should be maintained and there was plenty of support from the focus group work for the codes of conduct around good environmental practices which the CMCA has launched. At times the ideal images do actually contradict sound environmental practices. Images of RV vehicles in vineyards, such as those that appeared on the front cover of The Wanderer in May 2018, are alarming to wine growers as biosecurity issues, especially phylloxera, which is introduced on wheeled vehicles, are a dominant concern of that sector (Victorian Viticulture Biosecurity, n.d.). The theme of RV friendly towns and the efforts by CMCA to develop supporting links with councils are manifested in the data through the stories provided in the magazine about welcoming locations. Further, the status of the accepting community is constantly being updated and feature stories about these towns are a part of the text noted in the Leximancer outputs.

The social practices framework draws together the psychological elements with the designation 'meaning of the activity' (Table 11.3). This component is particularly relevant to the theme of successful ageing and is aligned here with the PERMA framework which focuses on human flourishing and well-being. As noted in the review of successful ageing, activity theory, mindfulness, socioemotional selectivity theory and selective optimisation with compensation theory, all suggest the importance of being engaged in the present moment, most desirably with like-minded others to build an active, purposeful, and skill using lifestyle. The data assembled in this chapter are valuable in addressing the adequacy of RV travel for the well-being of the grey nomad community. In terms of the P (positive) in PERMA, there is support for the view that grey nomads do experience and strive to be positive in an emotional sense. This is manifested in their positive representation of Australia as a great place to enjoy and travel around, as well their expressed emotion of enjoying freedom on the road. The concept of positive emotions is further strengthened by their perceived sense of safety when in grey nomad rallies and camping together. The Engagement component of the PERMA designation specifies activities which challenge and engage participants. The task of driving long distances and enjoying slow tourism provide solid evidence from the multiple data sources that grey nomads find the diversity and appeal of places engaging in terms of the physical effort to travel, organise themselves, and then be involved in on-site activities.

Relationships, too, are important for the grey nomad community. The social representation provided in Pearce and Wu's (2018) study of "Our extended family" is a recognition of the compatibility with others who travel in the same way. It is further

supported by the activity analysis in Wu and Pearce (2017) where some of the most liked activities at the rallies are the conversations and chat times. The meaning of the RV travel has multiple components and can be linked to achievement, the final letter of the PERMA framework. The meaning is well described by the phrases that the RV lifestyle is pleasurable and makes them happy. In terms of positive psychology, this set of reactions can be described as hedonic happiness, that is an in-the-moment enjoyment of sunsets and good social times. The meaning and achievement analysis can, however, be extended further into eudaimonic happiness, effectively flourishing and more enduring states of well-being (Filep et al. 2016). The PERMA framework of the grey nomads is presented in Fig. 11.2.

The grey nomads are systematically and purposefully exploring their country, a challenging task that builds their knowledge and contemporary awareness of many parts of Australia. Further, there are multiple examples of grey nomad groups assisting communities in times of disaster and crises; this altruism is an achievement which supports a view that the RV lifestyle can be seen as helping its members flourish and achieve significant life and community goals. Images pertaining to these concerns are provided in Fig. 11.3.

Future studies on the grey nomads travel can examine further the contribution of this market to a local destination and sustainable practices. Another study is to
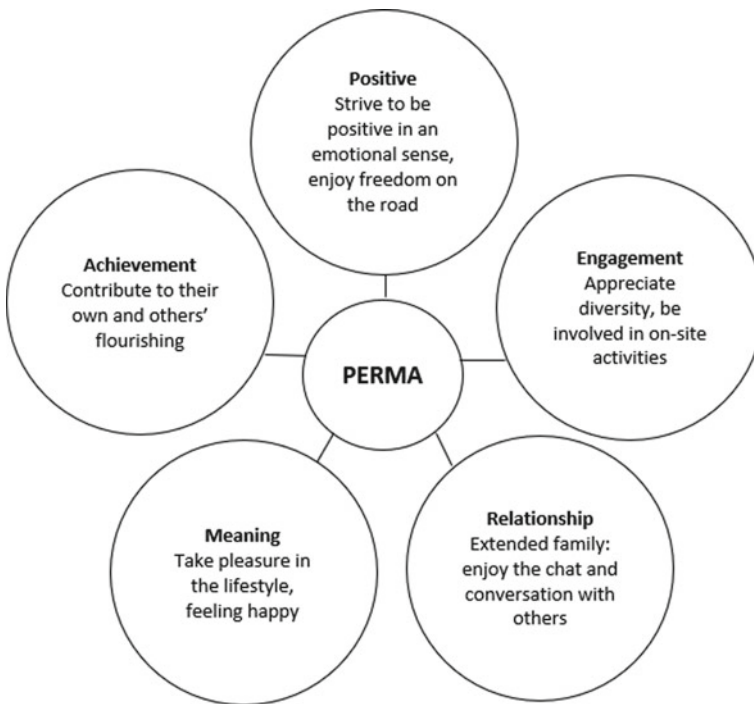

Fig. 11.2 The PERMA framework of the grey nomads travel

Fig. 11.3 The materialities and practices of the grey nomads market (Authors' photographs)

compare the psychological well-being and happiness between the grey nomads and another group of RV travellers (e.g. younger families, young people/the millennials) in travelling with a RV.

11.5 Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter suggest that the grey nomad community has the accoutrements and characteristics of a well-oiled group, fittingly described by a range of consistent social practices. It might be contended that any tourism market group can be shown to have common characteristics, beliefs and enthusiasms. The commonalities amongst the grey nomads go further than superficial resemblances amongst consumers. Not only are they tied together by the challenges of managing their later years, but large numbers of them also belong to assertive, self–organising clubs and associated regional networks that proselytise the causes of the group and develop infrastructure to suit the materialities which define their social practice. Further, these common interests are reflected in the narratives and social representations they use to describe their identity and separateness from other travellers and people of their own age group who do not travel. The grey nomads' knowledge of the road and how to maintain and manage their various specialist RV vehicles is a part of their dialogue and the touchstone for many conversations. They are a visible neo-tribe with an identity formed by their easily identified transport style, the places they visit and their conversational routines (Kriwoken and Hardy 2018; Pearce and

Wu 2018). It is important that the communities they visit welcome them as the grey nomads communicate the felt hospitality widely and publically. A key orientation of this chapter was directed at fitting the meaning and purpose of grey nomad travel into the research world of ageing successfully. The details provided through an analysis of the PERMA framework demonstrated that the core mechanisms for an enjoyable appreciation of the "sunset" of this phase of life were applicable to the groups' behaviours. The evidence mounted in this chapter suggests that the grey nomads are indeed using their time wisely to enjoy the sunset.

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Chapter 12
The Cycling Tourism Tribe

Michael Volgger and Manuel Demetz

Abstract Cycling has a 200-year long history with ups and downs but since more than a decade it is experiencing exceptional growth arguably because it gained in importance as a means for identity construction, bonding and signalling of social status. Some maintain that cycling has occupied the role of golf, others see the recent boom rooted in middle-aged body image crises. Whatever the root causes may be, cycling has become strongly embedded in a web of values and meanings up to the point of representing a lifestyle. This evolution affects cycling tourism as well, whose actors have realised growing numbers but have often been struggling to fully understand symbols and values of the cyclist tribe. This chapters adopts a perspective rooted in consumer sociology and explores commonalities in the cycling tourism tribe to differentiate it subsequently into its sub-tribes. While differentiation has indeed flourished, we concentrate on the three main segments of road cyclists, mountain bikers and trekking cyclists and eclectically unveil some of their status symbols, communication mechanisms and group dynamics.

Keywords Cycling · Bicycle · Tourism · Cycle tourism · Consumer tribes · Neo-tribes

12.1 Introduction

Although cycling has been a relevant tourism activity for many years and many tourism destinations experience growing numbers of people who travel specifically to cycle, amazingly, cycling tourism has received scant attention in tourism research (Lamont 2009). The existing research almost exclusively concentrates on infrastructure requirements (Bíl et al. 2012; Cox 2012; Deenihan and Caulfield 2015; Lamont

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and Buultjens 2011; Lee and Huang 2012; Lumsdon 2000) and individual tourist decision-making (Buning et al. 2019; Chiu and Leng 2017; Gibson and Chang 2012; Han et al. 2017; Rejón-Guardia et al. 2018). While Ritchie et al. (2010) hinted to "enduring involvement" with cycling, the social and collective dynamics around the proliferating passion for cycling have commonly been neglected. We hold that these group dynamics within what we will call "cycling tribes" are a crucial component in any attempt to better understand behaviour, decision making and ultimately supply-side requirements in cycling tourism. Therefore, this chapter will apply the neotribal lens (Cova and Cova 2001, 2002; Maffesoli 1996) to highlight the potential of consumer sociological enquiries in helping to better understand the behaviour of cyclists while on vacation and, consequently, to create stronger cycling tourism products. This chapter thus discusses a specific phenomenon which more generally highlights the sometimes underexposed interplay between societal developments and tourism demand dynamics (Pechlaner and Volgger 2017).

12.2   Cycling Tourism as a Form of Special Interest Tourism

Among the pioneering works, Ritchie (1998, p. 568f.) defines the cycling tourist as "[a] person who is away from their home town or country for a period not less than 24 h or one night, for the purpose of a vacation or holiday, and for whom using a bicycle as a mode of transport during this time away is an integral part of their holiday or vacation. This vacation may be independently organised or part of a commercial tour and may include the use of transport support services and any type of formal and/or informal accommodation." Some later definitions also include spectators at cycling events, in particular if the respective definitions are aimed at measuring the economic impact of such events (Bull and Lovell 2007).

Cycling tourism is usually considered to be a form of special interest tourism. Weiler and Hall (1992, p. 5) speak of special interest tourism when the "traveler's motivation and decision-making are primarily determined by a particular special interest with a focus either on activity/ies and/or destinations and settings". The literature on special interest tourism suggests a continuum of tourist interest specificity (with respect to the motivation to make a trip) and depth of experience (with respect to the behavioural involvement during the trip). Accordingly, this literature came up with a number of scales that grade special interest tourists depending on their degree of interest/involvement and distinguish them from general interest ("place-driven") tourists (Brotherton and Himmetoglu 1997; Trauer 2006). For instance, such scales have been presented for wine tourists ("wine lovers", "wine interested", "curious tourists" etc.), ecotourists ("shallow ecotourists" vs "deep ecotourists"), cultural tourists ("culturally attracted" vs "culturally motivated") or are more generally expressed in the distinction between "serious leisure" versus "casual leisure" or "sport holiday tourists" (participation in sports is the main trip purpose) versus "holiday sport tourists" (participation in sport is not the main trip purpose or is incidental) (Acott et al. 1998; Charters and Ali-Knight 2002; Hall and Macionis 1998; Lamont
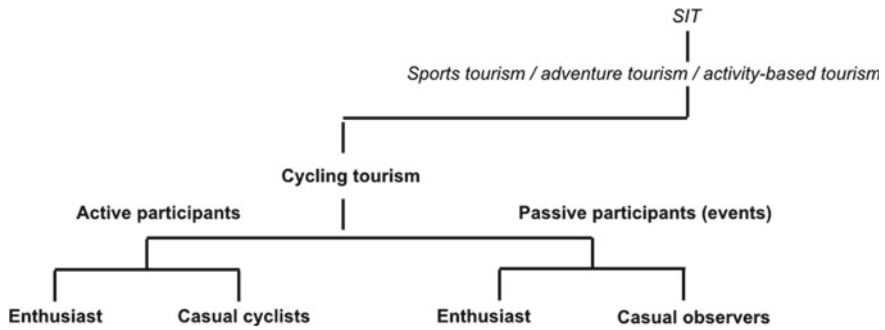
Fig. 12.1 A classification of cycling tourism

2009; McKercher and du Cros 2002; Standeven and de Knop 1998; Stebbins 1982). Sometimes, authors have also employed level of knowledge to classify and distinguish degrees of tourist involvement ("connoisseur" vs "novice"). Corresponding categories can be applied with passive observers in an event context. Following these considerations, cycling tourism can be subdivided in a manner inspired by the discussion in Lamont (2009) and as shown in Fig. 12.1.

12.3 A Short History of Cycling

Not too long ago, the bicycle celebrated its 200th birthday with the German "draisine" (named after the inventor Baron Karl von Drais who called the bicycle ancestor "Laufmaschine") being considered the first proto-bicycle with consecutive wheels. The draisine was a velocipede patented in 1818 (Lessing 2001). Its successors were the high wheeler and, since the 1890s, the so-called safety bicycle, the basic bicycle design which is still dominant today.

The history of the bicycle saw several marked booms usually nurtured by technological advancement or changing socioeconomic conditions. While for the most time of its existence the use of bicycles was primarily linked to transportation ("utilitarian cycling"), more recent booms took a markedly recreational spin partially offsetting the decline of bicycle commuting in China and Asia more broadly (Smethurst 2015). The introduction of the safety bicycle sparked a first socioeconomic-class-transcending bicycle boom across Europe, the British Empire and the US and lasted until mass production made motorised vehicles more affordable in the 1920s (Herlihy 2004). At the beginning of the twentieth century travelling was strongly associated with the bicycle as a mode of transport and the touring organisations of that time, some of which continue to exist until today, lobbied strongly for better cycling infrastructure (e.g. "Touring Club Italiano" in Italy; "The Cyclists' Touring Club", today "Cyling UK" in the UK; the "League of American Wheelmen" in the US). The early 1970s experienced a US bicycle boom as a result of a large cohort of baby boomers

in search of accessible means of transportation (Reid 2017). The UK experienced a boom after the introduction of mountain bikes in the 1980s and 1990s, again driven by technological and design innovation which extended the range of available bicycles (carbon fibre materials, suspensions etc.) (Waterman 2014). However, China was the *real* "Kingdom of Bicycles" where utilitarian cycling, famously associated with the bicycle manufacturer "Flying Pigeon", became ubiquitous during the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

Since the mid 2000s, there has been another sharp increase in bicycle sales and bicycle use prompted by what could be called a "cycling as a lifestyle" or "bicycle chic" boom. This boom was not triggered by any radically new design or technology innovation (Smethurst 2015). Rather, the depiction of the bicycle as a fashionable consumption item entered into a reciprocally reinforcing relationship with expansive and increasingly prominent cycling neotribes. The cycling lifestyle became associated with health, fashion and design-savviness, and the acronym MAMIL ("middle-aged men in lycra") was coined to capture some of the most quickly growing segments within the cycling tribe. Environmental concerns were arguably less relevant in driving this craze (Smethurst 2015). In the UK, which has been at the forefront of the current cycling boom, the 2005 London underground bombings and subsequent closures are said to have contributed to encourage people to use their bicycles for commuting purposes. UK government support schemes such as "Cycle to Work" which has been allowing for substantial tax benefits as well as widely celebrated cycling sports successes may have supported the positive trend further (Smale 2016). This increased use of bicycles in commuting and for leisure purposes has also started affecting tourism. For example, interviewed destination management organisation executives in the European Alps listed cycling and mountain biking as the single most promising tourism growth segments in 2015 (Pechlaner et al. 2015).

12.4   The Cycling Tribe

This chapter adopts the perspective of neotribal consumption theory (Cova and Cova 2001, 2002; Hardy and Robards 2015; Maffesoli 1996, 2016) to emphasise collectively anchored behavioural components in consumption. Neotribes shift the emphasis towards the relevance of shared experiences and collective identities emanating from the inter-individual sphere. While neotribal theory derived from the debates around the accuracy of subcultural theory versus post-subcultural theory in relation to their ability to capture increasingly fluid and overlapping group affiliations (Bennett 1999, 2011; Muggleton 2000), the approach taken in this chapter is pragmatic. Robards and Bennett (2011) clarify that a sense of belonging or what Maffesoli may call "affective solidarity" are central to being a member of a neotribe. This chapter does not interpret neotribal theory as a counterposition to subculture theory. This chapter rather deems neotribal theory useful to capture socio-dynamic

processes in tourism- and leisure-related behaviour because it allows to grasp socio-cultural belonging without necessarily turning the varying endurance of such affiliations (see Hardy and Robards 2015; Robards and Bennett 2011) or their relationships with "mainstream" culture into defining features. Without doubt, there is a continuum of ephemerality in neotribal linkages, which partially float and partially become more codified and reified in collective memory. For example, in the context of the cycling tribe there a number of norms and competencies as well as symbolic knowledge that cyclists must acquire in order to fully belong. Co-presence of tribe fellows in a circumscribed space (i.e. their "physical sharing of space") may be a specific and particularly palpable manifestation of neotribes, but should not be considered as a necessary condition for their existence. The underpinning sense of community can transcend spatial boundaries due to the greatly extended reach of today's means of communication (Hardy et al. 2013).

First, this chapter aims to highlight some of the more generic identity facets of the cycling tribe. Second, the chapter offers a discussion to support the notion that the cycling tribe is diverse and consists of a number of subtribes, similar to what Hardy and Robards (2015) had found for recreational vehicle users. The presented observations are based on autoethnographic accounts of the authors partially or fully participating in some of these tribal movements and are further corroborated with literature and media references. This chapter's discussion does not make a strong difference between recreational cycling, utilitarian cycling (for commuting) and cycling tourism. They are perceived to be highly inter-related practices within the cycling tribe where cycling tourism behaviour is largely assumed to be a derivative of the every-day approach to cycling.

The recent "cycling as a lifestyle" craze has expressed itself in an increase in the number of active cyclists and in growth of cycling club membership in several European, US-American, Australian and Asian urban areas. It has also been accompanied by a symbolic reinterpretation of the bicycle. After the bicycle had been associated with poverty for many years, in particular in Asia and even more pronouncedly in China, expensive recreational bicycles or recreationally-inspired commuting bicycles have suddenly become aspirational products in urban environments (Smethurst 2015). In present times, cycling has become an activity which is also performed for its demonstrative value, its role in identity construction and its effectiveness in impressing others and signalling social status. To a certain extent, cycling has turned into a symbolic marker of the affluent. Obviously, value-laden (consumption) behaviour is by no means limited to cycling with many other examples within the tourism (see e.g. Volgger and Pechlaner 2018) and non-tourism related spheres (see Bocock 1993; Hirsch 1977; Veblen 1899). However, the link with identity construction and conspicuous consumption has become particularly manifest in the case of cycling.

The now famous claim that "cycling is the new golf" (Knight 2014; McMahon 2015; The Economist 2014) highlights the opposing tendencies in popularity of these pastime activities among high-income earners. Cycling has become a way to signal being part of a community that is associated with values around fitness, design-savviness and performance. Expensive gear does play a role but cycling tribes do at the

same time not appear to be discriminatory towards owners of less expensive bicycles. This value system comprehensively seems to match with how many urban elites currently prefer to present themselves. This holds in particular for white males, who constitute the bulk of active cyclists, although the number of female cyclists has been on the rise (see Priday 2018; Smale 2016). Apparently, the set of values associated with cycling expresses a better fit with current lifeworlds than the previously hyped elite leisure activity golf. Some argue that the relaxed rhythms of golf (in addition to its time requirements) do not harmonise with the hectic, time poor and wellness-oriented contemporary urban lifestyles. In contrast, cycling delivers both: It allows middle-aged men and women to stay fit while showing off their expensive gear ("road jewellery"). The fascination with health and body fitness among middle-aged men and women is highly likely to play a role, as the prominence of performance-monitoring (by peers) through digital apps highlights. It is revealing to observe that a performance monitoring app (i.e., a digital meeting place for the purpose of performance comparison) such as Strava has become a critical point of encounter and information exchange for the global cycling tribe. Part of the appeal of cycling may also be found in the possibility to combine training with companionship and collaborative experiences, and the meditative repetitiveness of the activity may be a welcome alternative to different work life rhythms.

Cycling allows its tribe fellows to make statements about contemporary urban fashion. For instance, there is a well-established bicycle film festival in the US and bicycle-wear has started blending sportive design with elegance. Some authors also read the strong emphasis on retro chique within the cycling tribes as a postmodern critique of contemporary fashions and lifestyles ("back to the future") and see cycling more generally as a means to express difference (Smethurst 2015). Very few of the established bicycle producers with a corporate history over 30 years would not offer vintage and replica bicycles as part of their product range. The fascination of the cycling tribe with nicely coloured fixed-gear bicycles ("fixies") and single-speed bicycles is ultimately also an expression of the intimate interplay with urban design aesthetics. In particular younger urban age groups mix their use of fixies with their existing life-styles as yuppies, hipsters and LOHAS. With its lifestyle focus and an Apple-like boutique store strategy, cycling and clothing brand Rapha is a perfect expression of some of the values and identities of the contemporary cycling tribes. Today, a traditional cycling brand like Brooks England, a manufacturer of saddles, offers a wide array of products to allow its customers express their cycling-centred urban lifestyle. In general, prominent cycling brands exert a notable influence on the cycling tribes and some also interpret their roles as keepers of cycling culture.

Non-cycling-specific fashion brands such as Ralph Lauren and Chanel have recognised this transformation of cycling into a suitable medium to convey contemporary urban identity and have increasingly identified the bicycle as an element of their branding. Levi's offers commuter jeans ("bike to work clothing") and Fendi started selling bicycles. Moreover, Louis Vuitton bought the Italian bicycle manufacturer Pinarello (Kline 2017). The simplicity of the design of bicycles has also heavily

influenced the British fashion designer Paul Smith (Schofield 2016). Even hospitality businesses have started using the bicycle as a marker for their receptiveness to urban fashion (see e.g. Alex Hotel in Perth, https://alexhotel.com.au/).

12.5   The Cycling Subtribes

Throughout the history of cycling, technology and its advancement were primary influence factors. This is not different today where an appreciation of heritage and fascination for technologically driven innovation co-exist. Technological change and product innovation have also contributed to creating a marked diversity within the cycling tribe, which consequently can be further subdivided into a number of subgenres and niches. There is a genre focused on "fixies", one on fat-tire bicycles ("fatbikes"), another one on enduro bicycles, and the list could easily be continued. Arguably, these segmentations are often driven first and foremost by a product perspective and the different groups may not always qualify as subtribes from a consumer sociological point of view because practitioners may lack a strong sense of belonging.

It appears useful to distinguish at least three subgroups within the broader cycling tribe: road cyclists, mountain bikers and trekking cyclists focused on bicycle touring. Road cycling is the most prevalent form of cycling and is widely practiced in many countries for utilitarian and leisure purposes. It is a segment strongly interlinked with its relatively long history (and the related vintage cult), with sports events, legends, media and the big brands in the bicycle industry. Stories about suffering, achievements but also scandals are at the heart of the road cycling mythos. Its values are characterised by a hybrid mix of performance (speed), heritage and wellness. The largest share of road cyclists is concentrated in urban areas, which has led to an increasing fusion of road cycling with elements of urban culture decisively fuelling the contemporary cycling craze. Road cycling has recently become somewhat more differentiated due to technological innovations which made traditional road bicycle geometry more suitable for gravel roads. The desire to escape motorised traffic has pushed the road bicycle community towards so-called gravel and cross bikes. These all-surface bicycles are a valuable companion on flowy trails as well as on bitumen and can accommodate long rides and bike packing. Adventure, not race, is the central motivational aspiration of this new hybrid type of road cyclists. There is also a noticeable trend towards more differentiated bicycles (gran fondo, aero, special bicycles for climbing) and away from all-in-one approaches.

In comparison, the development of mountain biking has followed an even more divergent pathway and many subniches have emerged, including freeride biking, downhill, enduro biking and cross-country. Ad discussed, mountain biking has only emerged in the 1980s so vintage and heritage are not as central as symbolic markers as in the road cycling subtribe. To some extent, mountain biking remains linked to urban "action" sports and brand identities in the areas of skateboarding and BMX. While road cycling has been charged with urban lifestyle elements more recently,

the mountain biking set of values and practices have shifted towards adrenalin and action led by a growth in downhill oriented mountain biking activities. This shift in identity and practice entered a co-evolutionary symbiosis with a growing number of specifically built mountain bike parks, often located in ski resorts and constructed to increase occupancy of lift infrastructure during the summer time. Currently, the improving affordability of electric mountain bikes is impacting on this sub-neotribe attracting new consumers and inducing a significant proportion of the existing mountain bike community to switch from traditional mountain bikes to e-powered ones. That high-end mountain bike manufacturer Santa Cruz Bicycles from California has transitioned to emphasise e-mountain bikes as part of their portfolio can be read as a point in case. The impacts of this growing segment of e-mountain bikers on tourism-related cycling is however still to be seen.

What we are calling trekking cyclists in reality is a relatively heterogeneous category of people who use their bicycle for travelling and as a non-athletic activity. Trekking cyclists are people who travel on their general-purpose or touring bicycle for a day or more on varying surfaces and sometimes transport their belongings on the bicycle as well. This group is characterised by less specialism and perhaps less commitment than road cycling and mountain biking. In fact, it is reasonable to doubt it is appropriate to speak of a trekking cyclist subtribe. While all the discussed subgroups travel for their cycling, the group of trekking cyclists is the cycling segment where tourism is most clearly part of its raison d'être. Indeed, for trekking cyclists, cycling as such is not the only or even the primary motivation. The motivation is neither confined to physical activity and sports, but trekking cycling is frequently a means to explore landscapes. The bicycle is interpreted as an ecological means of transportation which allows to discover a tourism destination or to travel to nearby destinations at a lower speed (slow travel). The mix of physical activity, cultural sightseeing, gastronomy and accommodation plays an important role for this group. Therefore, the combination with other special interest areas (e.g., wine and food) and other means of transport (e.g., trains) is of crucial importance to improving the experience for this group. The introduction of electric bicycles can be expected to fuel the ongoing growth of this component further. For some trekking cyclists the capability of climbing on the bicycle was limited before. With the assistance of an electric motor the uphill climb to a traditional Italian *borgo* in Tuscany has become a much less daunting physical challenge.

12.6   Conclusion and Outlook

The main argument underpinning this chapter is that adopting a lens of cycling tourism tribes is beneficial to understand present and future drivers of cycling tourism. This change in perspective entails engaging with the collectively inspired tribal consumption of cyclists in their everyday lifeworlds and their leisure behaviour as

those factors will influence cycling in a tourism context. And yet, in the existing literature on cycling tourism, broader developments in recreational cycling (let alone utilitarian cycling) are often disregarded. A further shortcoming is the lack of consumer sociological scrutiny of cycling and cycling tourism despite the relevance of cycling communities, their symbols, values and role models. These gaps have resulted in a form of cycling tourism research that has been able to pick up individual attitudes and behaviours, but has been falling short of understanding their underlying inter-individual factors. This chapter encourages future research on cycling tourism behaviour that recognises the cycling practice as being embedded in webs of meaning and inter-individual relationships. Such a change in perspective will bolster the usefulness of research for informing future-oriented product development or marketing in cycling tourism.

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Chapter 13
Cruising and Clanning: The Motorcycle Tourism Tribal Experience

Diane Sykes

Abstract The motorcycle lifestyle is best conceived as a subculture, and there are a vast number of riding groups and clubs within that subculture that have formed around specific interests. Motorcycle tourists are a neo-tribe within the larger subculture that may or may not be affiliated with clubs or other neo-tribes. Motorcyclists share values, beliefs, symbols, narrative, and common lifestyle aspects. They also engage in common rituals. Among motorcycle tourists, members who form smaller tribal groups enjoy a shared passion and the desire to affiliate with like-minded people. Since all members of such a sub-tribe remain members of more comprehensive neo-tribes, the concept of clan formation is a more apt application. As motorcycle tourists travel, they may ride with their neo-tribe or they may form a new mobile clan for a particular trip or occasion. Furthermore, new clans may form on a temporary basis at a particular event or activity such as the annual 'Pig Roast' at Steel Steeds Motorcycle Campground in Pennsylvania (USA). This article challenges traditional notions of clan formation in a mobile society and argues that stability and continuity can be achieved at a temporal event that occurs annually and serves as the nexus for clan formation. Trust forms within the mobile communal relationship where members share experiences and rituals. Members may self-identify and self-segment joining different clans creating a multi-level communal experience. This clanning and neo-tribal behaviour is explored within the context of a motorcycle campground. Businesses that can provide spatial locations and activities for motorcycle tourism sub-tribes can form clan-like relationships within this community.

Keywords Motorcycle tourism · Motorcycle tribes · Motorcyclist clans · Neo-tribes · Clan formation · Motorcycle tribal experience

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13.1 Cruising and Clanning: The Motorcycle Tourism Tribal Experience

It is a lovely Spring Thursday evening when the rumble of motorcycles sound in the distance as bikers begin showing up to the Annual 'Pig Roast' at Steel Steeds Motorcycle Campground in Pennsylvania (USA). These are the early arrivals as more and more people show up for the weekend's festivities. For eleven years, a core group of riders has shared the event bringing in an ever-widening circle of family and friends. Newcomers are welcomed and invited to join various social enclaves as the mobile clan shares the celebration at the beginning of the riding season. For eleven years, the hosts at Steel Steeds have offered this early Spring event. A core group of riders has formed over the years that attend no matter the weather. Riders share life events at the event as well as afterwards. The visitors consider each other as brothers and sisters (metaphorically speaking which is common in the motorcycling community among friends and groups) even though there is no consanguinity. Many refer to the people here as 'my Steel Steeds family.'

While the field of the motorcycle subculture is still under researched, this developing field now has sufficient research to establish that motorcyclists form communities and can be considered a subculture (Maxwell 1998; Austin and Gagne 2008). Unfortunately, much of the research has focused on deviant behaviour whereas only specific brands have been studied as a subculture of consumption. Harley Davidson riders were researched as a subculture of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander 1995) and BMW touring riders as a mobile subculture (Austin and Gagne 2008, 2010). Other motorcycle brand riders have not been studied specifically, although motorcycle tourism is now emerging as a field of study. While the motorcycle subculture is linked to a specific lifestyle, motorcycle tourism has features akin to neo-tribalism. Maxwell's (1998) early sociological work focuses on the formation of motorcycling community around the formally hosted rallies attended by bikers.

As to neo-tribalism, Hardy and Robards (2015) pointed out that prior research has tended to focus on the homogenous aspects of neo-tribalism including symbolism, lifestyles, rituals and behaviour. In their studies of recreational vehicle tourism, Hardy et al. (2013) found that within neo-tribes, sub-tribes can form that are differentiated from the main tribe. Dolles et al. (2018) apply the concepts of tribes and sub-tribes to the motorcycle sporting events at the Isle of Man. They found that returning regularly to these events became a ritual to these visitors. The motorcycle races are a form of vicarious risk taking that results from a "shared love of thrill-seeking" (p. 128). Dolles et al. (2018) argue that Maffesoli's (1995) definition of a neo-tribe as "fluid, fragmented and focused on a state of mind" (p. 130) does not apply to these return visitors who have a long-term association (p. 130). Dolles et al.'s study (2018) was not brand exclusive unlike prior research on the motorcycle subculture. Their research focused on the motivations and roles of members in smaller tribal groups including a shared passion for the sport and the desire to affiliate with like-minded people. Members of the studied subtribes desired to rekindle old friendships and create new ones.

Motorcyclists are a mobile subculture (or mobile neo-tribe) although not all participants are motorcycle tourists. According to Sykes and Kelly (2014, p. 93), motorcycle tourism includes travelling on a two-wheeled or three-wheeled vehicle and "involves trips away from home whose main purpose is vacation, leisure, entertainment, or recreation." It may include participating in organised events or attendance at those events or travelling independently. Motorcycle tourists may be the primary driver or a passenger on the motorcycle. The collective behaviour of motorcycle tourists demonstrates that even within the larger neo-tribe of motorcyclists further sub-tribes can form. Dolles et al. (2018) might suggest that this is the formation of new neo-tribes, however, that implies that the new tribe is separate and distinct from the main neo-tribe. Since all members of the sub-tribe remain members of the neo-tribe, an alternative explanation of this formation of micro-segments may be more applicable to describe the behaviours within the larger group of motorcycle tourists.

Therefore, the concept of clan formation (similar to subtribes) may be a more apt description of the collective behaviour. For motorcycle tourism the individual motivations, behaviours, rituals and symbolism have to be examined to relate the existence of the neo-tribe. Then, the behaviour of tribe members will be explored as it may relate to the idea of subtribes or clans. Finally, the collective mechanisms of motorcycle tourists in forming a mobile clan at the motorcycle campground will be considered. This attention to the collective consumer tribal behaviours will help marketers understand how to appeal to this niche market segment.

It is at this juncture that this researcher would like to redirect the focus from the subcultural community to the practices of forming clans. While research on motorcyclists has found that there is a lifestyle subculture (although those studies were brand exclusive or focused on external events with set rituals), and that motorcyclists at a sporting event are a part of the neo-tribe and subtribes can form, the act of coming together in new subtribes may be described as *clanning*.

The reason for proposing the action of clanning lies in the uniqueness of the motorcycling subculture. Prior research has established that motorcyclists live a subcultural lifestyle. Other researchers have focused on the deviant behaviour of *Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs* (OMGs) in this subculture, thus establishing one type of neo-tribe within the subculture. To date, no research on the existence of numerous other neo-tribes within the subculture has been conducted. However, this participant researcher is well acquainted with the vast number of riding groups within the subculture that have formed around other interests. Participant researchers use ethnographic research to understand people "in their own environment and from the perspective of the participants" (Heding et al. 2009, p. 193). It can lead to a deeper insight and knowledge that is not available to outside observers. There are riding clubs, motorcycle associations, women's riding associations, religious affiliations, racing clubs, charity groups, politically active groups (i.e. ABATE—formerly known as American Bikers Active Toward Education), brand related riders (i.e. H.O.G. [Harley Owners Group] and Yamaha STAR Touring), and motorcycle sub-tribes of other groups (such as military riding groups, and public service groups—i.e. firefighters). These groups

are too numerous to examine within this article. But an Internet search (2 May 2019) yielded 11,500,000 results when the search term 'list motorcycle riding associations' was entered.

With so many different sub-tribes within the subcultural lifestyle, it becomes difficult to distinguish the behavioural patterns that form as part of the process of motorcycle tourism. Each participant in motorcycle tourism is part of the subculture and may be part of other neo-tribes. They may travel with that neo-tribe or they may travel independently or with another neo-tribe. They may travel to an event and become part of that sub-tribe, or they may travel to a location or participate in other tourism activities in which they form a mobile and temporary subtribe. It is that action which this article explores in the context of mobile clanning.

13.2 Identification Markers of Motorcyclists as a Neo Tribe

Maffesoli's (1995) original research on consumer neo-tribes has been greatly extended. Hardy et al. (2018) point out that the term has been used in a broad range of disciplinary settings including tourism and marketing. Xue et al. (2018) consider the factor of place attachment when studying tailgaters as a fluid and temporal community. However, tailgaters (football game enthusiasts who gather pre-game in the parking lots of the stadiums to barbecue and party) do not see their activities as a way of life although they do escape through the activities. Having cultural knowledge is a distinguishing tribal marker (Chandler et al. 2017). Hardy and Robards (2015) note that the following tribal markers of earlier research: common lifestyle aspects, capability of collective action, behavioural and symbolic characteristics of neo-tribes, rituals, and anchoring places. Yet Hardy and Robards (2015) depart from some of the prior research when they describe the suppositions that neo-tribe theory would not apply to tourism because it was thought that tourists are not capable of collective action. However, Hardy and Robards (2015) believe that Weaver's (2011) approach to mobility and its intangible aspects includes a sense of belonging, social centrality, interaction, and membership that may be applied to tourism.

Walker's (2010) research on motorcycle drive tourism supports the idea that a sense of belonging applies to motorcycle tourists. Austin and Gagne (2008) found that ritual and boundaries existed at a BMW rally in a campground setting. Schouten and McAlexander (1995) found that a subculture of consumption forms among Harley Davidson riders in which participants share a "unique ethos or set of common values" (p. 48) and further explain the group's symbolic consumption. While their study was limited to Harley Davidson riders, Austin's (2009) and Austin and Gagne's (2008), (2010) study of ritual and boundary distinction noted symbolic interaction among motorcycle riders at BMW rallies. BMW motorcycle riders follow rituals when they attend rallies that serve to bond members of the group and reinforce their identity. In some cases, the attendees may know each other or may be meeting old friends, but there is as much likelihood that attendees will be strangers. Communal behaviour is confirmed by Dolles et al.'s (2018) study at the Isle of Man (UK) races.

Rallies may be for a weekend or longer but follow a prescribed format that generally includes camping. The informal setting lends itself to such activities as storytelling of adventures and travel experiences as well as rituals that indicate group normative behaviour (Austin 2009). Tribal markers and boundaries include jargon (similar to tribal communication in Price and Cybulski 2007), equipment and material objects. In this case, the material objects are the motorcycles.

Understanding consumer tribes in a post-industrial world helps us understand how people construct their personal social identity. Identity now crosses geographical boundaries, as well as traditional cultural and social constraints. Despite the individualistic nature of the recreational pursuit of motorcycle riding, "community can develop in subcultures that live and work in geographically dispersed areas and interact with one another in varying locations" (Austin and Gagne 2008, p. 431). Thus, communities may form despite the lack of a fixed location. This means that the mobile nature of motorcycle riding and gathering does not prevent the formation of communities.

Primm (2004) notes that the Harley Davidson (HD) motorcycle is a status symbol and explores Harley Davidson's use of some of these traditions and trends to build a brand community among young professionals during the 1980s. The company began the Harley Owners Group (HOG) using a culture production system (Solomon 2007). But it would be simplistic to say that the biker subculture is solely a product of HD because the biker subculture also consists of users of other motorcycle brands and customized choppers.

When studying motorcyclists, other researchers have identified common symbols, narratives, values, shared mythology, common rituals, camaraderie and adventurism, shared consumption, and shared passions (Cater 2013, 2017; Sykes and Kelly 2014, 2016; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Austin and Gagne 2008, 2010; Austin et al. 2010; Austin 2009; Dolles et al. 2018). These constitute many of the tribal markers of motorcycle tourists.

Further exploring tribal markers in post-modern times, Bauman (1992) says that individuals can revoke their support of the group but that symbolic tokens reinforce the assembly. Robards and Bennett (2011) remind us that a sense of belonging is what being a part of the tribe is all about but interaction with the group can be fluid. Hardy and Robards (2015) add that neo-tribes are temporary in nature. This seems to conflict with the idea of a subcultural lifestyle but it does not conflict with the concepts of sub-tribes or mobile clan formation. As a participant researcher, it is enough for us to know that bikers recognize fellow bikers and separate them from those who do not live the lifestyle but participate in occasional activities.

13.3 Clan Formation

Little attention has been focused on how clans form in the post-modern world. The historical definition of a clan states that the members are descended from a common ancestor but there is another definition that explains that a clan is people united by a

common interest or common characteristics (The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary 2020). Chan (1997) explains that a clan organization is a social enclave bound by strong bonds with "socio-cultural barriers to entry (p. 94)" that is differentiated from the external environment. Furthermore, the enclaves have communally oriented values and a belief in the clan identity. While we know what clans are, the study of actual process of clan formation in post-industrial societies is limited. However, there is some preliminary research. Most research fails to explore the clan as people united by a common interest except in the context of political or economic factors. However, this paper explores certain other characteristics of clans to apply the action of clanning to mobile motorcycle tourism.

Litz and Stewart (2000) studied small businesses' use of internal clan coordinating mechanisms to build extra-organizational clans. Leaning on the prior research of Williamson (1975), Ouchi (1980), Litz and Stewart (2000) delineate the process of forming an intra-organizational clan and extra-organizational clan as part of the firm's strategy. The clan can be informal as well as soft and perpetual. Additional characteristics of the clan reduce the emphasis on specific knowledge and increases the emphasis on shared values. Social integrations become more important than hierarchal and bureaucratic structures. Litz and Stewart (2000) focus on the difference between associative and communal relationships indicating that there is an increased level of trust within communal relationships.

Cox (2012) studied attendees of the Burning Man Festival (USA) called 'burners.' Cox (2012) explores the formation of a mobile community that has collective beliefs that are reaffirmed in a variety of places. Members of the community suggest that they belong to that group. They self-describe as members of the community noting the willingness to travel not only to Burning Man but to other festivals and events to share other life experiences as part of the extended community. Interviewees stated that making connections is an important part of their experience within the community. This experience is echoed by Dolles et. al (2018) as they describe the *ritual of returning* for both visitors and volunteers to the Isle of Man races and renewing friendships as well as meeting new friends that are *like-minded*. In discussing the burner community, Cox (2012) mentions the spiritual component of being part of the community that shares ideals. Yet, she also mentions that the coming together in a particular location changes a space to a place when they become invested with meaning.

Other authors have identified clan characteristics that will apply outside the corporate setting. Chan (1997) mentions internalizing the 'we/they' mentality, a differentiation from the external world; common sets of beliefs; a clan identity with rites, rituals, and traditions; and a certain tolerance (or latitude) for deviant behaviours. Kirsch et al. (2010) add the element of social capital as part of internal clan control. Soanes and Marak (2013) explain the following functions of clans: social, economic, political, and religious. Linguistics and language also play a part in being part of a clan. Heim et al. (2018) point out the influence of tribal heritage on social life. Hung et al. (2016) explore *new clannism* and discuss the formation of new social connections without considering the entire clan. Franck (1996) allows for *multiple loyalties* and loyalty to more than one social system. These multiple loyalties are expressive

of self-identity and free will. Schlee (1993) describes relationships that may form based on *socially recognized descent* that may become latent and then reactivated.

There can be a number of reasons for joining a clan or maintaining membership in a clan. Lehtonen and Harviainen (2016) say that people may join clans because of friendship or what the clan represents and a desire to belong. They further explain that manufacturers use the desires of these social groups to design mobile games. Within that environment, members of the clans exhibit the desire to help one another and form new friendships. Interestingly, the game designers allow the players to segment themselves. The clan communities also extend their identity through other media such as Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

Other clan behaviours include cooperation without which the nomadic tribes may actually decline (Riyahi and Mehrad 2017). Lange (2015) explains that nomadic Bedouin tribes are known for courage and hospitality. Hull (2015) recounts activities at Scottish clan gatherings as dancing, athletic competitions, wearing clan tartans, and listening to pipe bands. Familial clans in Ireland and Scotland (Clans of Ireland (n.d) and Council of Scottish Clans and Associations Inc (n.d)) still hold annual gatherings whether in person, at the Highland Games, or virtually. Feasting and drinking are also popular activities at clan gatherings (Gil-White et al. 2004). Drif et al. (2017) introduce the term 'interest based mobile communities' to describe "a group who shares a common interest or a set of expected behaviours" (p. 345) stating that the interaction itself is mobilized submitting that the interactions can be tracked by mobile technology.

13.4 Motorcycle Tourist Clan Formation

With little to no prior research on modern clan formation especially applied to tourism, this article provides the opportunity to explore the niche group of motorcyclists by applying the collective characteristics, motivations, and behaviours of clans. The 'Annual Pig Roast' at Steel Steeds Motorcycle Campground provides the opportunity to observe this behaviour as a participant researcher (and host). There might be some thought that the host is providing the central figure around which the clan forms. It is true that comments on Facebook and other social media state that the host's hospitality is a positive influence on the desire to visit. Thus, the host's willingness to provide a welcoming environment is one factor in the clan formation. But it is the riders themselves that create a shared experience and form a welcoming conclave for each other.

The 'Annual Pig Roast' is the largest group formation at the campground of otherwise unrelated riders. However, other mini-clans form when visitors congregate and form smaller communities and decide to return at later dates to the campground to meet up again. Yet the 'Pig Roast' prompts the premise that clans form using self-selection to form an enclave that meets year after year at the same location. One distinction with this mobile clan is the lack of a centralized leader for the entire clan. Each smaller group finds its own central figure to follow and that informal

leader invites new members to join them in the clanning event. For example, ten years ago (year 1), one man ("Bones") came to the 'Pig Roast' with two friends. He subsequently returned on several occasions during the year. He returned with other friends and also made new friends at the campground. In year two, he connected with the new friends, brought his previous friends, and also brought other friends with him that then joined the group. The group now communicates on social media throughout the year. This smaller group has now grown to approximately thirty people who attend the 'Pig Roast' annually and also visit at other times. This process has repeated with other groups. Thus, smaller groups have formed informal clan groups that then choose to join in the larger clanning event. These groups are connected by their interactions at the 'Pig Roast' and engage with other groups and individuals. However, as individual travellers join the group, they may not form an affiliation with the smaller group instead becoming part of the larger clan that returns to the 'Pig Roast' year after year So a specific clan leader is not required for this community to form. Yet at the event, people recognize each other from previous years and are welcomed to the larger clan activity.

Prior research establishes that motorcyclists share similar values of individualism, adventure seeking, certain risk taking, a sense of freedom, trust within the community, shared symbolism, and a collective identity (Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Maxwell 1998; Austin and Gagne 2008). At a certain point, the discussion of neo-tribes, and sub-tribes has to determine what the semantic differences mean. To date, most of the research examines motorcyclists in terms of the brand of motorcycle they ride (Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Austin and Gagne 2008; Austin et al. 2010) or the particular event they attend such as the races at the Isle of Man (Dolles et al. 2018). Yet, if we continue with our ideas of forming a mobile temporal clan, motorcyclists have socio-cultural barriers to entry. While other visitors are welcome at the 'Pig Roast', they are not included in the more private communications and plans of the self-identified clan members. Subsequent invitations to events include those people who engage in the rituals and rites that the clan members recognize including riding together, shared interests, and an interest in the well-being of the members along with social support when members face problems.

The motorcyclists in the 'Steel Steeds' clan share values and consider themselves family. Rituals include funerals and feasts as well as celebration of life events such as weddings, birthdays, and graduations. They share narratives and storytelling around the central campfire, yet that narrative continues after the event. The 'Pig Roast' is a feast and the live bands and motorcycle games make it a festivity. Calling themselves a "family" with brothers and sisters indicates a commitment beyond the single event. Observation suggests that this is true as members of the Steel Steeds family follow each other on social media and share in life events such as illness, marriages, divorces, and death. Members of this clan may see each other at other times of the year and in other locations. They may return to visit Steel Steeds and each other at different times of the year. Yet, it is the 'Annual Pig Roast' that is a signifying event of clan celebration. Each year hails the arrival of Spring and surviving for another riding season. The 'Steel Steeds' family arrives engaging in fellowship and hedonism in a

relaxing, trusting, and accepting social enclave as the clan members greet each other warmly with hugs and kisses.

The study of the clan formation at Steel Steeds takes the view that a geographic location of a motorcycle friendly business enables dynamic interactive leisure whereby the participants themselves form the community that accepts members from various backgrounds and co-create their experience with dynamic fluidity. This self-selection and the actions that follow demonstrate how a mobile clan can form. Studying the behaviour within the motorcycle campground shows that bikers co-create the experience that they want to enjoy and the rituals that define the group. Of note is that this sharing of experiences does not require, nor does it focus on, consumerism.

The formation of the clan and the participation in the activities enable the group to co-create the experience. Rihova et al. (2018) identify the limonoid zone at festivals where Customer-to-Customer (C2C) practices include "trusting, embracing, fun-making and rekindling practices" (p. 370). They explain that deep friendships and a sense of kinship form that extends beyond the immediate time zone and place. They also address the sense of "we-ness" (p. 371) and creating positive social value outcomes. While Rihova et al. (2018) study what happens during the festival, they did not consider what happens to the group that returns year after year and brings new members into the clan.

13.5 Servicing Mobile Motorcycle Clans

Munoz et al. (2017) suggest a new definition for visiting friends and relatives (VFR). If we accept that visiting one's clan or tribe is similar to visiting friends and relatives, then it is possible to extend existing theories and definitions. These authors put VFR in the context of being influenced by the host defining it as *mobility influenced by a host* (MIH). However, that definition only fits some situations of motorcycle tourists and sub-tribes, mobile clanning, and temporary clanning. For motorcycle tourists, in some instances, the travel destination is influenced by the host. That can be the case with formally structured rallies and motorcycle events. Nevertheless, it may be sufficient for the host to simply provide a geographic location and initiating an event for mobile clans to form.

Another possible idea for explaining the collective behaviour of motorcyclists is the formation of a community of practice as a loose framework as explained by Goulding et al. (2013) who suggest that tribal formation includes engagement, imagination and alignment (or learning to be tribal). The tribe will co-create an authentic tribal experience if the market does not provide desired products and services (Goulding et al. 2013). These authors suggest that businesses can cater to tribes by offering spaces for the tribes to perform engagement practices.

Indeed, there are businesses that have grown organically by springing from motorcycle tourism demands. These may be considered hosts. There are motorcycle campgrounds, international and regional motorcycle tour agencies. Other business examples are motorcycle ocean cruises with rides that take place at destinations, and motorcycle only hotels.

The motorcycle tour industry is a small niche market in the hospitality industry but given the growth in adventure travel and motorcycling in general, it is a growing industry. The industry has grown organically in response to demand and is very fragmented. Ultimately, motorcycle tour operators provide similar amenities to motorcyclists as tour operators provide to other travellers. They just do it on two wheels exposed to all kinds of weather. Litz and Stewart (2000) conclude that small businesses have an opportunity to form relationships within their community that become clan-like linkages.

Yet, MIH does not explain all behaviour that motorcycle tourists engage in while they are touring and it is that behaviour that bears more exploration. The case of Steel Steeds Motorcycle Campground shows that the host does not have to be the central figure that attracts motorcycle tourists. Serving this niche market requires an understanding of the collectivism of the motorcycle community and supplying a welcoming environment for motorcycle tourists to co-create their own experiences and form their own clans and tribes (Figs. 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3).

Fig. 13.1 Camping friends. *Source* Author

Fig. 13.2 Bike Games. *Source* Author

Fig. 13.3 Local Riding. *Source* Author

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Chapter 14
Water-Sport Tribes in Multi-Sport Destinations: The Case of the Lake Garda, Italy

Check for updates

Anna Scuttari, Giulia Isetti, and Philipp Corradini

Abstract Lifestyle water-sports share a common escapist aim and were traditionally characterized by very specific—and sometimes closed—community groups. Initially framed within the discourse on adventure tourism, they are increasingly assessed in literature as forms of nature tourism, where the risk-taking attitude is combined with the desire to learn, achieve individual goals, and improve skills. Moreover, water-sports are also suitable to be analysed using the novel theoretical framework of consumer tribes, since they are constituted by heterogeneous groups of persons sharing a common passion and similar social practices, independently of a demographic- or class-based segmentation. The practice of multiple water-sports during one holiday for purposes of multifaceted experiences, the development of multiple water sports practices across a lifetime as well as a the co-existence of multi-optional and singular sporting practices are the main phenomena analysed in this chapter on water-sports neotribes. To analyse these phenomena, this case study focuses on the well-known destination Lake Garda, Italy. Based on semi-structured interviews to local and international stakeholders and a sample survey to local tourists, this work aims at analysing the tribes of water-sport practitioners of the Lake Garda. Results show that water-sport tribes are micro-tribes with blurring boundaries and transient memberships. They develop at destination level embedded in bigger outdoor sports tribes, having a common attitude towards eudaimonic experiences. Multi-sports destinations work both as 'tribe generators' and as 'anchoring places', because they evolve in a never ending dialogue with tribe members, that in turn improve their skills and challenge themselves in multiple sport adventures.

Keywords Water-sport tribes · Multi-sport practices · Sport specialization · Cross-generational changes · Lake Garda · Italy

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14.1   Introduction

Sport tourism represents an increasingly important niche for travellers, encompassing diverse engagement levels and user behaviours. Water-oriented sport experiences on holiday were traditionally associated with adventure tourism and characterized by very specific, and sometimes closed community groups. Multiple perspectives were used to analyse these groups. Traditional approaches have embraced the study of escapism and thrill-seeking as main water/sports motivations (Prayag and Jankee 2009), whereas more recently also symbolic elements and learning opportunities during the sport practice have been addressed within the framework of nature tourism (Collins and Brymer 2018). Acknowledging these multiple valid perspectives to approach water-sport tourism, this paper argues that the consumer tribes theory can highlight meaningful and underexplored features of water-based practices on holiday, while at the same time it enlightens co-creative processes of destination (and tribe) development.

Based on Maffesoli's concept of 'neotribes' (Maffesoli 1996), consumer tribes are "networks of heterogeneous persons […] who are linked by a shared passion or emotion [and are] capable of collective actions" (Cova and Cova 2002). Although their identification among tourist groups is very rare in literature (Hardy and Robards 2015), it might enlighten uncovered aspects of mobility, place meaning, and social interaction. Moreover, neotribes' inclination to collective engagement might be analysed with respect to the destination itself, investigating co-creation dynamics. Water-sport tourist tribes—typically born through the sports and lifestyle practices of young consumers in the second half of the last century—have been evolving in relation to places and lifetimes and seem to be increasingly fluid and bound to the idea of a wild human state to which one can return, rather than to specific sport features (Canniford and Shankar 2007).

In the light of a neotribal interpretation of water-sports, this chapter addresses escapism and the eudaimonic nature of water-based experiences, the development of multi-sport practices across a lifetime as well as the comparison between multi-optional and singular sporting attitudes during one holiday. To analyse the phenomena, this case study focuses on the well-known destination Lake Garda, Italy. Lake Garda is one of the cradles of European windsurfing and sailing practices, whilst at the same time, it is increasingly acknowledged as a multifaceted sport destination, offering a range of alternative (water) sports to entertain the active tourists. Due to the long tradition of water-sports, the destination has experienced (and partly fostered) the development of multiple consumer tribes, observing and partly shaping cross-generational changes in attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, Lake Garda might have the potential to be an *anchoring place* (Cova and Cova 2002) for water-sport tribes, where new sport and lifestyle practices are co-created.

Based on a mixed method research strategy, this work aims at analysing the tribes of sailors, wind- and kite-surfers, as well as the newly born tribe of stand-up-paddlers of the Lake Garda. In the following section, water-sport tourism is described with reference to adventure, nature and lifestyle sports, and it is related to neotribalism.

The case study and methodology are presented followed by the results and a matrix is offered to classify water-based sports tribes at destination scale.

14.2   Water-Based Tourism at the Interface Between Adventure, Nature and Lifestyle Sports

Water-based experiences may be pursued as tourism, sport, leisure, or recreation within a variety of water-based environments (Jennings 2007, p. 15), since the definition of water-based tourism is quite broad, as it relates to "any touristic activity […] undertaken on or in relation to water resources, such as lakes, dams, canals, creeks, streams, rivers, canals, waterways, marine coastal zones, seas, oceans, and ice-associated areas" (Jennings 2007, p. 10).

Water-based tourism has been often assessed in literature as a form of *adventure tourism* (Buckley 2006). According to Buckley (2007, p. 1428), adventure tourism mostly refers to "guided commercial tours, where the principal attraction is an outdoor activity that relies on features of the natural terrain, generally requires specialized equipment, and is exciting for the tour clients". However, many different experiences might stand out during one single tour, because the participation in sports during a holiday might be active, passive, or even vicarious, depending on time and financial budget, family life cycle, and perceptions of skill, risk, and novelty (Jennings 2007). No matter the degree of engagement, the experience of adventure in tourism is created when "risks are combined with an uncertainty in participants' minds as to whether they have the skills and abilities to meet and overcome them" (Morgan et al. 2005, p. 74). The interplay between risk and competence in adventure tourism is conceptualized in the Adventure Experience Paradigm (Priest 1992), according to which the balanced mix between the two factors ensures (peak) adventures, while an unbalanced mix can lead to a misadventure or even a disaster during sport practice.

Traditionally, adventure tourists are attracted by risky situations (Swarbrooke et al. 2003), and they would not undertake an activity if they perceived it is not risky at all (Sung et al. 1997). Not only physical risks associated with the possibility to get harmed, but also health risks and the risk of equipment failure threaten and enhance the experience (Prayag and Jankee 2009). According to Haddock (1993), as cited in Prayag and Jankee (2009), there are three types of risk related to adventure tourism: absolute, real and perceived risk. The first is used at the destination level to warn about the existence of danger, the second refers to the real possibility of being injured, and the third relates to the individual perception of both. Perceived risks in sport tourism are multi-dimensional (Prayag and Jankee 2009). All perceptions of risk work at the interface with the perception of one's skills and result in a certain type of feeling (e.g. excitement versus fear/anxiety) and behaviour (e.g. active vs. passive participation, exclusion). For tourism operators, this translates into the 'risk-recreation' paradox: they need to manage risk and its perception, without nullifying the thrill of adventure

(Buckley 2012). Based on the adventure tourism framework, it could therefore be argued that water-sport tourists are 'risk seekers'.

However, the debate on the role of risk in adventure tourism and the application of the 'risk recreation' paradox to address outdoor sports have been recently criticized, in favour of a broader view of outdoor activities: the concept of *nature tourism* (Collins and Brymer 2018). This post-modernist perspective on sport tourism acknowledges the importance of risk in outdoor activities but introduces "dimensions of self-development, recreation, social, historical, political and cultural discourses, and personal interpretation" (Collins and Brymer 2018, p. 3). The concept of nature sports refers therefore both to competitive and (mostly) non-competitive sport practices that require a relationship with the natural environment, that are not bounded to rules, regulations and norms, but rather linked to subcultural practices. Nature sports include, therefore, not only adventure and extreme or high-risk sports, but also action and lifestyle sports. Lifestyle sports are not defined by the 'form and context' of sporting activities, rather by "the orientation to and use of athletic movement in these post-sport spaces" (Atkinson 2010, p. 1265). Without being developed to address water-sports, this new interpretation of outdoor sports enables to soften the emphasis on risk and to classify water-sports as more diversified types of activities. Interestingly, Collins and Brymer (2018) refer to water-sports when describing not only adventure, but also lifestyle, emphasizing the socio-cultural and experiential aspects of (wind) surfing, sailing, and kiteboarding. These aspects include shared practices, dress codes, language and even a shared concept of rebellion, based on the (at least perceived) lack of rules. Moreover, the participation in these sports seems to represent a manifestation of identity, rather than a desire for competition (Collins and Brymer 2018). With this broader interpretation of outdoor practices in mind, the 'product-oriented' perspective used to assess adventure tourism slowly turns into a more 'people-oriented perspective', analysing individuals, sub-cultures, practices and inner experiences (Rantala et al. 2016).

To assess water-sport tourism from a 'people oriented perspective', the classification matrix of experiences into four realms by Pine and Gilmore (1999) might be helpful. According to this classification, experiences can be grouped based on their degree of user envolement and immersion in the context. An immersive experience with a high degree of active participation is an *escapist* experience. At a first glance, water-sports – if seen as forms of adventure tourism—seem related to escapist experiences, because the full immersion in the natural (water) environment is coupled with an active involvement in (sports) activities. Nevertheless, the consideration of those dimensions analysed in nature tourism studies, such as a shared lifestyle, language, and dress code, implies the identification of water-based *entertainment* or *aesthetic* experiences, as well. Ultimately, the possibility to develop soft skills while practising water sports (e.g. leadership skills, problem-solving, courage, and humility) enlightens the *learning* fuction of water-sport experiences as an additional layer of meaning. The distinction between escapism, self-development and entertainment is therefore clouded, and water-sport experiences are qualified as multifaceted experiences (Collins and Brymer 2018). Similarly, studies commissioned for specific

water-sport destinations have highlighted the co-existence of several types of experiences: from entertaining experiences to more active escapist experiences, and from hardcore sport activities oriented towards performance, to more leisure-oriented attitudes (European Tourism Futures Institute 2012). But do water-sport tourists belong to consumer tribes?

14.2.1   Water Sport Tribes

According to Cova et al. (2007), consumer tribes are characterized by four coherent themes: they are *multiple*, because they have fluid identities and individuals can belonging to many tribes; they are *playful*, because they conduct an active and irreverent play with marketplace resources, in order to deconstruct and reconstruct them through shared experiences; they are *transient*, since they change rapidly, so that their relationship to the market ranges from passive manipulation to active emancipation (Cova et al. 2007); finally, they are *entrepreneurial*, since they are creative in lounching new paths for entrepreneurial venture (Canniford 2011) and they become collective actors in marketing (Langer 2007). Members of consumer tribes, indeed, "cannot 'consume' a good without it becoming them and them becoming it; they cannot 'consume' a service without engaging in a dance with the service provider, where the dance becomes the service" (Cova et al. 2007, p. 4).

The number of socio-cultural studies exploring the experiences, practices, and identities of water sport tribes in tourism literature is small, except for the (wind)surfer community (Beaumont and Brown 2015; Hough-Snee and Sotelo Eastman 2017). Surfers have been defined as "a unique tribe of nomads who have wandered this planet in search of rideable waves" (Young 1983, p. 189, as cited in Dolnicar and Fluker 2003). These 'tribe of nomads' should be considered in a wider sense, because surf tourism does not necessarily only include active surfing participants, but also spectators and non-surfing travel companions (Dolnicar and Fluker 2003). Several typologies of surfing 'nomads' were identified according to their attitudes towards adrenaline, e.g. the way they interpret the 'rideable waves': the price-conscious safety seekers, the luxury surfers, the price- conscious adventurers, the ambivalent, and the radical adventurers (Dolnicar and Fluker 2003).

While interpreting 'rideable waves', it could be argued that water-sport tribes have often attributed new 'meanings' to the water surfaces and have changed the perspective of looking at coasts, through the attention to water, waves and wind. Using the first-person mode use on their action cams and sharing individual experiences on a community base, they have become playful co-creators of destination spaces, they have acted as inventors of new symbols on site, and finally they have also activated new marketing practices.

The relationships of (wind) surfers' tribes and society is widely described with reference to several development dynamics. For instance, the ethnographic analysis of surfers' careers in relation to local communities by Beaumont and Brown (2015) shows several stages of development of a surfer: the *nurtured stage*, in which he or

she starts to practice the sport, mostly motivated by male family members or peers; the *(possible) competitive stage*, during which he/she becomes more proficient; the *serious leisure traveller stage*, when the surfing lifestyle acquires notable importance; the *responsible stage*, a moment in which other responsibilities in life acquire more importance than sport; and finally the *legends stage*, when veteran surfers may not even enter the water any more, but they still practice the surfers' lifestyle. The consideration of silver windsurfers also provides insights into water-sports as "an identity resource in the extension of 'mid-life' and in the process of negotiating anxieties about ageing" (Wheaton 2017, p. 96), in a revisitation of the idea of windsurfing as a sport for young risk-seekers.

A second aspect related to windsurf tribes is the male-dominated sports practice and the perceived 'otherness' of women, but also the increasing importance of female participation (Wheaton 2004). Windsurfing practices are traditionally "cultural spaces where masculine identities are negotiated and defined" (Wheaton 2004, p. 135), particularly through demonstrating sporting (and sexual) prowess. Nevertheless, in contemporary windsurfing practice, different types of masculinity exist, and some conraddictions can be found between the 'feminised' appearance of some windsurfers and the mysoginistic character of some windsurfing communities.

Finally, a range of studies is available on culturally significant surfing locations (e.g. Booth 1996, 2001a, b; Flynn 1989; George 1991; Law 2001), emphasizing the close relationship between the place and the sport practice, to the point that surfers' place attachment can develop into a local involvement as environmental stewards in protected sites (Larson et al. 2018).

Notwithstanding the existance of some contributions on (wind)surfing tribes and their identity markers, when addressing other types of water tourism the focus still lies on traditional types of segmentation (see e.g. Carvache-Franco et al. 2019; Dolnicar and Fluker 2003; Hallmann et al. 2012; Hennigs and Hallmann 2014), while there is a lack of attention towards the relationship between sport identities and socio-cultural contexts, an issue addressed in this research in relation to the Lake Garda destination.

14.3 Case Study Lake Garda

Lake Garda, the largest lake in Italy, is nestled among the regions of Lombardia, Veneto and Trentino-South Tyrol in the northern part of the country. The area is a well-renowned tourism destination also thanks to its geographical location that makes it easily reachable not only for the domestic Italian market, but also for central and northern European visitors. Due to the ideal conditions of strong and regular winds, the Northern part of the lake, also known as Alto Garda, boasts a long tradition of water-sport practices and is considered one of the major destinations for water-based tourism worldwide. In fact, only the area of Alto Garda recorded more than 3.5 million tourist overnights in 2018 (Garda Trentino S.p.A. 2018). The lake constitutes an ideal training ground, as the narrowness of the body of water, surrounded by mountains, forces sportspeople to continually turn and tack. Therefore, the lake,

cradle of freestyle windsurf practices, is well known for staging professional sailing regattas and several specialized water-sport events.

These favorable conditions have fostered the development of water-sport neotribes, especially for windsurfing and sailing practices. At the same time, Lake Garda is increasingly acknowledged as a multifaceted sport destination, offering a range of alternative (water and land) sports to entertain active tourists. The co-existence of many sports opportunities makes the case Alto Garda worth examining to assess the fluidity and the transient nature of these tribes.

14.4 Methods

To address water-sport tribes in the Alto Garda destination, 22 semi-structured qualitative interviews with local and international stakeholders and experts have been conducted until saturation during the Northern hemisphere's winter 2017. The transcribed interviews were analysed using GABEK, a computer-assisted method that allows researchers to handle complexity by coding interview texts on a keyword basis. The output consists in a visual representation of the interviewees' statements as semantic networks and thus depicts their main associations. These so-called association graphs show the link between keywords, when these are mentioned at least once by interviewees within the same conceptual unit (i.e. when a conceptual relationship between them is established) (Zelger 2000). The graphs of interrelated keywords (association graphs) provide a comprehensive overview of some associations that interviewees made while talking about (water) sport practices in Lake Garda and beyond, and serve as anchor points for the case analysis. The connecting lines' thickness in the graphs highlights the frequency of the connections: the thicker the lines, the more frequently a connection has been established.

As a further methodological approach, a questionnaire was completed by tourists vacationing in the municipalities of Riva del Garda, Torbole and Arco in Alto Garda. The sample was stratified according to the overnight stays per municipalities and different accommodation categories and surveyed in three waves of face-to-face interviews in May, July and September 2017. Participants were randomly selected, and 498 valid surveys were collected. The survey was drafted in three languages, English, German and Italian, and consisted of 36 questions divided into three sections. The first part aimed at understanding the sport activities practiced both on holiday as well as at home, the second collected information regarding the satisfaction with the local (water-sport) tourism offer, the third collected socio-demographic information. The gathered data was organized, tabulated and analysed using the IBM SPSS software. Moreover, to ease the results comprehension, the software Gephi (Bastian et al. 2009) was employed to visualize the sports practiced within the destination and the combinations thereof.

14.5   Results

International experts and local stakeholders were first asked to identify the peculiarities of the destination. Their descriptions highlighted the competitiveness of the destination, as already stated in the case description, that is its strategic geographical position, its international reputation, and its enviable wind conditions. The Lake features a complete product to its visitors, meaning that they can practice several (water) sport activities. The lake attracts both recreational sportspeople as well as professionals, who either visit the destination for training purposes or to participate in sports events, such as regattas and other competitions (Fig. 14.1). As those sport events cover most of the sailing categories, among the professional sportsmen and sportswomen are included many youngsters, which in turn attract other markets, such as family members. These do not necessarily practice the same sport activity but are very often willing to practice and try out new activities as beginners, for example by attending courses. The events and regattas finally do not just constitute a strong attraction for professionals and their families but are also able to spark amateurs' interest for the specific sport they witness being practiced on the lake. The interest might translate merely in the desire to see the competitions and training, up to the willingness to enrol for specific classes and courses.

Interviewees were also asked to identify emerging trends, both at the destination level, as well as internationally. They highlighted a developing tendency, for people practicing sports, to experiment different activities, both during their lifetime, as well as, in the case of tourists, during a single holiday (Fig. 14.2).
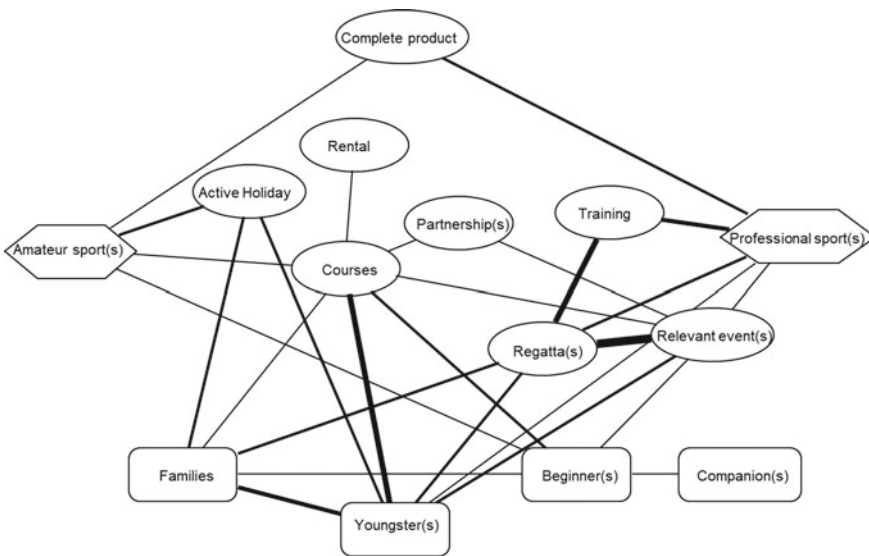

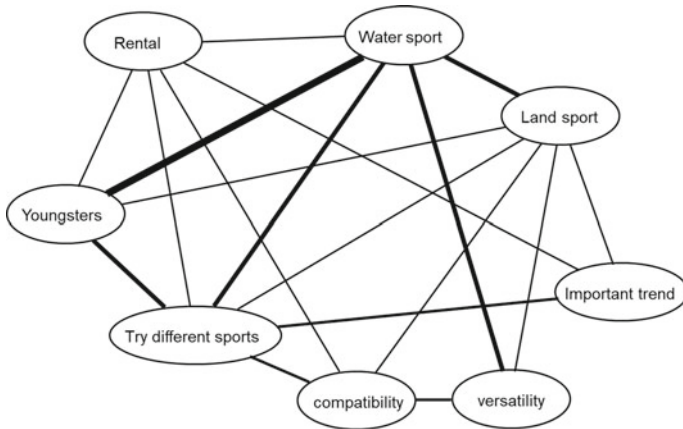**Fig.14.1** Professional and amateur sport activities (n = 22)

Fig. 14.2 Emerging trends in water and land sport practice (n = 22)

This is especially true for youngsters, as they are more eager to seek thrill (Fig. 14.3) and face new challenges, such as constantly learning the latest activities and trying out new lifestyles. Moreover, people in this age group tend to have a lower purchasing power and, instead of buying sports equipment, they would rather rent it, as it is particularly expensive, rapidly obsolete and cumbersome in the case of water sports (Fig. 14.2; see also Thomas and Potts 2015). This, in turn, discourages
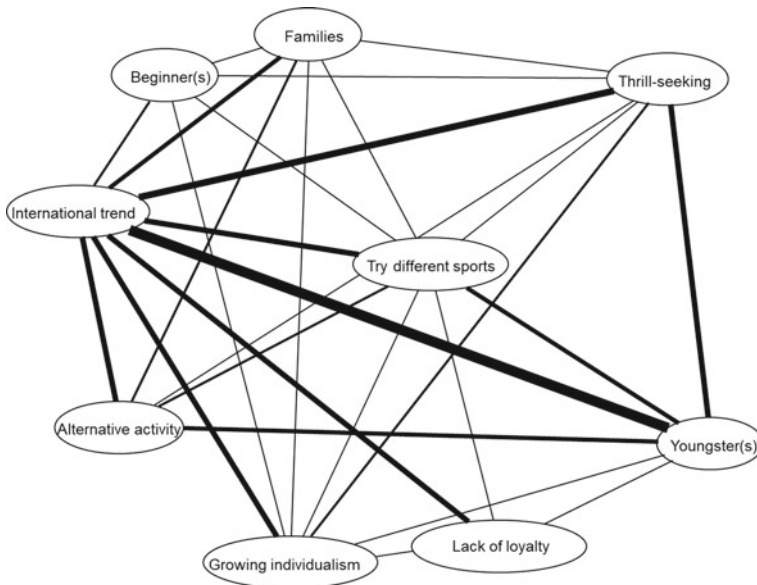

Fig. 14.3 Multi-sport practices (n = 22)

loyalty to one single sport, making it easier to jump from one activity to the other. As one interviewee puts it: *"I would think that the youth of today are dynamic, and they want to try different things. In tourism we talk about multiple identities, people want to try out different lifestyles […] in the past the youth were interested in water-sports and doing some leisure things attached to that, today it is reversed. Youth want to have a nice time; water-sports are just one element in the overall experience"* (Interview participant 15).

Considering family activities on holiday, the trend is twofold: on one hand, as already stated previously, within the same family group, members wish now to differentiate their activities according to their interests and passions (Fig. 14.3). On the other hand, there is a wish from parents' side to passionate their children to their sports activities, as a way of bonding with them, as well as to pass down their knowledge and passion to the younger generation. As a local stakeholder noted: "*In the 2000s there were people who practiced windsurfing, but they got married, got children, and set other priorities. Now their children are more or less 15–16 years old and they see the photos of the parents who have surfed and say "cool: we want to try too, but together" so this group is coming back because the parent is organized, has time to spend with the children and returns"* (Interview participant 8).

Additional data from the survey conducted among the tourists are provided to support reconstructions and perceptions of interviewees. One of the aims of the survey was to identify tourists' main sports activities during their holiday and what kind of synergies it is possible to reconstruct among those practices, that is, whether there are affinities among lifestyle sports. To display these results, a Gephi visualization was prepared based on a multiple-choice question on the sport practiced while on holiday (Fig. 14.4). Results show a more marked preference for land sports than water-sports, with hiking (43.6% of respondents), mountain biking (36.9%), climbing (16.1%) and fitness (13.6%) being the most practiced activities. Despite the presence of water in the destination and the international notoriety of Lake Garda, the predominance of terrain sports is consistent with international trends. According to 2018 US data, in comparison to 59.2% of people practicing outdoor sports, only 13.7% practiced water-sports (Physical Activity Council 2019). From the majority of respondents practicing sports (79%), 33% stated to practice one single activity. The other 46% are engaged in multiple activities. The minority of visitors (21%) do not undertake any kind of sports at all.

The most practiced water sport among respondents is windsurfing (11.2%), followed by Stand-up-Paddle—SUP—(5%) and kayak (4.4%). Experts and local stakeholders highlighted the increased popularity of kitesurfing in the last few years, yet the fact that this practice has been so rarely named by respondents (only 2%) is not surprising, given that this practice is strictly regulated in the Northern part of the Lake where responses were collected. The regulation of such practice is not uncommon, as the length of the ropes, the performance of tricks and the high speed easily reached by kitesurfer, enhance risks of collisions and accidents among kitesurfers and other sportspeople on water and even on terrain (see also Ducato 2015). The practice is instead allowed in the Southern part of the Lake, characterized by weaker winds and wider spaces for maneuvers.
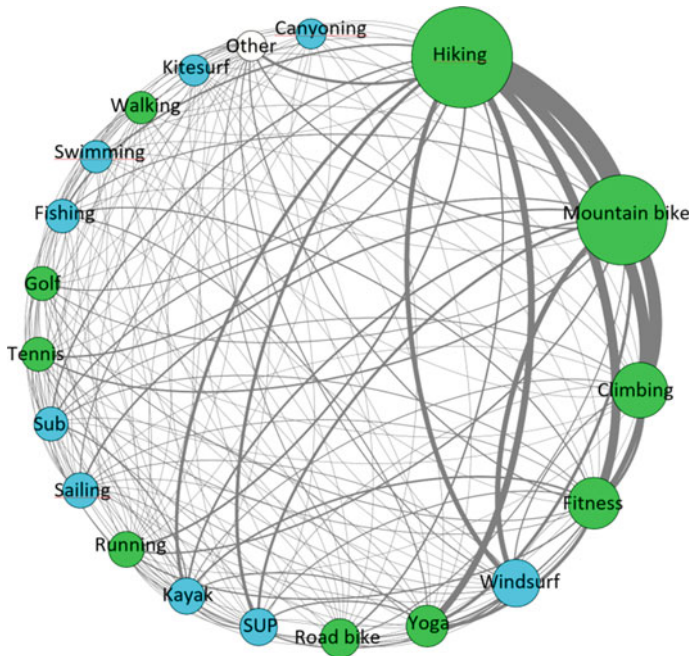
Fig. 14.4 Water and terrain sports practiced by on-site tourists and their combinations (n = 393)

Local stakeholders have also captured the trend to multisport: "*there is a group of people that practices may be up to three disciplines within a day, such as windsurfing, SUP and bike. Since windsurfing is quite challenging on a physical level, usually you practice it two hours a day. Then you can cycle two more hours, and a small walk-in Riva del Garda is not disdainful.[…]. We have many customers who dedicate themselves to biking in the morning, windsurfing in the afternoon or* vice versa *depending on the level they have. Because in the morning there is little wind for beginners, in the afternoon there is a strong wind for the advanced users. Sportsmen usually express their sporting character throughout the day. They always choose to do something*" (Interview participant 1).

As stated by the interviewees, the wind conditions in combination with the level of skills favor customer segmentation, so that windsurf and sailing beginners can practice in the morning and professionals in the afternoon. At Lake Garda there are windless days: and while in the past this translated into visitors merely sitting on the beach and waiting for the wind to blow again, nowadays, local stakeholders developed new products and offers to keep their guests engaged throughout the day. These alternative activities range, on water, from SUP, swimming, and kayaking (easier to practice in the absence of wind and waves), to biking, climbing and running on the mainland.

The survey highlighted the importance of sport practice in visitor retention at Lake Garda, as results show that tourists practicing sport are more likely to come
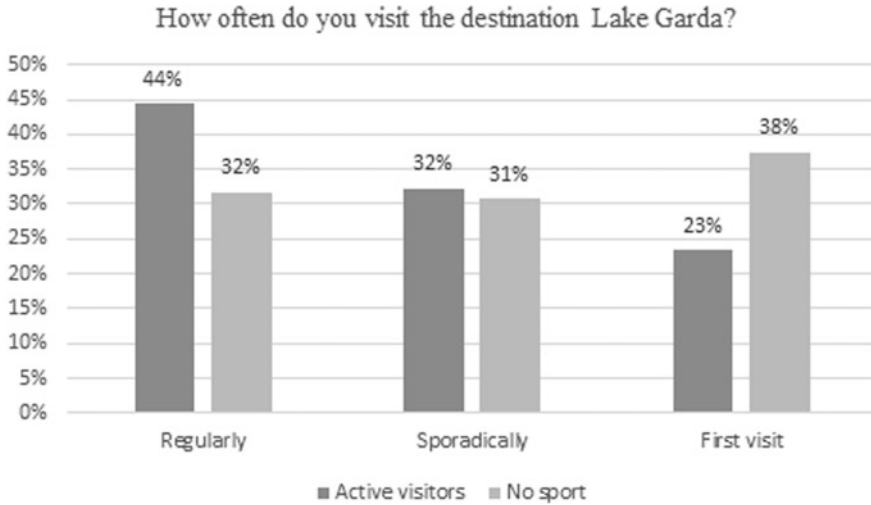
Fig. 14.5 Visit frequency by active and passive tourists at Lake Garda (n = 494)

back to the destination, while passive guests have a higher share among first-time visitors (Fig. 14.5).

14.6 Discussion and Conclusions

Based on this exploratory research, water-sport tribes seem extremely fluid and transient in the Alto Garda destination. Moreover, the transition among sports practices appears to be strictly related to the contextual conditions—e.g. the wind or the weather—while the common element linking all activities is the performance of a challenging outdoor experience at different professional levels. Some sportsmen and sportswomen in Alto Garda might be occasional users, but many of them are professionals, since the destination regularly hosts training camps and high-level competitions. This co-existence of many sports and different skills makes the destination a unique case to analyse consumer tribes.

In the light of the neotribal theory, results might suggest the co-existence of multiple and extremely dynamic micro-tribes related to single sports, and the presence of one bigger tribe of outdoor sport lovers, motivated by the passion of practicing water and terrain activities in open-air spaces, with a (more or less dominant) sports specialization. Results show that the most numerous terrain sports tribe is the one of mountainbikers, and the main water-sport tribe is that of windsurfers. These two main tribes seem to be very linked one another, since many users reported to practice both sports during one stay. At the same time, the supply side of services is also enhancing multisport practices, for instance through multisport centers offering windsurf and mountainbike packages for one price. In doing so, lifestyle sport lovers

in the Alto Garda destination can choose their sports activity without advanced planning, because professional equipment is rented directly on demand and on the same site. Following this interpretation, it might be argued that the water-sport tribe visiting Lake Garda should not be segmented by the type of sport practiced, but rather by the attitude towards sport specialization (mono-sport versus multi-sport) and to the level of professional engagement and skills (beginner versus professional athlete). Figure 14.6 illustrates the different offers suitable for outdoor lovers, based on the level of skills and the amount of practiced sports.

Water or terrain environment, bicycle or board seem interchangable markers of identity for the outdoor sport lovers tribe at Alto Garda, because their desire is to experience eudaimonia (Knobloch et al. 2016), more than to practice a sport. Eudaimonia, differently from hedonia, is a type of wellbeing that encompasses hard challenges and does not exclude the feeling of pain and fatigue, but at the same time it enables to increase one's skills, to achieve one's goals, and to achieve a personal growth. From the individual perspective, the easy access to equipment and training opportunities in many sports enables tourists to experience multiple forms of eudaimonia in one holiday, and to join and leave multiple sub-tribes, in a sort of continuous self-testing process. From a destination perspective, the diversification of the offer
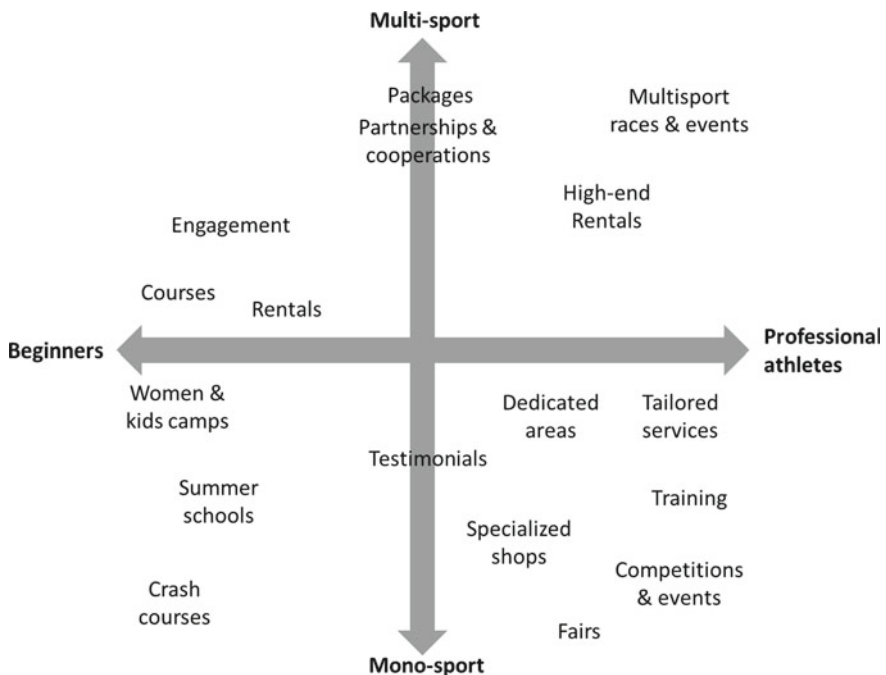

Fig. 14.6 Segmentation of the outdoor sport lovers tribe according to the level of professional engagement and the fluidity (or long-standing) involvement (
Source Own elaboration)

and the combination of multiple sports might enable a competitive advantage in the long term. In fact, the destination might increase the sport commitment of beginners thanks to the presence of established sub-tribes. Moreover, it might encourage a generational handover in the sport practice by offering a well-organized setting and appropriate offers. In sum, the destination might work as a 'tribe incubator' if it is able to interact with outdoor sport lovers in a sort of co-designing process. On the other hand, it might also work as an 'anchoring place' (Cova and Cova 2002) for outdoor sports tribes if it is able to pursuit their passion through the voice of their passionate members. Some actions have already started in the Alto Garda destination, e.g. the use of blogs to tell stories about the local windsurf world champions, that are treated as 'ambassadors' of the destination. As Cova et al. (2007, p. 21) "where once tribes were seen as transformative to their members, we are beginning to see how they are transformative to businesses and communicative practices and to society itself".

14.7 Limitations and Further Research

As most case studies, the present work has some limitations, such as the lack of generalizability of single case study results. Moreover, even though the sample was statistically representative of the total visitors of the destination Alto Garda, the number of respondents practicing (water) sports was overall not high, which did not enable us to conduct a cluster analysis among different sub-groups based on sociodemographic information.

Further work might expand the investigation on how sports tribes engage with their activity and how they interact with members of their sports community outside of the tourism destination.

Moreover, our observation on sportspeople passing down to their children a sense of belonging to one core sport deserves further investigation, possibly longitudinal, in order to assess whether the younger generations prove as loyal to the core activity as the older generation or whether they would switch to other practices during their lifetime.

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Chapter 15
Searching the Seven Seas: Investigating Western Australia's Cape Naturaliste Surfing Tribe as a Surf-Tourism Paradigm

Robert A. Holt

Abstract A byzantine phenomenon, surfing has escalated from a countercultural lifestyle into mainstream. Surfing populations exist as tribes, isolated by time and space, distinguishable by beliefs, values, history and ecology. These subsets operate as idiosyncratic subdivisions of the wider parent surfing culture. Western Australia's Cape Naturaliste surfing tribe is an example of this paradigm. Motivated by fun and driven by the search, the Cape Crusaders travel the planet to consume surfing. Surf tourism is big business, and like most surfing tribes, the Cape Naturaliste crew visit diverse destinations to supress their appetite for riding the cliché perfect wave. Using ethnography and autoethnography methodology as the basis of socio-cultural investigation, this chapter explores the Cape Naturaliste wave riders as a surf-tourism tribe, identifying and examining the motives and mechanisms for their travel predilection.

Keywords Ethnography · Tribes · Surfing · Tourism · Autoethnography · Neo-tribes

15.1 Introduction: The Endless Search

Stepping from the Douglas DC-7 onto Dakar's steamy tarmac, Robert August and Mike Hynson arguably launched international surfing tourism. In their black suits, tapered ties and dark glasses, lugging awkward suitcases and their Malibu longboards, the two young Californians looked more like hatless Blues Brothers than contemporary surf travellers. Starring in Bruce Brown's 1966 surf movie, *The Endless Summer*, the boys entranced a global audience with graceful wave riding, extensive exploration and fun antics, their superb session at Cape St Francis, South Africa, forever carved into surfing folklore. Canniford and Shankar (2007, 42) describe *The Endless Summer* as "an iconic and archetypal example of the *Pure Surf Film* genre", a motion picture developed by surfers, for surfers. Resultant of their film, August, Hynson and Brown encouraged a generation of wave riders to advance their surfing

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performance. However, in relation to this work, they also stimulated many of those same surfers to develop their lifestyle as an adventure platform to explore the planet, searching for perfect waves.

15.2   Tribal Definition: Waves of Meaning.

"Borrowed from anthropology" as a means of characterising "archaic societies, where social order was maintained without the existence of a central power", the term 'tribe', according to Cova and Cova (2002, 596) can be used to define "postmodern social dynamics". Marsh (1988, 10) similarly classifies a tribe as being "acephalous", a group of people sharing "patterns of speech, basic cultural characteristics … a common territory … [and who] feel that they have more in common with each other than with neighbouring groups." Summoning meditations of indigenous peoples, isolated and ancient, bound by rituals and traditions, colourfully adorned and tuned with their ecology, the tribal cliché is solidified by the beautiful photographs of Herero and Himba, Mangati and Maasai, Balti and Bhutanese, Inuit and Aborigine in Prior (2003). On the contrary, globalisation, tourism and commercialisation has clearly led to a more homogenised society, and the virtual extinction of the "untouched tribe" (Prior 2003, 8).

Seeking an alternative framework to characterise youth culture, Bennett (1999, 605) reviewed the word 'subculture' using Maffesoli's (1996) notion of *tribus*. Juxtaposing with the expression 'neo-tribe', Bennett (1999, 607) gracefully expanded definition stating that the "… concept of 'lifestyle' provides a useful basis for a revised understanding of how individual identities are constructed and lived out". Neo-tribes, according to Hardy, Gretzel and Hanson (2013, 48), are "people from different walks of life who come together in fluid groupings, bound by common interests, similar lifestyles, rituals and language." In neo-tribes, tribal members express their "collective identities [and] membership at "performance sites" with their "homogeneity [lying] in their passion and emotion" (Hardy and Robards 2015). This notion directly relates to tribal surfers practicing at surfing spots within the boundaries of their territory. Moreover, surfing tribes, such as the Cape Crusaders, exhibit the passion and emotional prerequisite, as per the quotation. Furthermore, if lifestyle accurately reflects collective tribal associations, then surfing communities are reasonably considered as neo-tribes. Pertinent to this work, neo-tribal evolution "… is tied inherently to the origins of mass consumerism" (Bennett 1999, 607). Using such nomenclature as the basis for definition, I contend that geographically isolated surfing communities exist as tribes. Surfing tribes consume surfing, and part of this consumption involves surf tourism.

In 1968 Dahrendorf suggested that humans behave with predictability. Reiterating the Shakespearian metaphor 'all the world's a stage', Dahrendorf (1968, 8) proposed that humans live their lives as "*Homo sociologicus* … the social actor". *Homo sociologicus* plays different roles on different stages. If *Homo sociologicus* acts the part successfully, then she/he must know what the role entails. Furthermore, she/he must

also know how to deliver the acceptable lines, the appropriate gesticulation, the pause, the tears, the laughter, the money shot at the right moment. Like any demographic, surfers demonstrate variety, however, surfers also share numerous qualities in the way they act out their lives as surfers, as *Homo sociologicus surferensis.*

Although surfing involves personal performance, surfers seldom play out their surfing life in solitude. As social actors, surfers function with other surfers, often existing as tribes. Some work has been undertaken involving surfing spaces (Hull 1976; Farmer 1992, 2002; Waitt and Warren 2008; Wheaton 2000; Langseth 2012; Uekusa 2019), yet investigation involving the veracity of surfing groups existing as geographically distinctive units is somewhat lacking. According to Irwin (1973, 133), devoted surfers make a "commitment to their surfing lifestyle" with such sophistication rewarding surfers with a characteristic phenotype. Fiske (1983, 123) indicates that surfers look like surfers because of their "connotations of leisure". *Committed* surfers recognise themselves as surfers, immersed in a holistic lifestyle. In her windsurfing ethnography, Wheaton (2000, 148) supports this notion labelling the action sport lifestyle as "all absorbing". In such cases, the dedicated windsurfer adopts an identity and when such dedication occurs en masse at a common location, this generates a "collective identity"—the tribe. Situated on the northern tip of Western Australia's South West surf coast, Cape Naturaliste is home to a distinctive surfing tribe, the Cape Crusaders. This chapter considers the group as a surf-tourism case example.

15.3   Establishing Balance: Research Methodology.

Using ethnographic methodology, the qualitative data used to generate analysis and synthesise discussion in this chapter was sourced during my doctoral research from two traditional research methods—interview and participant observation (Malinowski 1922; Spradley 1979; Ellen 1988; Fetterman 1989; Agar 1986, 1996; Gold 1997; Brewer 2000; Sands 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Gobo 2008; Hughson 2008).

Participant observations in the original investigation involved 84 diarised annotations, accrued from surfing practice in Europe, Indonesia and extensively in the Cape Naturaliste field. Interviews, spanning 36 h of recorded data, involved semi structured discussions with 74 Yallingup, Dunsborough, Margaret River and Perth surfers—men, women, boys and girls, who provided consent to validate their commentary using personal identification. As the chapter incorporates personal vignettes, an autoethnographic flavour is assumed, blending cultural research with personal subjectivity to make sense of the data and provide engaging manuscript, in demonstrating tribal interaction and understanding (Geertz 1973; Chang 2008). As a surfing ethnographer, I immersed myself in the ocean and involved myself in the surfing practice. A participant observer is different to an observer participant, as highlighted by Woodward (2009, 558), describing herself as "hanging about" as an observer, rather than "hanging out" as a participant, in the male dominated fist-fighting realm.

As a participant observer I devoted substantial time "hanging out" with the Cape Crusaders. Being an active tribal surfer assisted in the data gathering process. As a wave riding ethnographer, I have been privy to an insider's view, such positioning importantly facilitating intimate observation opportunities. Notably, Butts (2001, 4) supports this claim in stating; "the only way tacit knowledge of [surfing] … can be developed is through active participation". In transplanting field experiences into this chapter, I modified Spradley's "Description Matrix" (1980), streamlining his parameters (space, object, act, activity, event, time, actor, goal, feelings) into two *Tourism Tales*. This scheme enabled insertion of contextualised participant observation in the work.

Perspective is a tenuous beast, and although cultural observation is imperative in ethnography, alone it is insufficient. Behaviours, patterns and cultural actions that are observed by the anthropologist are considered from the scientist's point of view. As such, these observations may contrast with reality. To achieve ethnographical nirvana, Spradley (1979, 4) advises that "native realism" should be attained. To truly understand a culture, an ethnographer must communicate with the cultural members in addition to observing them in action (Spradley 1979; Brewer 2000). An ethnographer depends on the cultural actors to explain cultural enigmas. Correspondingly, Patterson (2010, 14) states "connectedness to the surf community … can only result from listening closely to [surfers'] stories". According to Cruikshank (1990, 1), tales "breathe life into academic writing". Stories provide a vehicle for people to "explain aspects of their culture … aspects of their lives, place, space and social relationships" (Cruikshank 2005, 66). Narrative presents a base for ethnographic description. Fishers are not exclusive in their proclivity for tales. Surfers have always loved storytelling. Preston *Pete* Peterson, a legendary Californian surfer from the 1930s, could "sit and spin stories hour after hour about his 48 years of surfing …" (Dixon 1969, 22). Storytelling allows the narrator opportunity to explain a point via personal experience. Stories provide occasion for learning, they foster tradition and provide entertainment. In the data gathering process, I encouraged interview participants to tell their stories, eagerly listening and learning as I questioned, probed, redirected and recorded. Narrative quotations, gathered during interviews, have been woven into this work as primary ethnographic data, enabling assertions to be supported and discussion to be enhanced. Incorporating narratives in ethnography enables characters and events to be enlivened, and so epitomise the spirit of the Cape Naturaliste surfing tribe.

Motivated by the Geertzian (1973) thick description edict, and excited by Sword's (2009) style manifesto, I felt compelled to write an ethnography that is "a pleasure to read" (Sword 2009, 320). To be rewarded on the style scoreboard, Sword entreats the writer to engage her/his audience with humour, passion and creativity. Stylish writing relates anecdotes and conveys examples, providing illustrations and metaphors to entertain, as well as enlighten. Sword's goal is to communicate a sense of self by displaying material in personal academic prose that welcomes readers with precise, rich, appetising language.

Branded as "cultural hoppers" by Agar (1996, 56), ethnographers are privileged to act as cultural investigators. Traveling the world, experiencing diverse people and

stunning coastal vistas, searching for glassy waves, bright sunshine and warm water, I am grateful that surf tourism is a significant element of my life.

15.4 Surf Tourism Genesis: On the Road

Myths and legends identify *he'e-nalu* (wave sliding) as an intrinsic ancient Hawaiian cultural ingredient. The Polynesian Islands are the zygote of surfing and, according to Moser (2008, 4), a great deal of surf related oral history was recorded because of Sheldon Dibble, William Westervelt and endemic Hawaiian scholars Kamakau, Malko and Hale'ole. "Kane surfed the waves of Oahu … he surfed through the white foam, the raging waves … from Maui to Hawaii and on to Mauwele …" (Moser 2008, 36). This mantra outlines the extent of wave riding across the Hawaiian archipelago. Arguably, such primitive surfing tourists were searching for, and performing in, diverse environments to satisfy a desire to ride top-quality waves.

Catalyst molecules accelerate chemical reactions, providing the energy required to drive molecular transmission. World renowned authors Mark Twain and Jack London were important human catalysts, tourists who hastened surfing dispersion from the tropical North Pacific into western society. Twain visited Hawaii in 1866, writing several editorials regarding his adventures for the *Sacramento Daily Union* (Kampion 2003; Moser 2008). Publishing *Roughing It* (Twain 1872), a humoristic account of his travels, Twain vividly illustrated the excitement of surfing to a worldwide audience. When the charismatic Jack London arrived in Oahu in 1907, he was introduced to riding Waikiki's rollers by Alexander Hume Ford. This experience captivated London as indicated in his memoir, *The Cruise of the Snark* (1913). Dubbing surfing "a royal sport for the natural kings of earth", London (2001, 50) conveyed the exhilaration of surfboard riding to a huge audience across the United States and Britain. Bitten hard by the surfing bug, London's excitement was apparent in his persuasive memorandum of fun. As Jack Kerouac stimulated American wanderlust in the 1950s with his celebrated novel *On the Road*, so too did Jack London, forty years beforehand.

Legendary Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku described his vision for surfing tourism in vibrant beachboy style. "For many years it has been a desire of mine to see the people of other nations derive pleasure and benefit from the Hawaiian surfboard … It is my dream to some day tour other countries and personally acquaint people with the uses of the surfboard … it commands respect …" (Blake 1935 iii). Duke's dream has occurred. According to International Surfing Association's operations coordinator Kiko Toledo (Personal communication 2011), the global surfing population at that time approached 35 million surfers. On a planet with limited surfable waves, and an ever-expanding surfing armada, surf tourism is thriving. Defining surf tourism, Buckley (2002) indicates that a journey of at least 40 kms, for an overnight stay involving surfing, suffices. The remainder of this work considers the extensive surf tourism undertaken by the Cape Naturaliste surfing tribe.

15.5 The Yallingup Portal: Surf-Tourism into the South West

Global surf-wear company Rip Curl has hung its corporate hat on the concept of *The Search* since the early 1990s (Rip Curl website 2019). This celebrated, highly successful marketing campaign was underpinned by the concept of adventure associated with the hunt for perfect waves. When Kevin Merifield, Tony Harbison, Mark Paterson and their surfing friends made preliminary surf tourist visitations from Perth into Western Australia's South West in the mid-1950s, they recognised the depth of their discovery in a goldrush like scenario. Merifield described his "first real surfing experience" to me during an interview on the lawn in winter sunshine, overlooking Yallingup's waves.

"I first came down here on the January long weekend in 1955, with my cousin … we couldn't believe our eyes as we drove down the gravel, Yallingup was huge!" Kevin recalled being mesmerised by the mountainous swells, exploding on the outer reefs. Compared to the typical summertime Perth surf, this was a whole new realm. "When we got the hang of it down here, [the journey] was on every weekend," chuckled Mark Paterson. "I remember loading up the cars, putting the boards on top … you could taste the excitement of heading down-south. Surfing down here then, with no crowds, finding new spots, we had lots of laughs, we had lots of fun." In Noongar language, Yallingup literally translates to 'place of love'—the boys had clearly fallen head-over-heels with their newfound domain.

Exploration was elemental in the youthful Cape Naturaliste surfers' psyche, the surf environment was extensive, raw, and in many cases, relatively inaccessible. The region has always been a vast wave field and from their vivid and entertaining recollections, those initial *surfaris* (surfing safaris) were rites of passage for the intrepid young surfing tourists. Investigation intensified in the subsequent decade, with a host of fresh surfing locations, at Injidup, *Guillotines*, and *Gallows*, discovered south of the Cape.

Tony Harbison recited his earliest Margaret River experience, clearly a watershed moment in his surfing life. "One day when Yallingup was pretty flat, Kevin [Merifield] and me [sic] packed up our surfboards … and headed down to see Margs for ourselves." After temporary bamboozlement, eventually rounding the potholed coastal track, the lads were presented with a corduroyed ocean, tipping over into perfect peaks on the Surfers' Point reef. "When we saw those waves for the first time … wow, it was like those guys who found J Bay [Cape St Francis]." Tony paused reverently. "There it was. We'd found perfect waves, with nobody around. Unbelievable!".

The Search drives surf tourism. Surfers persistently think about surfing, they dream about riding flawless, tubing waves. Surfers converse with compatible fanatics about recent surf exploits and speculate about impending surf schemes. Surfers enthusiastically trip the planet, hunting for fun, craving adventure … searching for perfect waves.

15.6 Countercultural Surge

Roszak (1970, 11) indicated that the counterculture was "the spirit of the times". Widespread anti-Vietnam War sentiment that trailed Cold War consternation generated an international, youth-based rejection of preceding cultural standards. Showcased by sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll—and surfing—the countercultural revolution defied establishment.

Mick Marlin grew up surfing on Sydney's northern beaches in the early 1960s. Relying on publications such as *Surfer*, *Surfabout* and *Surfing World*, Mick studied the hotdog techniques of American surf heroes Dora, Noll and Edwards on the celebrated waves at Malibu, Sunset and Waimea. These same surfing magazines also showcased the eminent Australian surfers. Farrelly, Young, Conneeley and McTavish developed global surfing status as the right-hand points at Noosa, Burleigh and Crescent Head became renowned. "We started getting these mags with photos taken by guys who *actually knew* about surfing," said Mick. "Hawaiian and Californian waves and surfers mainly." He fondly recalled the first sixteen-millimetre surf flicks rolling at the Collaroy Surf Club. "And when those John Severson movies started screening all hell broke loose. We'd hoot and holler, we couldn't believe what they were doing on the waves. Watching those surfers was coaching us what we should be doing … and directing us to where we should be going."

There was a new affluence attached to surfing in the flower-power era. Airline travel was relatively affordable and custom-made surfboards were accessible. The middle-class youth of coastal Australia and the United States had money in their pockets, hedonistic time to spend and surfing role models to emulate. Led by *The Endless Summer* and later turbo-charged by Alby Falzon's *Morning of the Earth*, surfers looked beyond their local breaks and headed off to exotic locations. A new form of global travel materialised—international surf tourism was born.

"Early on in the piece, surfers mainly travelled to Hawaii," Mick related. "*Endless Summer* was the big one that really motivated me to get to South Africa. It blew everyone away seeing 'Bruce's Beauties' [Cape St Francis] … every surfer wanted to surf there. It became a magical Mecca … everyone wanted waves like that." Mick paused, "Our parents had to cope with the depression and just when they got on their feet, along came World War Two. Then they had kids. Our generation changed all that. And now we're changing the retirement scene too." Mick grinned. "I don't want to give up and die. I want to be out there doing things … travelling and going surfing."

15.7 Tourists Turn Residents: Radical Entries

George Simpson is commonly regarded as a Cape Naturaliste surfing tribal marvel. His surfing prowess and his fishing exploits are legendary, his chisand led features indicative of hard work and love of outdoor Australia, his fun-loving nature endearing

him to all. Clearly recognising his serendipity, George's encyclopaedic understanding of Cape Naturaliste surfing knowledge has widened over fifty solid years in the South West lineups. "Our generation was down here at the right time. Tony and Kevin and those blokes, they started it all, but without the right gear. Once surfboards went down from nine-foot … to six four [6′ 4″] … in about a year, surfing performance [advanced]. We were doing things on waves you couldn't do on the longer boards," said George. "We started surfing the bombies and at [Injidup] Carpark, places that you couldn't previously surf."

As surfboard size diminished, surf tourism in South West Western Australia grew. Cape Naturaliste's waves enticed enthusiastic surfers to relocate from Perth, the eastern states, and from overseas. George was in the trickle of surfers who decided to live the surf tourist dream, relocating to become one of the first permanent Cape Crusaders. "I think that Murray Smith was actually the first guy to come down here and live, then came the guys like Bob Monkman … we'd all drive down-south from Perth on the weekends." There was no wine industry back then—and not much work. But the pioneering tribal members were present for waves, not for wages. Emigration must have been a huge decision for the young countercultural surf tourists, moving wholes-bolus in pursuit of their passion. George Simpson took the plunge and redeployed full-time to Yallingup in 1969.

As wave riding tourists trekked to Hawaii, Africa, Mexico and Indonesia in search of perfect, unpopulated waves, the South West surf secret was soon out of the bottle, divulged by magazines, movies and tales of adventure. The Yallingup waves enticed a fresh crew of surfers to the Cape Naturaliste lineups, immigrants from Perth, from the eastern states and from far-flung California. During the early 1970s, the hunt for new surfing spots between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin continued in earnest. And as exploration was occurring to Yallingup's south, thinking outside the box, Simpson peered opposite, observing waves feathering on distant outer reefs. Acting on a hunch that quality untapped surf was proximal, George's search unearthed a treasure trove—Naturaliste's triple crowns, Three Bears. After an unsuccessful initial foray, George and crew took to the dusty trek a week later, when the winds backed around. "We parked up at Sugarloaf and walked in, a good half hour, and there they were, about four to five foot, no one there of course, no one had ever surfed the place … We went racing down the hill and we had our first surf there, the four of us—Tony Harbison, Russell from Queensland, Glyn Lance and me." The three discrete breaks later prompted the *Babies*, *Mammas* and *Pappas* taxonomy, these Three Bears delivering a 'just right' wave riding field. And how good was that initial session? "Yeah I remember it clearly," George grinned. "We paddled out and I got the first wave at *Babies*. Paddling back, I looked down to *Mammas* and saw a perfect wave break. We were like two-year-olds, hooting, totally amped!" Although Georgie had told his tale of discovery a hundred times before the rendition, he radiated over a swig from his cold beer during the interview. "And that was Bears!" he concluded with a characteristic big beam.

If the folklore associated with the exodus of surfers into the South West from Perth is impressive, then John Malloy's migration from the United States to Cape Naturaliste is extraordinary. John grew up in Los Angeles, "a long way from the ocean".

Like Mick Marlin, he recalled the impact of surfing publications and surf movies in shaping his surfing life. With a small band of high-school buddies, John regularly made his way down to surf the weekend waves at Santa Monica and Malibu. As a nineteen-year-old, John's spirit of adventure took over, and he boarded a Norwegian freighter as a work-away, scarcely a surf tourist in traditional sense. Voyaging across the Pacific Ocean, John and his mates were in surf heaven, scoring warm waves in Tahiti, Samoa and in Fiji. But the distant South West coast of Australia summoned him. "We'd heard about Margaret River," John recalled during our interview. "We'd seen photos in the magazines … so we decided to make our way out to Western Australia. We arrived in Sydney … young blokes with surfboards, got to the Hume Hwy, hitchhiked across the Nullarbor to Perth, and then down to Yallingup. We arrived in the autumn of 1972 … beautiful weather, beautiful waves. I just loved the place straight away." John fondly remembered the first time he and mate Carter stumbled upon an offshore reef near Yallingup. "The waves down this way were significantly different to anything I'd ever surfed before. I clearly remember our first surf out at *Supertubes*. We just couldn't get over how perfect the waves were … and we couldn't believe that there was nobody else in the lineup."

As well as being an avid wave rider, John was also an entrepreneur. Recognising that a market existed for legropes, a relatively new surfing hardware accessory, John started his *Pipelines* surf company in 1974. Introducing urethane chord and injection moulded parts, the innovation radically transformed legrope manufacturing. Product endurance in the South West big wave environment underpinned John's legrope evolution and ultimately directed the development of a new surfing business, *Creatures of Leisure*, in 1987. Interestingly, Malloy's enterprise occurred as an outcome of his surf tourism, with *Creatures* evolving into a global surfing icon. John still enjoys his surfing life, and firmly remains a surf tourist aficionado, regularly journeying to the Maldives in search of warm perfect waves.

Countless other Cape Naturaliste surfing tourist anecdotes exist. Enthralling stories involving adventure, camaraderie, happiness, mistakes and sometimes tragedy. Developing within all surfing tribes, propagated over time, etched in history, often achieving legendary status, tourism-based narratives are fundamental in characterising distinctive surfing tribes within the global surfing society.

15.8 Tourism Tale (i): *Baila Mi Hermana*

With Carlos Santana's *Dance Sister Dance* (*Baila Mi Hermana)* harmonising to crystal clear-blue Indonesian waves, the 1975 Hoole/McCoy surf movie *Tubular Swells* tweaked my surf adventure spirt. However, it was their subsequent 1982 classic *Storm Riders* that instigated my life as a surfing tourist. I mentioned the formative influence with movie director Jack McCoy during our interview, and his response was as cool and as perceptive as his movies. "For me," said McCoy, "*Storm Riders* was just a fun time in my life … and we recorded that. We were travelling,

and surfing and I guess guys like you felt out the vibe … and the rest as they say, is history."

Footage of coconut palms and Sentigi trees fringing tropical beaches and cerulean, hollow waves breaking perfectly on shallow coral reefs had me 'feeling out the vibe', chucking boardshorts and tee-shirts into backpack and scurrying to the airport. My first ever plane trip transported me to the 'Island of the Gods', Bali, Indonesia. With great mate Drew Murrie, I managed to do all the things I promised Mum we wouldn't—chowing down magic mushrooms, riding motor bikes at velocity around Denpasar's roads and swilling Bintangs under the moon on the beach at the Sand-Bar. Bali was a total adventure, an uncrowded playground. And the Balinese surf was superb. Inside an hour of jumping off Garuda Flight 879 and negotiating the humidity, heat and hassles of Ngurah Rai Bali International Airport, we were playing in the waves at Kuta Beach. I was thrilled to be surfing in boardies, revelling on the three-foot glassy beachies in the tepid north-eastern Indian Ocean. We rode scores of clean, fun breakers on the outer reefs and along white sand strip during our stay at the Lestari Beach Inn. Oh yes, this was what surfing was *really* about!

In 1982 the villages of Kuta and Legian were separated by five kilometres of fields, bush and coconut palms. A limestone track skirted the beach front. There was no traffic chaos, no massage teams, no surf shops or boutiques. The crazy hubbub of twenty-first century Kuta was inconceivable. There were a few polite street hawkers, a couple of pirate-cassette shops and the occasional proffer of 'mar-eeee-wannna' from a shadowy alley, but for all intents and purpose, Bali was relaxed and safe (Figs. 15.1 and 15.2).

The Kodachrome snap of a clean, empty, tree lined Jalan Melasti in Fig. 15.3 unmistakably reflects laidback Kuta. The barking geckoes, the drifting dogs, the tasty satays, the scented offerings, the sweet Gudang Garam cigarettes and the beautiful Balinese people—these things were novel and exciting. The culture of Hindu Bali captivated me. We witnessed a Geertzian (1973) cockfight, a beachside funeral pyre, a traditional Balinese wedding ceremony. Our motor bikes transported us from the impressive coral reefs at Lovina to the steaming volcano at Kintamani. We wandered past the resident macaques at Ubud's ancient ruins, we walked out on low tide to the famous Tanah-Lot temple.

However, the Bukit Peninsula was undoubtedly the highlight of my first Bali visitation. The ride out to Uluwatu was fearsome and the long dry walk through the thorn trees, gruelling. With hearts in mouth we approached the coast, the vibration of breaking waves carried through the afternoon humidity. Two animated Balinese lads carried our surfboards to the cliff top warung and called back to us—"Ombak! Ombak! Bagus ombak!" ("Waves! Waves! Good waves!") What we saw below was our fantasy. We stood there staring, gobsmacked, the ocean was a sheet of glass disturbed only by corrugations of long-period swell lines, racing down the reef. *Ulus* was on! I felt like a pioneer as we clambered the rickety bamboo ladder into Uluwatu's notorious cave. Excitement coursed as we crossed the reef, my skin goose bumped, and not from cold water, as we paddled out into the world class waves. There was a sense of connection with the space, a déjà vu. Uluwatu's surf really was as good as it looked in those Hoole/McCoy surf flicks. We rode the waves until dark—uncrowded,

Fig. 15.1 *The Search* delivers: The author on a nice one, Bangkaru, North Sumatra 2003 (Holt archive)

four foot, superb to perfect on the falling tide. The racetrack section on the end of the long left was hollow and epic. A few scrapes from bouncing on the coral were later sprinkled with the penicillin powder, the wounds paraded like badges of honour at tour end. At that point I realised that surf exploration *could* result in unearthing treasure, and for the first time in my life I appreciated the existence of a big, exciting world that required further investigation. In that moment, I morphed into an addicted surf tourist.

15.9 Up and Off: Exit, Stage Left

At any given time, fortunate surfers are relishing idyllic swells at some exotic location on Earth, slaking their thirst, finding and dancing on long, walling waves. And that is a marvellous thought. Powered by fantasy and driven by a sense of exploration, surfers scour the planet, gambling with opportunity cost, willing to direct significant time, energy and funds into surfing-based vacations, achieving what Buckley (2002, 427) terms "competitive advantage" as a part of their wave riding habit. Cape Naturaliste surfers are truly possessed by adventure (Figs. 15.4 and 15.5).

John Ferguson is a passionate surfing tourist, and a long-time surfing companion. A Cape Naturaliste surfing tribal member for nearly thirty years, I recently interviewed him in his new abode on Lombok, Indonesia. "I was first captivated by the
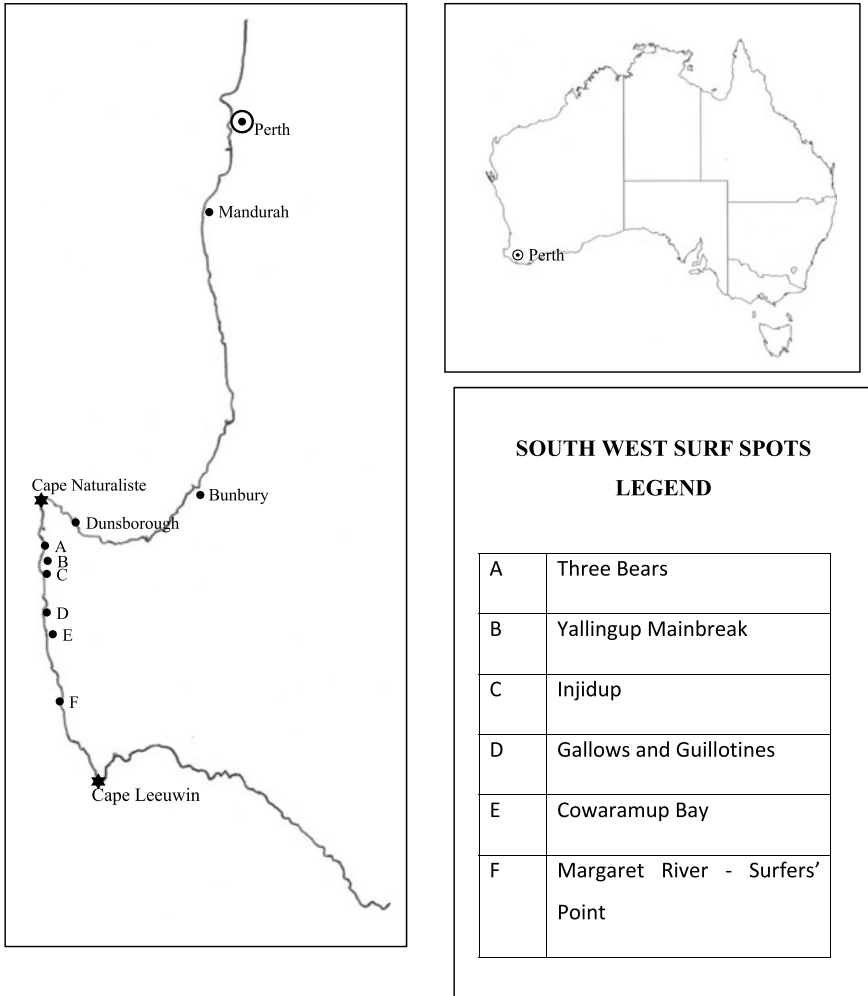
Fig. 15.2 Surf map of the Cape to Cape region of South West Western Australia

Indonesian surf when I saw a photo of Nias [Lagundri Bay, Sumatra] in *Surfing Life* [Australian surfing magazine]," recalled Ferguson. "But as a young bloke, stories of malaria and the hassle of making the long journey put me off a bit. So, we put Sumatra on ice, and did our first overseas surf trip to Bali instead. And that was so good … I wanted to go further." Boat trips to Sumatra, Lombok, Sumbawa and Sumba followed, as did excursions to land camps in Java, Lembogan and the Telos. Ferguson's extensive surfing tourism to the archipelago fittingly earned him the nickname, *Indo John.* Buying real estate and setting up a relaxed dwelling at Kuta in Lombok, John has fulfilled his dream. "When I'm up in the humidity and warmth, I feel good, I'm healthy. My arthritis plays up in the cold. So, Heather [partner] and

Fig. 15.3 Jalan Melasti, Kuta 1982: Thirty-seven years is a *very* long time in Bali (Holt archive)

Fig. 15.4 Uluwatu, Bali: Andrew Murrie and author, on the reef with twin fins and Balinese caddies (Holt archive)

Fig. 15.5 *Baz* Young: Searching for and enjoying *those really special* Maldivian days (Young Archive)

I decided to move up here and enjoy life in the tropics, while we still can. We love the lifestyle … the Sasak people, their culture, the food, the beaches, the warm water and the surf." Although earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are part of Indonesian reality, John is another exemplar of surf tourism leading to long-lasting relocation. "Sure, there's sometimes a few hassles living up this way," John chuckled over his frosty Bintang. "But that's life, no matter where you're positioned. There's lots more surfers around Kuta now, lots of Europeans, but dealing with tourists in the surf is a reality. You can't begrudge [people] from wanting to ride these waves. And as long as they're respectful, everything's fine."

Highly esteemed across the surfing world, Injidup resident Damon Eastaugh is admired for his big wave riding abilities and unpretentious demeanour**. "**Surfing is much about adventure, the risk taking … although those things sound cliché, they are the reasons I'm involved in surfing," deliberated Eastaugh. "Surfing is all about riding a wave. You can over-think it, but if you pare it back … you're just riding a wave." I asked Damon about the importance of travel in his surfing exploits. "Mate, I do it as much as I can. Just about every spare dollar I have goes into surfboards or surf trips [big laughs] … when we got married, we had this massive trip around the world and did some of the best things I've ever done. We hired a boat in Tahiti and sailed around searching for surf. We went to Mexico, to Puerto, looking for waves, we had such a great trip. When I was younger every time I could afford it, I'd go to Hawaii during their winter. It's a massive part of our [Cape Naturaliste] surfing culture. Everyone I know does it. It's like a ghost town around here in winter."

In my experience, tourism teaches people about culture, about self-awareness and about patience. Surfing teaches people that the world does not owe them special privileges. Surf tourism teaches that good waves are a very valuable and rare entity, sought after by many like-minded adventurers. When surfers gather around limited areas to ride perfect waves, competition often becomes fierce. Damon Eastaugh provided analogous context during his interview. "I try to take a pretty tolerant attitude and don't judge too much when I travel," he said. "But the thing I *don't* like when I travel is localism. I think localism is a product of small-minded people who haven't travelled much. If you've travelled, it is hypocritical to be showing aggressive behaviour at your home break. When you're overseas, you keep your head down … you show respect." He smiled through his famous last words, "… and you *usually* won't get into trouble."

Eminent Dunsborough surfboard shaper/artisan and surf adventurer Mark *Oggy* Ogram similarly regards travel as a method of curtailing the gloomy shadow of localism. "Most of our local surfers get away regularly on surf trips. If you travel and you surf somewhere else, well you're not going to be the heavy local in your own back yard, are you? That'd be totally hypocritical. That's the vibe I get anyway." *Oggy* implied that surf tourism promotes an "an open-mind" encouraging tolerance and a wave-sharing philosophy.

Long-time Yallingup charger, Stewart Bettenay, asserts that "getting away during winter" is part of life around Cape Naturaliste. "If you can avoid part of the winter, it makes it all the more enjoyable down here. Getting the tropical fix … the fun of going somewhere exotic, the lure of surfing waves you've seen and heard about in the magazines or the movies. You want to go and see it for yourself." Stewart nominated the definitive 1971 Albert Falzon and David Elfick surfing film, *Morning of the Earth* as a significant moment in his life. "That did it for me … those waves we first saw from Indonesia.[We] never thought of waves up in *Indo* … always thought it was just flat water and lagoons up that way. I guess we had a narrow focus on what was out there … but when we saw those blokes surfing Uluwatu at six foot in board shorts, warm water—wow [laughs] off we go!".

"Winter-time gets long, cold and hard down here," said Dunsborough surfer, Garrick Jackson. "Everyone gets away up north or to Indonesia … holidays around here typically involve going surfing in tropical destinations." Fellow Dunsborough local, John Tognini, likewise indicated that surf tourism is about temporarily escaping the Cape's bleak winter period. "The annual surf trip is an important part of our local surfing culture, a great way to escape winter … getting into your favourite boardies, relaxing and sharing surf and a few Bintangs with your mates. It's fantastic fun."

Surf travel is a noteworthy part of the global surfing culture. Environmental position and fiscal ramifications ultimately determine *when* surfing subcultural members vacate and *where* they search. Home practice for many Cape Naturaliste surfers is put into torpor as a result of an elongated cold winter phase. The Dunsborough/Yallingup wave riders rate their regular surf-related holiday as a function of their ecosystem. *The Search* is, and has always been, intrinsic to the Cape Crusaders. Warren Boyes considered his fortune being a Cape Naturaliste surfer. "You get a lot of European tourists down here in their Wicked [camper] Vans and a lot them can't even surf

[polite chortle]. But they want to be surfers … and you can't blame someone for wanting to be part of the surfing culture, can you?" he nodded. "We're very lucky to be surfers down here. We have these world class waves in our back yard, and you've got to expect people to want to experience our waves and lifestyle." Using Warren's commentary as a segue, let's jet off to Europe.

15.10   Tourism Tale (ii): *Es Boa Como Milho*

Surf tourism is a gamble, but surfers are an optimistic mob. Enticed by the lure of riding perfect waves in exotic locations, best mate Jeremy Pearce and I quit our jobs, packed up our surfboards and headed to Europe, an extended surf tour beckoning. Way back in 1986, long before the Quiksilver Pro had invaded the Basque coast, the European rite of passage for most young Aussies was more about Contiki Tours than catching waves. *Pearcey* and I had heard of some mystical beach breaks in France, a perfect left in Spain and cheap seaside living in Portugal, so we decided to take the punt. After a laborious flight to Heathrow, we purchased a Ford Falcon from an Arthur Daly doppelganger, jumped on the ferry to Calais and were on the Autoroute to Aquitaine before you could say *bon-jour*. Arriving at Hossegor twelve hours later, our lotto numbers bobbed up and for 21 consecutive days, the surf pumped. The quality beach-break peaks were amazing, our surf smorgasbord generated by a recalcitrant low-pressure system loitering between Iceland and Greenland. Such North Atlantic fury produces vast swells that empty out in the Bay of Biscay. Hossegor is a wave magnet, and we were iron filings stuck to its pole.

Spring life in the camp ground under the aromatic pine trees was superb. The local *Biere Boc* brew was tasty and affordable on our budget. Jeremy was a devotee of the *Gauloises* cigarettes. We were nourished by *jambon*, *fromage*, French sticks and the occasional chocolate from the *Seignosse Supermercado*. We played tennis when the winds wafted onshore, lounged on the beach between surf sessions, read Wilbur Smith books in the sun, enjoying the indulgent lifestyle of an indolent surf tourist. As Europe was somewhat of a secret spot on the surfing radar in that period, we enjoyed the waves with relatively few competitors. Occasional participants from home, from the US, South Africa and New Zealand bobbed up in the lineup, however, we generally surfed on our own. Although few local folks surfed at that time, the French loved the seaside. An intriguing element of Hossegor's beach culture was the regularity of gorgeous topless local girls in the waves—a most distracting episode.

The harsh reality of 'good things coming to an end' meant that the Hossegor swell eventually subsided. We cleared border formalities with pre-arranged Spanish visas, the fabled Basque village of Mundaka beckoning. A beautiful fishing community located at the mouth of the Guernica Estuary in Spain's Bizkaia Province, Mundaka was a major pull for our European surf trip. We had heard yarns and seen photographs of a long, fast, hollow, left hander that peeled quickly along a sandy bottom in front of the Catholic cathedral. Time to taste it!

Pitching our oversize tent on the terraced Mundaka camping ground, we rapidly acclimatised to the local lifestyle. The cuisine was delectable. We lived on the delicious bar snacks, the tapas served at eighteen old-world bars on the cobblestoned lanes. The Tempranillo was excellent, and at fifty pesetas per glass, it was way too affordable. We dubbed our favourite cantina 'Cone-eyes' after the perpetually stoned, laconic young Spaniard who filled our wine glasses and supervised our tortilla demolition. It was amazing how this young bloke's demeanour sparked up when we presented him with a Hoodoo Gurus and Jimmy Hendrix tape over an afternoon card game. Immediately treated like his best mates, the young local patrons started acknowledging us with smiles and greetings. Tourist lesson learned—a small gift can bring much reward.

We encountered other like-minded surfer travellers in Mundaka, patiently waiting for the waves to turn on. Days were spent kicking the footy and flicking the Frisbee on the river flat at low tide, playing 'five hundred' on the camp ground lawns, drinking frosty cerveza and enjoying luxurious afternoon siestas. Unfortunately, a new ground swell didn't eventuate. In reflection, we should have fled Hossegor earlier to ride the Mundakan freight trains, but it's always easy in retrospection. Local knowledge is gold to surfers, capital that the surfing tourist sometimes lack—know the environment, know the field. The European map was hauled from the Ford's glove box and a new travel plan was hatched—onward to Portugal.

Colonial giant of the fifteenth century, Portugal is the birth place of Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan. Famous for its temperate climate, musical fado, ancient castles, friendly people, cheap lodging, with over 1,000 kms of Atlantic-facing real estate including the notorious *Supertubos* surf break, Portugal ticked all our surf tourism boxes. Being a surfing tourist in Europe was an enlightening experience for us. In addition to learning history and geography, we also developed an appreciation for language. As courteous tourists, Jeremy and I always attempted to converse with the locals in native tongue, generally successful in making ourselves understood. Many of the young Europeans understood English and seemed happy to practice their conversational language on us. Of the informal language that we learned on our sojourn, one phrase remains imprinted in my temporal lobe. We learned this expression from a group of Lisbon University students, holidaying in Peniché. Enthusiastic to hear our Australian tales, they laughed at our jokes and enjoyed drinking coffee and red wine with us in the sunshine at our favourite café. During a fun surfing lesson, we offered on a warm Portuguese morning, the gang unexpectedly started chanting 'es boa como milho' in singsong unison. Obviously stoked about riding a few waves, the rendition was fascinating. What was the chorus all about? Inquiry provided the translation—'as good as popcorn'. Riding waves is a difficult experience to describe, however likening surfing to popcorn had us in hysterics. Although we were assured that 'es boa como milho' was a huge tribute, a traditional Portuguese accolade, we tried to convince our friends to modify their wording. "Try as good as beer," we suggested. But they would not hear of such blasphemy. For the remainder of the trip at any feel-good moment, Jeremy and I would trot-out our newfound Portuguese sonata.

Our surfing experience in Portugal was unforgettable. From the northern beach breaks of Costa Nova and the Aveiro Peninsula, through the points at Figueira da Foz and Nazaré, the wedging peaks at Peniché and the heaving reefs at Ericeira, we were treated to some quality waves. Unexpectedly though, surfing became *almost* secondary on the journey. We enjoyed our immersion in the Portuguese culture. The Escudo was a cheap currency, being spoiled by Portuguese widows in their homely pensions was a welcome change from our subsistent tent-life regime, restaurant food was affordable, and the wicker bottles of vino tinto a bargain. We visited museums, art galleries, universities, cathedrals and castles. We became conscious of the proud Portuguese maritime traditions, developed a taste for the omnipresent grilled sardines, sat mesmerised as the Portuguese Forcados challenged the all black bulls in a rugby style scum at the Grande Corrida and visited the docks in the wee hours of the morning watching the tanned fishers unloading their catch. Portugal was 'es boa como milho'.

15.11   End of Tour: The Last Wave

As a boy, Barry *Baz* Young developed his love for surfing on the waves at Glenelg, South Australia. "I started when *Midget* [Farrelly] won the 1962 Makaha Championships," he recalled during our interview. "There was a photo of him in front of the paper, sitting next to his surfboard and trophies … and I just thought that [surfing] looked like a good thing to do." *Baz* undertook his mission and progressed to realise a wonderful surfing life. "During the '70 s, surfers followed the hippy-type-thing. Polyester shirts, flower power, long hair, rebellion … we didn't really have a surfing identity like the kids today. There was nothing that labelled you as a surfer, other than the fact that you surfed. Those early days were days of discovery." As part of his journey, Barry exited the desert state when he was 27 years old, touring west to chase his destiny as a prominent Cape Crusader.

"Surfing is a healer and it has always been a big part of my life," Barry stated, gratefully recognising his providence. "I often think that only a fraction of a percentage of people on the planet surf! You've got to keep doing it for as long as you can. Now that I've more time on my hands [in retirement], it's a lovely way to fill in my day. Surfing is about accomplishment … and some days I do it better than others [laughs]. But I've learned to accept that situation over the years. You've got to realise that when you're 70, you're not going to surf like you did when you were 40. But some days you get that magic happening," *Baz* grinned. If you're expecting too much of yourself, then you [should] give it away, go and play golf …".

Barry is a surf tourism devotee. His biannual pilgrimages to the remote central Indian Ocean are emblematic of his lifestyle. "When I go to the Maldives, I have sessions when I feel like I surf as well as I can. Surf travel really brings home *why* you're surfing. … it's all about self-gratification. You're searching for those really special days in your life, days that don't happen that often." *Baz* contemplatively paused. "In the Maldives, you are surfing waves that are more perfect than we get

at home. It's offshore all day, and you're surfing in warm water in board shorts … it's the only time when I go surfing three times a day, you're like a grommet [young surfer]. I get five or six really good waves in a session, and on a surf trip, it's just a total joy … it's everything you desire as surfer. That Rip Curl campaign, that cameo about *The Search* … the romantic dream, the perfect wave with no one on it. That stuff gets to the surfing crew. Surfers love the element of discovery—and it's hard finding new places to surf now [deliberation] …but I'm sure they're out there, it just depends how hardcore you want to go in your search, I guess."

15.12 Conclusion: Close-Out Set

Using the Cape Naturaliste surfing group as a paradigm, this chapter investigated the veracity of surfing tribes. As an acephalous group of people, bound by territory, lifestyle, passion and emotion, the *Cape Crusader*s parallel Bennett's (1999) and Hardy et al. (2013) concept of lifestyle defining neo-tribes. Using ethnographic methodology, specifically interview and participant observation method, I have attempted to substantiate this claim, investigating the Cape Naturaliste surfing tribe as a surf-tourism paradigm.

Surf tourism is driven by The Search, a concept originating from the 1960/1970 s pure surf movies and later patently branded and marketed by the *Rip Curl* surf company. Coupled with surfing magazines, these media stimulated a generation of adventuresome surfers to leave the comfort of their tribal homeland, and to travel to exotic destinations chasing the cliché *perfect wave.*

I have drawn on interview data to elaborate the history of surf tourism associated with the Cape Naturaliste tribe, developing the notion that surf tourism led to the genesis of the original surfing tribe—the first surfers to migrate to the region, to live their surfing lifestyle. A contemporary example of this theory was deliberated, considering the relocation of an interviewee, who has permanently emigrated from Cape Naturaliste to Indonesia.

Surf tourism often involves seasonal tribal migration, specifically Cape Naturaliste surfers exiting their tribal performance sites during unpleasant winter ecology, to the tropical climes of Indonesia and the Maldivian archipelago. Resembling animal migrations, such surf-tourism resonates with what Maffesoli (1996, 98) coined as "rituals of evasion".

However, surf tourism extends beyond searching for perfect waves, and avoiding the winter blues. Surf tourism promotes the quest for knowledge, understanding and tolerance, intangible qualities that grow and define 'self'. Using autoethnographic narrative, I have endeavoured to illustrate how surfing and wanderlust can amalgamate, acting as a vehicle to value diverse cultures, and develop gratitude—sometimes seemingly lacking in the contemporary consumer society—for being part of the global surfing culture, but moreover, for being part of a surfing tribe.

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Chapter 16
Offshore Sailing: Subcultures and Neotribes

Jim Macbeth

Abstract Offshore ocean sailing is not for everyone, not even for every sailor! I will take you sailing through ethnography and published research then consider these sailors in the context of neotribes, consumer tribes, brand communities and subcultures. My interest here is epitomized by sailing in the open ocean, offshore, out of sight of land and overnight(s). Some people race around the world, some sail between islands or follow the coast, others take their time sailing from country to country, living life on the ocean full time, a lifestyle. I focus on ocean cruising and ocean racing, both of which I will restrict to offshore. Sociological concepts used to understand our social world are always contested, with tribes, neo-tribes, consumer tribes, brand communities and subcultures being no different. This chapter explores aspects of these concepts as lenses with which to steady our gaze on offshore ocean sailors. I argue that offshore sailors can't be fully understood using the concepts of tribes or neotribes.

Keywords Offshore sailing · Yacht cruising · Yacht racing · Neo-tribe · Consumer tribe · Subculture

16.1 Introduction: The Author and Autoethnography

I grew up in the mountains of British Columbia, far from the sea—and I miss those mountains, the rivers, the boating and snow that goes with them. But, the ocean captured me when I first lived by the ocean as an adult in Australia, but certainly later when I first sailed offshore from Neah Bay in Washington State, USA, to San Diego, California (2200 km).[1] Since that first passage, I've sailed from Hawaii to Tonga (6000 km), from Fremantle (Perth) to Bali and return (twice; 4500 km) and from Sydney to Fremantle in Western Australia where I live (4000 km). I've owned

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[1] I've used kilometres as the most common 'language' as nautical miles is not commonly used outside boating. The figures shown are approximate.

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3 yachts and sailed the current one to Bali and also sailed solo and with crew on the West Coast of Western Australia. These ocean voyages and living aboard in associated anchorages have occurred over almost 40 years. Why am I telling you this? Autoethnography, even ethnography, requires that I give you a sense of how I've experienced offshore sailing. My interest in doing this chapter is because I've sailed oceans and I want to interrogate that experience with the concepts central to this book. This chapter is not about me, but it is informed by my experience, by one of the critically important aspects of my life.

Ethnography and autoethnography underlie the creation of the data central to the analysis in this chapter. I share with Scott (1985) a theoretical belief that an ethnographer can and should learn about and within their own experience. Scott asserts that "in reporting the results of his [sic] research, he should include enough about himself so that others may assess the effects that he, as an individual, had on the material collected and on the analysis of those materials" (Scott 1985: 3). Such autoethnography underpins this chapter, as it does for Brown (2017) and for Buckley (2012). The approach of these two authors, Brown and Buckley, is inspiring for a 'sailor/scholar' (Brown 2017: 686) such as myself, a reaffirming process of my approach to much of my research. In relation to offshore sailing, I have always been embedded in scholarly endeavours; in relation to certain scholarly endeavours, I have always been embedded in ocean sailing, usually offshore. And, it is very clear to me, as it is to Brown, that my identity as an offshore sailor is contested, not only by others but within my own self-concept.

A key aspect of offshore sailing is each sailor's enskilment, a process of being embedded in the 'skill set', of *becoming* skilled, always becoming (Brown 2017). But, lest the reader assume this enskilment is all about physical and knowledge skills, be clear that it is also about a sense of identity, of self, the body, the emotions and commitment. My identity as a sailor also leads on to the idea that...

> [b]eing in or on the sea attends to the whole body, not the (un)consciousness in isolation but the whole of the corporeal body: mind, senses, their inter-relatedness and particular embodied relationship with the sea. (Humberstone 2016: 28–9)

Thus, it is also about a sense of identity, of self, the body, the emotions and commitment. I talk about being a 'sailor' but as I work with these thoughts I think my identity is tied up with being an 'offshore sailor'. My body has to learn to move with the motion of the ocean-traversing yacht—it is always moving when afloat, always! My body has to move with the boat, has to learn to expect unexpected movements, to be safe when nothing stands still. At sea my emotions range from 'why am I out here' to awe at the full-moon rise as the sun sets. Underlying Brown and Humberstone's book (2016) is this embodied experience. I suspect that all mariners share this embodied relationship to the sea, certainly offshore racing and cruising sailors do.

My offshore sailing experience is primarily 'cruising' because little of it involved competition, none of it was racing as a skipper. I have done some ocean racing, but what I would call coastal ocean racing. Entering the Bali Rally in my yacht did involve significant aspects of offshore racing because the Rally that year was run

under the same safety code as for the racing yachts. These rules have to be followed to enter and include life rafts, storm sails, safety harnesses and life jackets, personal EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon), hatch restraints, emergency rudders, yacht stability requirements, fire extinguishers, flares and qualifying sailing experience (of the crew). Add to all that First Aid Certificates and kits, Sea Safety Survival qualifications—and the list goes on.

As any reader will know, there are a multitude of types of sailing, let alone types of sailboats. From dinghy sailing in rivers and lakes to sailing around the world, there are many ways to interrogate sailing. My interest here is the specialized sailing epitomized by sailing on the open ocean, offshore, out of sight of land and overnight(s). Some people race around the world, some sail between islands or follow the coast, others take their time sailing from country to country, living life on the ocean full time, a lifestyle. I focus on ocean cruising and ocean racing, both of which I will restrict to offshore.

This introduction has been about orienting the reader. But, it is also the initial foray into the ethnography of offshore sailing, can I say, embodying the reader in this 'paper' ocean. The next section builds a sequence from offshore sailing in general through to cruising and racing. Later, I will illustrate why the concepts of neotribes and consumer tribes are problematic to deal with offshore sailing.

16.2 Racing and Cruising Offshore

16.2.1 Offshore Sailing

Let's go first to a consideration of 'offshore' sailing as both groups, racers and cruisers, mention the ocean experience. To quote from one of my informants, a globe-girdling[2] offshore racing skipper:

> I just love being out on the ocean, nothing else matters out there, it's just you and the elements. It takes a few days to get into the groove .., so the longer passages give you more time to shake off the land and just be. (Macbeth 2019: R720m[3])

Offshore sailing is literally that, sailing in the open ocean, usually out of sight of land and often across entire oceans, between continents, and certainly night sailing. The differences between offshore sailing and inshore, river and lake sailing are significant in terms of the nature of the activity, commitment, equipment and lifestyle.

Being an offshore sailor is more than the ocean. It is also about harbours and bays, about hurricane holes, wind and waves, birds and sea creatures, clouds, phases of the moon, sunset and sunrise, comradery and teamwork, fear and satisfaction, injury

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[2]The phrase 'globe-girdling' is used in sailing discussions.

[3]Rxxx refers to racing sailors conversation number. The date shown is date of interview or, if author shown, date of publication. Some of the recent racing skippers made written comments. Likewise, Cxxx refers to cruisers, with date. Gender indicated, if available, by m and f.

and health and life goals. Crossing oceans tells us something about ourselves and others, that gives us a perspective on the land, cities, towns, farms and mountains.

> For a few people, [offshore] sailing and the activities surrounding it [dominate or are] their whole life, a life of hardship and insecurity, counterbalanced by powerful intrinsic rewards…. At its best, [offshore sailing] is a life with freedom and constant challenges, a life where results follow efforts and where one is confirmed existentially simply by surviving. At its worst it is uncomfortable, insecure and sometimes frightening! Life is dominated by the ultimate logic of nature where each element of existence flows and merges with each other element. The life of [an offshore] sailor is one of total and holistic involvement with the processes of living and being, especially while at sea on extended passages. (Macbeth 1992: C320)

This quotation is from my study of offshore cruising but offshore racing sailors express much the same feelings about sailing offshore.

> Broad horizons, sense of self-reliance, freedom and most of all the beauty of only having to do one thing – maintain the safety and efficiency of your vessel. This frees the mind to a single purpose which is a remarkable relief in our busy, multi tasked modern world. Long passages [have the] rhythm of the weather and watch systems. (Macbeth 2019: R722m)

16.2.2   Cruisers

Offshore cruising is not a unitary concept, although, whether long-term or short-term, it is about sailing offshore. In my previous research I worked only with cruisers who had already been away from their home port for a minimum of 18 months with no immediate plan to return 'home'; most were interviewed in various Pacific island countries (Macbeth 1985, 1988, 1992, 2000). While writing this chapter, I was at separate presentations by two long-term cruising couples, one has been gone for 5 years and the other for 4 (expecting another 10); neither has their boat back in Fremantle, which they each consider home. The latter couple has to earn further funds to be able to return to the ocean and is presently working in London, England. Many cruisers have skills that are in demand in other countries and set off cruising with that in mind.

Since I undertook my original research in the early 1980s, I've found little research has been done and, in fact, my papers and thesis are cited in the more recent work. I mention this because I will use some of my original findings (see quote above) to illustrate aspects of cruising and racing before grappling with neotribes. I might add that my previous research was also ethnographic and involved participation in both cruising and racing offshore.

People go cruising on small yachts for a complex of reasons although my research suggests there is a duality such that the initial time cruising is dominated by a desire to escape contemporary western society. But, in parallel, there is a search for a better life and it is this creative search that dominates longer-term offshore sailing; again a duality, critical and creative. In tourism, there is often reference to push and pull factors and for cruisers, push is dominant in the departure stage while pull dominates

Table 16.1 Why cruise?

	Departure stage	Commitment stage
1	Escapist, fleeing, going from	Going to, searching
2	Disaffected	Satisfied
3	'Because' motives dominant	'In-order-to motives' dominant
4	Security based on external world	Security based on internal world, on self
5	Work ethic dominant	Work ethic not dominant
6	Stereotyped, mythical	Realistic
7	Imitative	Designing, building, creating
8	Simplistic view	Complex view
9	Activity focus	Lifestyle or holistic focus
10	Unknown/unknowing/ignorant/vague	Known/definable/concrete
11	Implicit	Explicit

Source Macbeth (1985: 117)
Note This is not a ranking list

later. This duality of escape/search can be shown in relation to the departure stage and the commitment stage, the latter being after 18 months in my research. Table 16.1 illustrates this in detail.

For some sailors, destinations are central while for others the passage-making is a key objective. Crucial to my argument is that cruising long-term is autotelic; using Csikszentmihalyi's concepts, it is undertaken for its intrinsic value (1974, 1975). Most participants of high adventure activities do it for the intrinsic rewards and offshore cruising sailors are undertaking a high adventure activity. Freedom is a theme in this research. The works by Brown (2017), Jennings (1999, 2005), Buckley (2012), Lusby and Anderson (2008, 2010), Lusby et al. (2012, 2015) provide other, and consistent, analyses.

Carolin Lusby and her colleagues have been the key researchers in this area in the last 20 years and their research confirms earlier studies about cruisers: their 'boating' is not just a recreational activity on weekends but a lifestyle. They make a "conscious decision to quit their land-based life … [and] they liveaboard full time [and] are constantly on the move" (Lusby and Anderson 2010: 85). My research also found that cruising "is intellectually, emotionally and physically challenging, it requires constant problem solving; it is freely engaged in; there is a sense of personal control; and there are no extrinsic rewards of consequence" (Macbeth 1985: 253). This makes cruising an autotelic lifestyle, "one that represents an attempt to restructure everyday life activities into a continuous flow experience" (Macbeth 1988: 214).

Offshore cruisers prioritise the activity itself, the pattern, the world it provides while developing the skills needed for the lifestyle. They believe that to succeed in the lifestyle, cruisers need to be adaptable, self-reliant, resourceful and self-sufficient. But, they also need to be hazard conscious, adventurous and disciplined. People cruise for the lifestyle, that is, the life itself, and for intrinsic reasons.

I have argued previously (Macbeth 2000) that cruisers can be understood as utopian tourists; they are tourists because they are visitors. In the words of one of the most accomplished circumnavigating cruisers of his time, British Eric Hiscock (1959: IX)...[4]

> ...all small-boat voyagers have two things in common: a love of freedom – for they can go where they will almost unhampered by rules or restrictions, except those which are part of the seaman's lore – and a desire to pit their skill, wits and courage against the oceans in every mood. The mainspring of this activity is, I believe, not the desire to be well thought of by others, but the desire to think well of oneself.

Before I move on to the racers, John Urry's romantic gaze fits cruisers: "the emphasis is upon solitude, privacy and a personal semi-spiritual relationship with …" the sea and its coastlines (Urry 1990: 45).

To conclude this section on cruising, when, in 2019, hurricane Dorian devastated the Bahamas, the tragedy brought out the best in all sorts of people, including cruisers. An example of how the subculture of yacht cruising works together appeared in the *Cruisers Forum* on September 7, 2019.[5] *Palarran* posted a call for rebuilding help for the Bahamas.[6]

> I've been thinking today about how to help the people affected by Hurricane Dorian. Giving money right now helps get some immediate assistance but afterwards they are going to need some long term help rebuilding.[7]

There was so much interest in this initiative that the US Coast Guard posted on Facebook guidelines for yachties thinking of going to help, guidelines about safety, damaged navigational aids, sunken hazards and so forth.

16.2.3 Racers

Offshore racing can include, *inter alia,* such races as the Fastnet (1100 km; UK), Sydney/Hobart (1200 km; Australia), Transpac (4000 km; USA), Vic-Maui Yacht Race (4000 + km; Canada), and San Fernando (900 km; Hong Kong to the Philippines). That list includes only point to point races on fully crewed yachts, some with up to 20 crew members, some professional sailors. But, there are also a number of round the world races, including the Clipper Round the World race series and the

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[4]Now, to be fair, Eric and Susan did the sailing, not just Eric. The Wikipedia entry is entitled 'Eric and Susan Hiscock'. They did their first circumnavigation in the early 1950s in their 30ft/9.1 m sloop *Wanderer III*, did three circumnavigations. Eric died in NZ aboard *Wanderer V*, age 78.

[5]For example: *Seven* Seas Cruising Association has a few posts on Facebook every day; *Cruisers Forum: Cruising boats, Cruising People, Cruising Answers'* postings include a daily email list of active topics linked to a webpage.

[6]Most members of the Forum use a pseudonym.

[7]https://www.cruisersforum.com/forums/f158/bahamas-hurricane-relief-by-cruisers-223455.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+cruisersforumnews+%28Cruisers+Forum+-+Emails%29

Table 16.2 Why race?

1	The crew as a team; comradery
2	Adventure; challenge; exhilaration of sailing
3	Competition; satisfaction with completion of a task
4	On the ocean; away from everyday life
5	Satisfaction of sailing the boat well
6	Tactics, navigation, racing routine
7	Business; testing gear and designs; advising clients
8	Winning
9	Preparation; planning

Source Macbeth (1985: 442)
Note This list represents a ranking of responses based on frequency of mention in interviews

Volvo Ocean Race, both of which are fully crewed and with ports of call. Offshore round the world racing also encompasses solo racing, including the Vendee Globe[8] (France) and the Golden Globe Race (Tonga/France), both of which are solo. Then there is the two handed Melbourne to Osaka Cup (10000 km Australia to Japan). As a sailor and ethnographer, I've recently spent time with sailors who have competed in the Clipper Race and the Melbourne to Osaka Cup. Others I know have sailed multiple Sydney to Hobart races and multiple Fremantle to Bali races.

I undertook my original research with offshore racing sailors through in-depth interviews in two countries and with some participant observation (Macbeth 1985). My respondents were amateurs, not sponsored or paid. I asked them why they race and Table 16.2 outlines the responses.

I've also supplemented some of my earlier research by undertaking conversations and emails with contemporary racing sailors. Winning is not the answer to the question 'why ocean race?' because 'the ocean' sometimes is first. One of my fellow skippers affirmed his competitive nature but went on to explain that he sails long distance on the ocean because of the challenge of the unpredictability of the weather, the currents and the seas.

> Long ocean passages are just a little more unpredictable weather wise, not knowing. That's part of the deal in my view. They're the sorts of things that happen in long ocean passages. Fantastic. (Macbeth 2019: R721m)

Let me return to competition. It is important for at least three reasons. First, finishing a race well is rewarding. Second, skill: racing requires tuning the boat and

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[8]As I write this, "*[y]oung Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg has chosen to sail to the United Nations Climate Conference, which took place in New York in September 2019, aboard* Malizia*, the IMOCA of the Yacht Club of Monaco which is skippered by Boris Herrmann. The passage which is designed to highlight the problems of climate change is in keeping with the fundamental philosophy of the Malizia team which is led by Herrmann and Monaco's Pierre Casiraghi.*" https://www.vendeeglobe.org/en/ Accessed September 4, 2019. The IMOCA Open 60 is a Vendee Globe class yacht. This was not a race.

its sails, getting optimum trim and balance (throughout the race). Third, as we all know, many people like to compete and they often want to 'win'. Racing has both intrinsic rewards and the extrinsic reward of a trophy or a flag, usually little if any prize money.

> I like the competitiveness and the complexity – it's like a chess game where the pieces get up and walk around of their own volition. (Macbeth 1985: R710)

> [Why do I compete?] I guess that's just the sort of person I am. *Cl*ipper made it just that much better to sail around the world. I'm competitive by nature. If you are going from A to B you may as well be racing. Racing gives sailing an extra dimension. A race just gives that extra, something to think about. (Macbeth 2019: R721f)

But, most important for this book is that the 'membership' of 'offshore racing' is not ephemeral, is not for image, it is for the experience. That is not to deny the 'glamour' and 'notoriety' that is attached to serious offshore racing, but that is not what holds the subculture together. This issue of a 'fraternity' is evident when simply watching racing sailors and is international:

> If for no other reasons there has been a relationship with a team of people; there is a friendship, a relationship that is everlasting because you undergo conditions in which you are subject to danger. The minute you do that you recognise that you depend on each other and so share something deeper. (Macbeth 1985: R717)

> There is a fraternity as such of like-minded people who have done similar things. (Macbeth 2019: R721m)

I will finish this section on racing with a diary note I took after an 'offshore' race. I was a crew member with 6 other crew on a race that stretched over two nights and days.

> Sailed in beautiful weather, especially at night, with the moon lighting up the ocean. We were in front at dawn Saturday but wind conditions left us 5th, I think, across the line last night at 0315 in Bather's Bay just off the beach. I'm very glad I did this because of how much it showed me how differently racing sailors approach sailing to cruising and leisure sailors. The passion for getting every last bit of speed is quite incredible. The attention to detail and the willingness to change sails for very short distances just to get a slight advantage is obvious. Teamwork and comradery, laughing and joking and sitting on the rail are all part of the adventure. Given my previous experience and research, I have no reason to think this boat is any different. There was a barbacue at Fremantle Sailing Club after the race that would have been going since the first boats came in a few hours before us. So, the comradery between teams was also really obvious - there is a strong sense of sharing a world between racing sailors. This is what subcultures are about in many ways. (Macbeth 2019)

This diary note is auto-ethnography but is obviously built on both immediate experience and the comments by my other informants about offshore racing. For example, this comment from the skipper of a fully crewed ocean racing yacht, racing around the world:

> But, it can get boring day in and day out if there is no tacking or gybing needed. So the hard part is to keep motivated and the crew motivated and keep the boat going fast. Sometimes it is just so beautiful sunsets sunrises, the wild life, so you just have to enjoy it. When we have a good position report it feels great. It's also awesome when the crew do evolutions, that is, sail changes or reefs and it is perfect. (Macbeth 2019: R720f)

16.3 Tribes, with and Without the 'Neo'

I decided to start with the word 'tribe'. Lienhardt (1966: 56) suggests that "[i]n most anthropological writings now, 'tribe' is used to mean a major political and territorial division of a larger, loosely organised cultural and ethnic group, a people or nation". Fundamentally, they are seen as "a political community." This does suggest some form of identity. That said, Salazar (2013), while critical of tourism anthropology, clearly uses the word 'tribe' to refer to identifiable people who would fit the definitions below. Salazar's paper begins with the Jarawa tribe on the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean, although he does refer to tribes in Africa, as well as a discussion around 'lost tribes'. Salazar also uses the term "native life" (p. 671). Carod-Artal et al. (2007) even use the word tribe in their title. Gulliver's Introduction (2004; 1969) acknowledges the variety of uses of the word tribe but confirms the essential character as discussed here. Lewis (1976: 354) notes:

> The term thus referred to distinctive cultural entities, whose members spoke the same language or dialect and generally lived in a common territory; they might or might not acknowledge the authority of a single chief and so form a political as well as a cultural unit.

How the word tribe was and is used in anthropology gives us the following identifiers: political, territorial divisions; Political community, probably a central authority; Ethnic and cultural commonalities; Common language or dialect.

> I think of the tribes I encountered in the media of my childhood. These tribes could be either Native Americans or the tribes of Africa. Certainly, to me, a component of this type of tribe was the interdependence among members of these groups. They were often isolated by factors such as geography, … and dress, and differed from other tribes or larger groups in terms of religion, housing, and worldview. (Parker 2008: 2)

My point is that the word tribe seems to be used consistently in anthropology in much the same way over the millennia. How we get from this to the use of the word 'tribe' in the concept of 'neotribe' is anyone's guess, except Michel Maffesoli. Just a yearning for a 'lost' past, lost meaning?

The 'stability' of a 'group' (for want of a better term here) is ironic in that Cova and Cova (2001: 67) portray tribes as unstable, hardly a way we characterise tribes in history where stability and strong commitments were paramount in understanding how they functioned and why tribes were often in conflict with other tribes (cf Native American 'Indians'). This comment is part of my concern that the adoption for this 'neotribe' purpose of the term 'tribe' is historically and anthropologically inaccurate. In this context, Cova and Cova migrate the concept of tribe from the archaic (their term) into the postmodern, with specific differences, including that they are temporary and only part of life. In the postmodern context, the individual can 'belong' to more than one tribe, with conceptual boundaries, not physical ones. Shared feelings and signs, not kinship and dialect, are defining features. As they are not totalising, postmodern people can belong not only to multiple tribes but can live a 'normal life' as well (2002: 599).

Davidov and Andersen (2008: 21) believe "[t]he term 'tribe' is a ticklish one for anthropologists, and one ensconced in layers of its own semiotic mythologies."

They continue by outlining some of the discussions about colonial influences and contemporary use of the word tribe by various indigenous groups.

> All this is to say that with intentionality becoming a dominant aspect of affiliations that fall in the category of a "tribe," that category shifts from a descriptive framework enabling the naturalizing of constellations of social relationships and interactions by an outside (colonial, ethnographic) gaze to an actively chosen discourse that simultaneously signifies and reproduces formative/emphasized aspects of personhood. (2008: 22)

It is with this intentionality, and they add agency, that Davidov and Andersen move on to contemporary tribes that are not simply colonial, for example. Their tribes are what Maffesoli, the Covas, and others like to call neotribes.

Adams and Smith (2008a) prefer the word tribes to the word neotribes while seeing the two terms as representing the same thing, which seems odd, given the above. To some degree the approach of Adams and Smith (2008a) to e-tribes reinforces this notion of agency, of a search for, or in their case a reaction to, the individualism and fragmentation of industrial society.

> These heterogeneous fragments come in the shape of electronic tribes. Even though they are not tribes in the traditional anthropological signification of primitive arcadian congeries, they are nonetheless social aggregations that closely approximate the sense of community of the tribe. (Adams and Smith 2008b: 18)

While these 'fragments' share a praxis, they also "form, disband, and re-form as something else, reflecting the perpetually transforming and kaleidoscopic character of postmodern identities" (Adams and Smith 2008b: 18). Contrast the e-tribes, which seem to have stability, to Cova and Cova's characterising of neo-tribes as ephemeral, having a short lifespan (2001: 68). Davidov and Andersen explore aspects of the tribalism that includes resistance and reflects a utopian outlook and dream; we come full circle to long-term, offshore cruisers. But, first, what about neo- and consumer tribes?

The following section explores the underlying concepts of neotribalism, ignoring for the most part a concern for consumer neotribalism. Maffesoli's (2016: 742) polemic explores, in part, why researchers should embrace the concepts of 'tribes' in modern society, well parts of society (eg white males). But, Maffesoli's book (1996) is, of course, a much more measured theoretical discussion supporting a chapter on tribalism. Now, consider his.

> three great characteristics of the tribal phenomenon,…the importance of the territory in which the tribe finds itself; the sharing of common tastes; and the return of the eternal child. All three are paradigmatic of the feeling of belonging which is both the cause and effect of tribalism" (2016: 742).

As you would expect, Maffesoli's book contains a much more thorough conceptualisation. I do like his phrase "there is sometimes a participation in the life and in the *world of the other* as different communities interact amongst themselves" (2016: 746).

Cova and Cova (2002:595) wrote their paper in a very specific context and from a very specific intellectual perspective, that of the Latin School of Societing [sic].

They contrast this with the 'Northern approaches' to marketing. In using the Latin approach to re-invigorating marketing (i.e. tribalism), Cova and Cova's paper aims at "re-socialising people more than liberating them" (p. 596). The irony in their 'marketing' objective and morality is their complete antithesis to the objectives of offshore sailing, especially cruising, to be free of such 'external' socialising forces. That is not to say there is not a social world to which they belong, but, arguably, this is not about being re-socialised. Saying this is to accept the Northern focus on individualism, liberation and the right to liberty. Now, another aspect of their analysis, or should I say underlying approach, is the use of the word 'tribe' to refer to a 'quasi-archaic' (p. 597) notion of social order. They conceptualise neotribes as without central authority, counter to institutional power and that the attraction is not rational and modern but to "locality, kinship, emotion and passion" (p597). But, in the final analysis, their work is about marketing, thus, their development of the concept of neotribe is from the perspective of marketing and consumption. While all people consume, the consumption of, for example, equipment for an ocean going yacht is not about marketing (in the way neotribes are used) so much as about function and reputation. Everything has to work and has to serve an offshore purpose. One of my informants wrote about equipment:

> So overall I'd say the criteria are (in decreasing order of importance): fitness for purpose; quality (including country of design and manufacture); ease of use; ease of maintenance; lifetime; cost (Macbeth 2019: C101m)

These papers put neotribes into a consumer marketing framework. At the same time, Hardy and Robards (2015) comment on the decline of subculture theory, or should I say the rise of neotribes as a concept (theory?). This decline arose as post-modern theorists were arguing that subculture theory was too bound up in homogenous groups to represent the developing patterns of behaviour and groupings in what is termed a post-subcultural world (see, Hardy and Robards 2015: 444). What I believe this misses is that sub-culture theory itself isn't or wasn't the problem, only the researchers working with it; they became too narrow and focussed on 'deviant' behaviour and homogenous groups, especially youth groups. A few years earlier, I published a paper showing a subculture that was not homogenous (class, income, etc.) nor geographically located but which could be defined as a subculture based on shared praxis and shared, if not uniform, ideology (Macbeth 1992). As I show in this paper, subcultures and neotribes are not simply binary opposites.

Hardy and Robards' (2015) first paragraph can be seen as an outline of subculture identification; yet they are referring specifically to tourists only and within the context of segmentation. But, their use of neotribe to describe "recreational vehicle users (RVers) as a mobile, somewhat ephemeral, ritual-oriented group of tourists" (2015: 444) is conceptually unrelated to traditional tribes. This again pits offshore sailors as a subculture vs RVers as ephemeral tourists. With them, I agree that socio-economic status does not *define* offshore sailors because "the ties that bind diverse individuals from different backgrounds together center around fellowship, shared sentiment and … behaviour" (Hardy and Robards 2015: 444). I removed the word rituals from this quote on the basis that most of what happens in an anchorage or marina is about

skilled tasks, not rituals. If you call being sociable a 'ritual', of course there are rituals; but, they are not the core feature of having a yacht safely in an anchorage.

Hardy and Robards (2015: 446) suggest the concept of neotribes is necessary to *replace* subculture theory as the latter can't cope with people belonging to multiple subcultures. This seems a bit odd to me given that people can belong simultaneously to a church, a political party or a commune, each of which can be analysed using subculture theory and each of which can be quite different. However, a more nuanced approach would see people within a subculture also 'belonging' to multiple neotribes and probably moving in and out of various neotribes while maintaining the subcultural identity. Similarly, there could be neotribe identity within a context, such as offshore sailing, where the concept of neotribe could be used to conceptually understand temporary identification with the activity of offshore sailing.

Stratton and Northcote (2014: 496) make a useful distinction 'between the concepts of neotribe and brand community [as] best understood as the distinction between a social grouping (akin to a tribe) and a cultural grouping (akin to a subculture)'. Their analysis is about 'brands' which might better be referred to as 'Brands', from BMWs to Calvin Klein, while in sailing we can see brand communities around yacht manufacturers (eg. Oyster; Jeanneau) or designers (eg. Herreshoff; Farr). However, these are not defining features in offshore cruising although brands are stronger in offshore racing. Some offshore racing is dominated by 'one-design' rules such as "the IMOCA 60 ('Open 60'), …a class of advanced monohull sailing yacht[s] administered by the International Monohull Open Class Association (IMOCA). It is dominant in single and double handed ocean racing." (Wikipedia accessed September 5, 2019).[9]

Hardy and Robards agree with the Covas (2002: 602) that modern tribes are "networks of heterogeneous persons…linked by a shared passion …[and] are not simple consumers, they are also advocates". This sounds like subcultures given I've argued previously that subcultures need not be contiguous, geographic or class based, they are ideological and have a shared praxis (Macbeth 1992). I am aware that researchers such as Bennett (1999) present a serious critique of subculture theory in a postmodern context.

I suggest that offshore sailors are neither a consumer tribe (Cova and Cova 2001) nor a brand community (Stratton and Northcote 2014) as the overall defining feature. Brand communities exist because the Brand exists; subcultures continue to exist because of their shared praxis and ideology(s). In particular, Cova and Cova (2001: 67) add that "[t]hus, to satisfy their desire for communion, consumers seek products and services less for their use value than for what is called their 'linking value'". This is just not how offshore sailors think about their boats and equipment. Further, the Covas suggest that "[t]he tribe metaphor is used to depict the dynamics of our societies while stressing their relation to the premodern era and their difference from the modern one." (Cova and Cova 2001: 68). Ironically, I would argue that

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[9]Neither 'one-design' nor IMOCA are brands in the way that manufacturers would use the term brand. They are a class of boat based on certain 'measurement rules'.

offshore sailors have shared the same characteristics since the famous Joshua Slocum circumnavigated the world in 1898, solo.

The Covas' concept of neotribes is complex. While here we see that "…tribal membership does not involve set personality traits or the same values…[while at the same time] "[a] tribe is defined as a network of heterogeneous persons—in terms of age, sex, income, etc.- who are interlinked by a shared passion or emotion" (Cova and Cova 2001: 69). In their terms mainstream tribes such as Mustang or MG owners simply gather around a cult object. The context is all about the display value, the consumption, not the ideology, skills or the 'search' of the long-term cruisers. As noted earlier, in the Covas' thinking, it's also about marketing, the 'linking value' of consumer choices in the tribe context (p. 70).[10]

Hardy and Robards (2015: 444) continue to be useful in helping us show that offshore sailors are not part of a neotribe, while "recreational vehicle users …[are] a mobile, somewhat ephemeral, ritual oriented group…". For example, they suggest that neotribes use 'rituals' to "confirm a group's view of itself" (2015: 445). Offshore sailors don't need rituals for this, in fact a ritual would not be enough—they cross oceans to confirm their membership of a group.[11] It is not a sign or a signifier ("such as goods which may be consumed") but an actual activity that is part of this confirmation. This is not consumption. Status is earned, not displayed.

Hardy and Robarts (2015: 446) go on to discuss marketing theory as it shifts to viewing consumers "within a broader societal context [who] consume in order to use and link them to things and people" (their emphasis). Of course, offshore sailors do consume and there are many products that they need and for which there is plenty of marketing, including sponsorship and advertising. But, in my view this does not lead to the conclusion that offshore sailors are consumer tribes, partly because purchasing by all offshore sailors is primarily about functionality, not fashion' I argue, with one of my reviewers that there are limited collective identity influences on offshore sailors' buying behaviour A comment on what to buy by two racing skippers:

> For Osaka, I added electric winches and put in a gen set. *Needed more power for long trip - purely functional*. Also put in satellite dome and computer programs for data and weather routing. You buy what you need for your boat. The gen set was purchased because [this model was] light and efficient. (Macbeth 2019: R721)

> The preparation is intense, making critical decisions on minimal information and always at great expense with serious consequences. [Just before the Osaka race] I had to redo my stability incline test, just when I was in the process of loading my boat, and resit the survival at sea exam to demonstrate my professional quals covered the yachtie requirements. (Macbeth 2019: R722)

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[10]Some years ago, I had considerable experience with the MG car culture. Especially when restoration was involved, skill and determination were recognised as much as the 'display'. Note the relevance of brand communities here. The Covas underestimate the depth of involvement in this aspect of the car culture. Similarly, Hardy and Robards as quoted in the next paragraph have not sufficiently nuanced the culture of road and desert travel.

[11]I personally experienced this in my research. Crossing oceans and living in anchorages allowed me 'in' to the subculture to do the research.

'Serious consequences' are about problems at sea, including death being possible when gear fails or crew members make a mistake. That said, there is evidence from the recent Golden Globe Race (GGR) solo round the world race that one or more skippers accepted sponsored wind self-steering apparatus that were not strong enough for sustained sailing in a round-the-world race. The skippers were forced to withdraw.

Hardy, Bennett and Robards (2018) wrestled with the task of structuring their edited book, recognising that early conceptualisations of neotribes were defined with the following characteristics:

> fluidity of membership; the fleeting and ephemeral nature of neo-tribes; neo-tribal belonging; tribal dynamics; and the performative characteristics of neo-tribes, including rituals, symbolism and the use of space and place. (p. 6)

Pulling together the characteristics of neotribes from the literature already cited is a set of characteristics not inconsistent with Weiler and Firth's chapter in this book. However, items 1, 5 and 8 clearly do not describe offshore sailors and clearly show that offshore sailing is not a neotribe.

1. Ephemeral
2. Fluid membership, yet interdependence; belong to more than one neotribe
3. Narrowly focused network of shared interests, passions, activities
4. Evidence of agency; reaction to social fragmentation
5. Socialisation, not liberation.[12]
6. Consume symbols, fashion, dress code; minor concern for function; performative
7. Sense of community
8. Not lifestyle; part of life only; no central authority
9. May be no age boundary.[13]

It is time to go sailing, to undertake a passage, as sailors call an ocean crossing. I have sent you sailing on the ocean and then dragged you into a theoretical discussion that is more like a dragging anchor (you never know where it will take you) than being berthed in a secure marina. Neotribe, as a concept is inadequate, is a dragging anchor in the context of offshore ocean sailing.

16.4 Passage-Making to Conclude

I argue that the difference in physicality between offshore sailors and neotribes (and other sailors) is a distinction worth keeping in mind. Thus, there are still questions about applying the neotribe label to subcultures in offshore sailing. Further, I argue that the defining feature of neotribe is its fleeting nature, it has no core of meaning, maybe even no sense of self.

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[12]This is not to underestimate the social dimension, as opposed to socialisation.

[13]A reviewer adds 'being an optimist'. See the CruisersForum at https://www.cruisersforum.com/forums/f2/essential-personal-qualities-of-offshore-sailors-30179.html.

The concept of neotribes seems, to me, to bear no relationship to the original and continuing anthropological concept of a tribe. Similarly, neither tribe, neotribe nor consumer tribe as concepts theoretically define offshore sailing. Maybe this chapter is in the wrong book? That said, one of the interesting aspects of Adams and Smith's discussion of e-tribes is the expression of community in e-tribes. This is also obvious in the sense of community among offshore sailors, including online in various global sailing forums. While I was writing this chapter, 'maxingout' started a thread *Essential Personal Qualities Of Offshore Sailors.* To summarise the resulting narrative, consider the key words: mental toughness and zero ambivalence; lunacy, denial and no fear of mortality; patience, prudence, perseverance, preparation; an optimistic pessimist; a skilled sailor; a higher than average tolerance for discomfort; a sense of humour.[14]

But, to finish this chapter I want you to forget labels like tribes and subcultures because what offshore sailing is really about is the experience itself, challenge and enjoyment. The people in this chapter don't sail for money, for extrinsic rewards as the key motivation, although competition plays an important role in racing. Csikszentmihalyi's (1974, 1975, 1992) elements of flow tell us a lot about why offshore sailing is autotelic, done for its own reward and why 'tribes' are beside the point. These elements are (1992: 48–67):

A challenging activity that requires skills

The merging of action and awareness

Clear goals and feedback

Concentration on the task at hand

The paradox of control

The loss of self-consciousness

The transformation of time

The autotelic experience

In the end, mixing the metaphors, I want to anchor this chapter with the experience of the open ocean, out of sight of land, with or without human company, but certainly close to nature in all its variations. It doesn't matter to offshore sailors whether we see them as members of tribes or subcultures, they understand their place with the ocean and with other offshore sailors. Yes, racing and cruising sailors experience the ocean in different ways, but they experience the *same* ocean, one that can caress or beat you, that can be benign or angry, and everything in between.

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Dean MacCannell's book *Empty Meeting Grounds* (1992) has always fascinated me, if for no other reason than the title is so evocative of issues in tourism. Is the title a metaphor for the 'meeting' of tourists with 'natives', a place empty of meaning

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[14]https://www.cruisersforum.com/forums/f2/essential-personal-qualities-of-offshore-sailors-30179.html.

and empty of a meeting of the minds and experiences of tourists and locals? viz in *Cannibal Tours (1987)*, the (in)famous film by Dennis O'Rourke? Or, is the title about a place where people of different cultures and lifestyle can meet to exchange meaning? It is not my place to pass judgement on offshore sailors or neotribes but only to ask that you think about empty meeting grounds in considering the concepts in this chapter, in this book.

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Part III
Conclusion

Chapter 17
Tribes in Tourism: A Socio-Cultural Perspective on Special Interest Tourism Consumption

Michael Volgger, Christof Pforr, and Ross Dowling

Abstract This chapter discusses benefits of adopting a sociological angle to better understand social processes and structures that underpin tourism consumption. It more specifically argues that the study of special interest tourism can benefit from a perspective that embraces collectives as units of analysis. The chapter concludes by suggesting advantages of examining special interest tourism from the perspective of consumer tribes or neo-tribes.

17.1   A Plea for a Community Angle

"As an area of study … psychology is predominantly focussed at the individual level" (Pearce and Packer 2013, p. 386). Theories and methodological approaches stemming from the discipline of psychology, and their prevailing focus on the individual tourist, have had a lasting impact on more recent research in tourism. The formal disciplinary training of tourism scholars plays a secondary role (see Pearce and Packer 2013). It is more convincing to associate the strong influence of psychology on tourism research with the popularity and relevance of marketing-related thinking in tourism theory and practice. While mainstream psychological thought dominating marketing has a long tradition (Peter 1982), tourism research has not always been characterised by such a uniform disciplinary borrowing (see e.g. early writings of Jafari 1979; Smith 1977). With the exception of geographical and economic perspectives, anthropological, sociological, political science and management approaches appear to have lost influence on tourism research discourses compared to earlier years and decades.

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It is conceivable that the often-acclaimed individualisation of consumption (Cova and Cova 2002), or "the continuously increasing diversity of leisure interests of the late-modern leisure society" (Trauer 2006, p. 183) are drivers behind such a strong 'psychologisation' (read mostly as 'individualisation')[1] of tourism research. To be clear: Highlighting this 'psychologisation' of tourism research is not by any means to deny the importance and contribution of psychologically inspired work to advance knowledge in the tourism domain. However, this is to suggest that the analysis of many tourism phenomena will benefit from complementing individualistic investigations with a stronger consideration of social processes and with an increased embracement of collectives as units of analysis.

Among these tourism phenomena is what with different accentuation has been called either 'special interest tourism' (SIT) (Weiler and Hall 1992; see Weiler and Firth, Chap. 2) or 'niche tourism' (Novelli 2005). Both concepts aspire to capture specialised interest-based tourism phenomena separate from the generalist mainstream, such as geotourism (Page and Dowling 2001; Dowling et al., Chap. 9), cycling tourism (Ritchie 1998; Volgger and Demetz, Chap. 12) or bird-watching tourism (Higham 1998; Steven et al., Chap. 8), to cite a few. Following mostly a critical paradigm, 'niche tourism' arguably aims at denoting forms of tourism attracting relatively smaller quantities of people and thus being differentiable from the often rejected 'mass tourism' (Novelli 2005, p. 5). In contrast, the concept of "special interest tourism" seems to be a more direct result of the above-mentioned psychologisation of tourism research: The individual ('special') interest, that is the motivation to participate in a specific activity, is highlighted as a guiding force in travel decision-making. For example, the golf tourist is identified by their interest in playing golf when making travel decisions or being on vacation (Garcia Mestanza and Svendsen Maza 2015). While there are differences in emphasis, both the 'niche tourism' and 'special interest tourism' concepts agree in their assumption that distinguishable segments of tourists exist whose behaviour differs from generalist or mass tourists to such a degree to warrant their identification as (temporary) segments. It is noteworthy though that Weiler and Firth (Chap. 2) urge for caution in identifying special interest tourists "beyond a particular travel experience".

Regardless of the relative stability of 'special interest tourist' identities, this volume has been driven by an attempt to complement past psychologically inspired accounts by scrutinising how the collective dimension shapes 'special interest tourism' behaviour. As any conceptualisation of human behaviour that disregards social mechanisms must inevitably fall short of reality, this volume considered selected special interest tourists under the lens of consumer tribes (Cova et al. 2007). The contributions to this volume suggest that it is possible to gain additional insights about special interest tourism if interest-driven tourist segments are viewed as symbolic communities in which individuals get embedded and loosely bond together. This assessment holds regardless of the relative elusiveness of tribe fellowship in special interest communities: Individuals may fluctuate between such

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[1]We are aware that social psychology has had a strong influence on tourism research and that it is interested in the collective dimension.

communities and their identification with one particular community may be fluid, but the symbolic community as such is a reality which can transcend the behaviour and sense of belonging of specific individuals.

17.2   Opportunities of a Consumer Tribes Perspective

This volume highlighted at least two advantages of examining special interest tourism from the perspective of consumer tribes. As a first advantage, the advocated perspective allows to separate those special interest tourists with strong collective identities, social worlds and even group structures (see e.g. Vorobjovas-Pinta and Lewis on LGBTQI + tourism, Chap. 6) from those who are more a sum of individuals with similar motivations (see e.g. Macbeth on offshore sailing, Chap. 16). This volume showed that the former category of special interest tourists develops shared value systems and common symbols in their communication, use specific communication channels, accept 'influencers' and adopt implicit codes of conduct and conventions that any progressive tourism marketer or aspiring tribe fellow should be aware of. Cova and Cova (2002) argue that such groups of interest might under certain circumstances be able to engage in "collective action". The appearance of globalised communication networks and social media has clearly augmented the likelihood of dispersed 'special interest' tourists creating shared identities and negotiating constructions of meaning (Croy et al., Chap. 5; Dinhopl and Gretzel 2018). Due to contemporary means of communication it has become possible for consumer tribes to achieve "the shared occupation of a … virtual space" (Vorobjovas-Pinta and Lewis, Chap. 6). In other words, the existence of tourism tribes such as film tourism tribes do not rely any more on tourists physically meeting in a particular place such as the film location (Croy et al., Chap. 5). While contemporary tourism tribes do not any more depend on them, physical gathering points can still remain important manifestations of temporal communities and rituals as evidenced by the behaviour of motorcycle tourism tribes (Sykes, Chap. 13). Some social bonding dynamics remain heavily place-dependent as illustrated in the case of dark tourism (Seraphin and Korstanje, Chap. 7).

The tourism consumption implications of a special interest *collective* differ notably from those of a sum of similarly motivated *individuals* and these implications have immediate relevance for tourism marketing and management. In marketing to collectives and in managing their behaviour, understanding the in-group structures, symbols and discursive dynamics is of critical relevance. In contrast, a sum of unconnected individuals with similar motivations but without collective structures require first of all appreciating their individual motivations.

As a second advantage, the shift advocated here also allows us to tackle collectives who are not only unified by a common tourism motivation, but brought together by otherwise conditioned commonalities. This volume presented the example of black travel tribes (see Dillette, Chap. 4) and grey nomads (see Pearce et al., Chap. 11). Aggregations can also be due to particular supply-side contexts (see Scuttari et al.,

Chap. 14) although some authors would argue that supply-side factors are not the main concern of special interest tourism (see e.g. Weiler and Firth, Chap. 2). The example of sharing economy platforms may be a case in point as these platforms tend to generate or reinforce consumer communities. Even a heavily commercialised platform such as Airbnb is characterised by community mechanisms and is difficult to understand without grasping the dynamics of interpersonal communication between platform members. Amongst those are membership rules (how to become a member, how to behave as a member, how to lose membership, how to talk about others), the use of status-symbols and a high emphasis on peer-to-peer communication (Dolnicar 2017; Goodfellow et al. 2017). This discussion highlights the value of considering the collective and symbolic levels of tourism practice for tourism research and tourism marketing or management practice alike.

Therefore, building on the closely related work of colleagues (Hardy, Chap. 3, Dinhopl and Gretzel 2018; Hardy and Gretzel 2011; Hardy et al. 2013; Hardy and Robards 2015; Kriwoken and Hardy 2018; Weaver 2011), this volume advocated approaching special interest tourism from a 'consumer tribes' angle. It is evident that tribes in tourism or in any other consumption context are not identical to the tribes identified in the classic monographies of social and cultural anthropology (see Macbeth, Chap. 16). However, it is similarly clear that in some of the contemporary tourism segments collective mechanisms such as norms, value systems and identities, sense of belonging, shared communication codes and even rudimentary social structures emerge (see e.g. Pearce et al. on grey nomads, Chap. 11, Caldicott on freedom campers, Chap. 10). A note is warranted here: This volume adopted the 'consumer tribes' concept but this should not be misread as a dismissal of the related theorising on subcultures (Hall and Jefferson 1976; Willis 1978). It was our intention to highlight the strength of genuine social science approaches in discussing special interest tourism, which include the ability to tackle collective, symbolic and behavioural determinants of behaviour. It was not our main intention to juxtapose substantially similar theories (see Bennett 1999) such as 'consumer tribes'/'neo-tribes' and 'subcultures' or undertake a detailed comparative evaluation of these theories. This volume is not alone in its emphasis on conceptual convergence between subcultures and consumer tribes/neo-tribes (see Hardy, Chap. 3).

17.3   The Glue that Holds Communities Together

This volume's purpose was to investigate the shared meanings and shared physical and virtual spaces of special interest tourist communities. While there is a long history and a myriad of concepts which are available to tackle collective realities (see the classics of Durkheim 1893; Parsons 1970, 1940; Weber 1922), this volume opted for using a somewhat revamped version of the tribe concept, namely the theory of neo-tribalism as presented by Maffesoli (1996). Maffesoli argues that mass culture does not break up into individualism but into a multitude of micro groups, i.e. neo- or pseudo tribes. Traditionally, a tribe was understood as "a method of social grouping.

… It is used by … populations … as an expression of separateness, distinctiveness and uniqueness which is rooted in history and which is subject to change and redefinition" (Biebuyck 1966, p. 510). Biebuyck (1966, p. 510) also emphasises such classification "is pragmatic i.e. it is flexible and adaptive, it operates with nuances and degrees, it leaves room for modifications and adjustments in time perspective". Yet, the tribe concept has been subject to severe criticism due to its evolutionary connotation, definitory incoherence and vagueness, perpetuation of stereotypes as well as issues with drawing too rigid boundaries (Biebuyck 1966; Lowe et al. 1997)—and in consequence has been mostly replaced by other concepts. Recognising the contested nature of the original tribe concept, our intent was to use the neo-tribal idea as an analogy for collectives among contemporary tourists who share a common identity, behavioural norms and communication codes (Biebuyck 1966).

Neo-tribes are frequently discussed as 'consumer tribes' (Cova et al. 2007; Featherstone 1991) because they are often "bound by consumption patterns" (Hardy and Robards 2015, p. 2) and make use of consumption as a symbolic vehicle to signify tribe fellowship. A key tenet of any sociological analysis of consumption is that goods are not consumed only for the mere functional satisfaction of physiological needs ('use value') but are also for their 'symbolic value' to signal belonging (Durkheim 1893; Weber 1922). In this sense, consumption must be seen as socially embedded and symbolic agency which cannot be understood if fully separated from societal values and relationships (Polanyi 1944). One prominent instance of this generic thought is what Veblen (1899) has famously called 'conspicuous consumption', where the value of consumption is specifically derived from the reaction of others to the consumptive act and is intimately linked to 'impression making'.

Contemporary consumer tribes are held together by shared beliefs and identities (Cova and Cova 2002), usually without resorting to formal hierarchical power structures or forms of structured organisation. Although traditional self-identifications as tribes have been more adaptive than what is often suggested and have been subject to change, according to Maffesoli (1996), Goulding and Shankar (2011), contemporary consumer tribes are characterised by further augmented degrees of fuzziness, fluidity and ephemerality as they have limited manifestation beyond the symbolical level (see Caldicott, Chap. 10; Croy et al., Chap. 5; Scuttari et al., Chap. 14; Steven et al., Chap. 8). Spatial closeness or physical barriers often appear to be irrelevant mechanisms of togetherness for consumer tribes. All the more important are common rituals and shared experiences which create a spirit of community (called 'communitas' by Turner 1974), in the form of shared passion, beliefs and feelings (see Hardy, Chap. 3).

17.4 Implications and Outlook

Undeniably, tourism markets are fragmented and heterogenous with a consideration of micro-segments necessary to understand consumer behaviour (see Caldicott, Chap. 10; Macbeth, Chap. 16; Steven et al., Chap. 8). At the same time, multi-optional

lifestyles make it more challenging to identify stable niche affiliations (see Scuttari et al., Chap. 14). In any case and most importantly, this disintegration of consumptive bonds (following a disintegration of a range of other bonds such as religion) should not be mistaken as an indication that social perspectives are not relevant. Social perspectives are relevant *although* communities may become fluid. They are relevant because, thanks to globalised communication networks, micro-niches are not that small after all and may easily be able to engage in multi-local, multi-nodal interpersonal interactions.

We concur with Cova and Cova (2002) that tourism marketing can benefit from engaging with tourism tribes. In order to develop and communicate attractive products and experiences for *existing* tourism tribes, it is necessary that marketers understand tourism tribes' collective identities, shared rituals and behavioural traditions. As Hardy (Chap. 3) points out, it is, however, not only about understanding existing tribes. Sparking the development of *new* consumption communities (e.g. brand communities as discussed by Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Stratton and Northcote 2014; see also Macbeth, Chap. 16) can be a powerful measure to establish emotional bonds between companies, destinations and tourists resulting in loyalty and repeat visitation. The unprecedented success of online peer-to-peer platforms in tourism rests heavily on a well-developed understanding and harvesting of these dynamics. The same is true for film fan bases created and activated for travel with notable impact on selected tourism destinations (Croy et al., Chap. 5).

This volume, in combination with previous works, has made progress in defining tourist segments from a consumer tribes perspective and in capturing the collective dimensions of their consumption behaviour. While this descriptive work has been useful and necessary, in going forward, instrumental research scrutinising the opportunities of igniting the co-creation of consumption communities is needed. While such a research agenda would penetrate the boundaries of more traditional understandings of demand-side-focussed special interest tourism (see Weiler and Firth, Chap. 2), it promises to be of immense value for understanding and shaping future tourism behaviour in a lifeworld characterised by interconnected, multi-faceted and finely segmented virtual communities. Such a tribes perspective is well-placed to capture the co-creating (and perhaps co-destructing) dynamics which will progressively transcend traditional distinctions between demand and supply side and overcome increasingly unjustified analytical divisions of concomitant concepts.

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