Following the Theme: Conceptualizing Value as a More-than-Human Achievement

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Following the Theme: Conceptualizing Value as a More-than-Human Achievement

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Wollongong

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University of Wollongong
Faculty of Business
School of Management, Operations and Marketing

March 2019
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In the end, thank you Arnab for being a true friend, partner, husband, and the father of my child. Look what we created together. This journey would have been impossible without your love and support. To little Nayantara, who came into my life during this journey and has brightened my life forever. You both are my world.
DEDICATION

To the twinkle of my eyes and the love of my life.

Nayantara and Arnab
ABSTRACT

Theming is used as a powerful tool in the domain of marketing. Themes structure and regulate the rhythm of consumption experiences by facilitating the interplay between human and non-human entities. Trails such as the international ‘Silk Road’ or a local ‘wine trail’ use theming as a tool to connect multiple destinations, services, institutions and products in a geographic region and guide tourism consumption, providing meaningful experiences to travellers. However, how value emerges for the traveller from such a socio-materi ally constituted marketplace remains unclear. The agentic capabilities of non-human entities such as landscapes, roads, vehicles and other ‘things’ challenge existing conceptualisations of value, revealing a gap in the understanding of value on themed routes with regard to its substantial ontological framing in marketing. Using a relational ontological lens and a practice-based value framework, this thesis argues that value is a more than human achievement.

In a research design that adopted the principles of ethnomethodology, an ethnography was conducted gathering empirical material from the Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail (AHWFT), Hunter Valley, New South Wales, Australia to understand the emergence of value using the proposed framework. The ethnography involved nine research trips to the field over a period of 6 months that resulted in a rich dataset
comprising of artefacts and digital archival material (marketing collateral, books, photos, historical documents, and reports), transcribed semi-structured interviews with 57 tourists and 18 stakeholders, and 142 pages of field notes gathered through participant observation. The data were analysed hermeneutically and reflexively to identify value in the socio-material relations on the themed route situated in practices.

The interpretation of the data culminated into four shared practices being followed on the AHWFT, namely, opulence, countryside, touring and sociality. Together, these practices highlighted three ways in which value emerged on the route. First, the practices of opulence and countryside demonstrated how value was felt in the affective atmosphere generated by the socio-material relational positioning of non-human entities. Second, the practice of touring demonstrated the role of non-human entities in shaping value on the route through their material affordances. Third, sociality practices demonstrated value in the feeling of togetherness, shaped through shared affective atmosphere triggered by non-human entities as well as their material affordances, which physically brought people together in shared, ritualistic experiences. Highlighting the role of non-human agency through affect and affordances, the thesis concludes that value emergence is an ongoing process which is revealed in the socio-material interplay in marketplaces, and is thus always a more-than-human achievement. Therefore, the thesis extends the understanding of relational value or ‘value in relation’, particularly contributing to post-modern discourses on marketplaces.
**CONCEPTS AND NOMENCLATURE**

### Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Meanings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Human entities with intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actants</td>
<td>Human and non-human entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>Intensities shared between entities unconsciously, leads to cognition and/or emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Ability to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
<td>Collective sense of affect of a group of humans that share the same space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>The ability of the human mind to synthesise information and thus make judgments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>Capacity to do something which is uniquely human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Field of study, relationally defined in this thesis as emergent in socio-material relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Subjective responses to affect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange Value</td>
<td>worth of an object during a transaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans</td>
<td>Cognitive and affective bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions</td>
<td>Situations where two or more entities communicate or react to each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materiality</td>
<td>Physical attributes of things or entities (human and non-human)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Human actants</td>
<td>Physical entities that are not human, such as things, surfaces, wildlife, landscapes, weather (through heat, rain, clouds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>Situated socio-material relational arrangements. Practices comprise of doings and sayings. They demonstrate how</td>
</tr>
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</table>
meanings, rules, affects and competencies set relations between entities

Relations  Ways in which entities are connected. This could be through physical interactions or other cognitive or affective associations

Route/trail  A walkable/drivable/ridable path connecting places

Semiotic Value  Worthiness of an object based on its symbolic meaning to a consumer assumed to supersede exchange and use value.

Space  Expanse composed of relations between humans and non-humans that can be felt/sensed or cognitively perceived

Teleo-affective Structures (TA)  Meanings, affects, emotions, and actions (teleology of actions) of a practice

Theme  Abstract idea that lends structure or order to otherwise disjoint elements through its reoccurrence

Themed Route  A marketed travel experience which brings together multiple destinations/services along a path under a structural order, and is consumed through symbolic associations

Use Value  importance of an object realised during its consumption

Value in Relation/ Relational Value  A benefit which originates in an assemblage of relations, and is always a more-than-human achievement

Nomenclature

GDL  Goods Dominant Logic

SDL  Services Dominant Logic

CCT  Consumer Culture Theory

TA Structures  Teleo-affective Structures
AHWFT  Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail
HVVC   Hunter Valley Visitor Centre
HVWTA  Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association
AHA    Around Hermitage Association
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1 CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter introduces the research. The chapter provides a background of theming as the general area of the research; specific emphasis is given to the themed route environment. The research gap and the research question is justified based on the lack of attention given to socio-material entanglements in the themed route context. A brief introduction to the methodology and summary of contributions is provided to justify the importance of the research. The chapter ends with a description of how this thesis is structured.

1.2 Background

Theming has emerged as a compelling marketing strategy through which marketers create an experience for the consumer (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Themes bundle services/products through an overarching narrative (Pine & Gilmore 1998; Rosenbaum & Massiah 2011), which regulates the rhythm or screenplay of consumption experiences (Clavé 2007; Gottdiener 1997). Value of theming is argued to be in the symbolic associations of products, services and environments, and their success is achieved through the use of human and non-human elements such as narratives, service staff, maps, brochures, signs, motifs and cues (Beardsworth & Bryman 1999; Lukas 2007b).
In tourism, theming is integral to destination marketing (Morgan et al. 2007) as evidenced in the case of the ‘themed route’ (Shaw & Williams 2004). Themed routes connect three or more destinations/ experiences, marketed as a single tourism product under an overarching theme (Olsen 2003). Examples of themed routes include food and wine trails, heritage trails and pilgrimage themed routes. Themed routes allow tourist destination areas and organisations to gain competitive advantage by pooling knowledge, expertise and capital (Chowdhury 2011). Themed routes reflect an alignment of producers and institutions in destinations/services and experiences at different geographical scales including local (e.g. Wine Trail), regional (Great Ocean Road in Australia), national (Route 66 in the USA) or international trails (Mare Nostrum connecting port cities along the Mediterranean Sea) (Timothy & Boyd 2014).

Themed routes are being heavily developed and invested in. Examples include the European Cultural Routes program and the Silk Road development in Asia (Koh & Kwok 2017; Sun et al. 2011; UNWTO 2017). Australia itself has developed more than 50 themed routes of national, state or regional significance (Olsen 2003). Thus, owing to the increase in the use of this strategy for international, national and regional partnerships and alliances (CIIC 2008), it is timely to study the topic of themed routes.

Research on themed routes discusses their popularity as co-marketing and regional collaboration tools (Hojman & Hunter-Jones 2012; Majdoub 2010; Mitchell & van der
Linden 2010) from a marketing and development perspective; however, existing research does not shed much light on the consumer perspective (Timothy & Boyd 2014). The limited consumer research on themed routes (Carden 2006; Cutler et. al. 2014; Murray & Graham 1997; Lopez-Guzman et. al. 2014) is fragmented and does not explain the consumer experience of such routes, especially considering the influence of the socio-material thematic environment that is constructed through marketing paraphernalia, landscapes, movement, imaginaries and personal associations. Consequently, the extant literature presents a supply-side dominated, skewed understanding of what themed routes actually are (Broadway 2017; Deenihan et al. 2013) (Lopez-Guzman et.al. 2014; Murray & Graham 1997). This thesis aims to provide a consumer perspective on themed routes by understanding value formation for those following such routes.

1.2.1 Themed Routes as Socio-Material Marketplaces

Following post-modern conceptualisations of marketplaces (Fernandez & Figueiredo 2018, Firat et al. 2014; Giesler & Fischer 2016), for the purpose of this thesis, themed routes are conceptualised as co-constituted socio-material marketplaces where both human and non-human entities come together to create value (Canniford & Bajde 2015). Post-modern thinkers including Deleuze (1989) and Latour (2005), highlight the ‘socio-material’ as the intermingling interdependence between the human and the non-human. The term socio-material is therefore used to refer to the highly heterogeneous interplay of human and non-human entities that constitute, construct and convey the
entanglements of marketplaces (Magaudda 2011; Ren 2009). Themed routes are guided by the theme, which suggests an important role of non-human elements in driving value through symbolic association (Lukas 2007c). However, the ability of non-human entities creating value for the traveller is ‘assumed’ in the scholarship on themed routes (Gottdiener 1997; MacLeod 2016; Shaw & Williams 2004). Not much attention has been given to the use of non-human elements such as landscapes, maps, roads and other symbolic cues/motifs and signage, which help tourists connect with destinations/services and move on such routes (MacLeod 2016). Conceptualising the themed routes as socio-material marketplaces is helpful because it helps focus on the role of socio-material interplay that produces value for travellers. Themed routes are thus conceived as marketplaces that emerge through interactions of both human and non-human entities (Hayes & MacLeod 2007; MacLeod 2016).

Although the role of human entities in directing value for themselves is much established in the marketing literature (Smith & Colgate 2007; Zeithaml 1988), research pointing to the role of non-human entities in shaping value is limited (Arsel 2016). There are two strands of research that note the role of non-human entities in shaping experiences on a themed route. One strand of literature on theming and tourism points towards the semiotic associations of material objects. Several tourism researchers argue that ‘things’ are crucial in tourism performances through their affective involvement in practices which are more-than-cognitively ‘felt’ (Haldrup & Larsen 2006; Urry 2005). Tourism and
consumer culture literature contends that non-human entities are generators of symbolism through affect (Hill 2015) which is not judged but sensed. Non-human elements trigger affects, understood as intensities that trigger feelings and emotions (Newell 2018). Literature on affect points towards themed routes being potentially affectively charged spaces. Themed routes rely heavily on semiotic associations of thematic paraphernalia, spatial elements and commodities (Hardy 2003; Shaw & Williams 2004) which create ‘atmospheres’ or ‘affects’ (Hill 2015) that shape tourists’ actions and experiences (Bærenholdt et al. 2017; Massumi 1995). For example, maps and signage that are important marketing paraphernalia on themed routes are known to ensure comfort and competence in an unfamiliar environment (Rossetto 2012).

Another strand of literature on consumer culture (Arnould & Thompson 2005) and tourism mobilities (Hannam et al. 2014) discusses tourist experiences being governed by the affordances of non-human entities that shape activities and routines (Watson & Shove 2008). The materiality of non-human entities has the capacity to mark boundaries as well as shape spaces and practices when they interact with other human or non-human entities (Epp & Price 2010; Epp et al. 2014). Accessibility, travel distances and places at which tourists stop on a themed route, all indicate a directive role of the mode of travel (Merriman 2004). Furthermore, materialities of landscape and weather are important directors of consumption practices of tourists (Aitchison et al. 2014; Rantala et al. 2011).
This literature points towards the affordances of vehicles, products, maps, signage, road, weather and views being instrumental in directing tourist practices on the themed route.

1.3 **Research Gap: Call for Value as a More-than-Human Achievement**

Following post-modern thinking and the role of non-human agency on themed routes, the themed route marketplace may be conceived as constructed through a ‘dance of agency’ (Pickering 1995, pp 51) between human and non-human entities. The ‘dance of agency’ refers to the intermittent and continuous exchange of agency between human and non-human entities in practice (Shove et. al 2012). Understanding this ‘dance of agency’ is key to understand value from the socio-material marketplace of the themed route as it highlights that value may not necessarily be humanly constructed or assessed. Consequently, when conceptualizing the themed route marketplace as the ongoing interplay of human and non-human agency, existing conceptualisations of value no longer make sense.

The literature review demonstrates that the existing substantialist\(^1\) conceptualisation of value is restrictive in exploring the role of non-human elements in value formation.

---

\(^1\) Emirbayer (1997) presents two ontological perspectives to understand the social world, namely the substantialist and the relational. The substantialist ontological positioning concerns with studies of sociality, which underpins human beings, and their interpretations of reality to be central to understanding the world (Hirschman 1986). The relational ontological approach, on the other hand focuses on relations between objects, rather than the objects themselves, thus highlighting the human as part of the larger socio-material fabric of the world.
Conventionally, value in marketing is understood through the Goods Dominant logic (GDL), Services Dominant logic (SDL) and the Consumer Culture Theory logic (CCT) (Hartmann 2013). While GDL proposes value to be created by the firm, and embedded as a property in the product or service (Kotler 1972; Miles 1961), SDL discusses its creation in the social context through ‘use’ of a product (Vargo & Lusch 2008b). CCT addresses value as a product or services’ symbolic relevance to a consumer’s life (Arnould 2013). All three logics demonstrate a substantialist perspective (Emirbayer 1997) towards value, which establishes value as a cognitive judgement. This substantialist orientation emphasises human agency and its practice in social contexts, implying that all phenomena are socially constructed and this in turn results from subjective interaction (Morgan 1983).

All conceptualisations of value from the substantialist perspective are unable to incorporate the role of non-human agency in shaping value. The role of non-human entities is restricted to passive resources that are used by actors in value practices in SDL (Chandler & Vargo 2011) and that influences semiotic connections in CCT (Akaka et al. 2014; Akaka et al. 2014). The role of non-human agency in triggering affect as well as its role in shaping value through affordances is not explained through the substantialist approach. Thus, the existing literature on value demonstrates a gap in acknowledging the role of non-human entities in shaping value. Following the importance given to the role of human agency and cognition, the value driven by non-human elements which is
‘felt’ and ‘sensed’ through symbolic associations is unrealised. This restricts our understanding of value in the socio-material context of themed routes, and subsequently suggests a need to conceptualise value from a more-than-human perspective (Pickering & Papineau 1995).

1.3.1 Research Question

Following the need to understand value in the themed route marketplace from a socio-material perspective, this research focuses on the following research question:

*How does value emerge for the traveller in the socio-material context of themed routes?*

The research question has been addressed in three steps. The first step involves acknowledging value as a more-than-human achievement. In order to understand value on the themed route as always embedded in socio-material relations, there is a need to address non-human entities from an equal ontological positioning (Latour 2005). An ontological discussion of value helps in moving away from existing perspectives by focusing on the relational interplay that acknowledges the agency of both human and non-human elements in value. Recent consumer culture studies point towards an active role of materials in shaping value by adopting a relational social ontological position (Borgerson 2014; Canniford & Bajde 2015; Epp & Price 2010). Relational ontologies view the world as a whole that is created through many sums (Deleuze & Guattari 1988; Latour 2005). Borrowing from philosophers such as Deleuze and Latour, two key characteristics
of a more-than-human or relational ontological positioning are subject decentring and relationality. First, subject decentring suggests de-prioritisation of human agency by attributing agency based on the involvement or role of human and non-human elements in the phenomenon (Deleuze & Guattari 1988). Second, relational ontologies argue for non-representational analysis of social structures by not distinguishing things based on categories as object and subject or human and non-human but by prioritising the relationships between ‘things’ (Emirbayer 2013). In other words, relational ontologies deprioritise human agency and representationalism (Giesler & Venkatesh 2005; Hill et al. 2014) to study phenomena as it unfolds in a network of relations. Hence, relational ontologies help explore both the role of human agency and materiality in social phenomena.

Additionally, a relational approach helps to understand value as emergent in the ongoing socio-material arrangements that comprise the themed route marketplace (Arsel 2016). This is helpful in acknowledging the social networks of different producers, consumers or products as dynamic, structuring relationships (Latour 2005) and not simply resources that producers or consumers tap into (Chandler & Vargo 2011; Flint et al. 2014). Thus, this relational approach makes it possible to understand value as emergent not through a system, but through an assemblage of socio-material relations (Deleuze & Guattari 1979). They may not in fact be bound or scoped in the existing ways a market is scoped.
(Humphreys 2010b; Vargo & Lusch 2016). Thus, using a relational perspective, value is proposed to be a more-than-human achievement.

Second, the research introduces a framework that provides an epistemology to understand value in socio-material relations of the themed route marketplace. This research draws on social practice theory (Shove et al. 2012) as an underpinning theoretical foundation to construct a context-attentive epistemology for understanding ‘value in relation’. Practice theory is a collection of theoretical approaches that rethink human behaviour by moving away from the psychological deliverance of attitudes and knowledge and emphasising the wider socio-material relationships that shape it (Schatzki 2002). Practice theoretical approaches differ between substantialist and relational worldviews (Nicolini 2017). Social practice theory is one such relational approach based on practice theory outlined by Shove and colleagues, which is adapted in this thesis to understand ‘value in relation’ or relational value as articulated in this thesis.

Third, ‘value in relation’ understood as a more-than-human achievement is studied through the proposed framework using an empirical case context. For this research, empirical data was collected for the Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail (AHWFT), Hunter Valley, New South Wales, Australia. Choosing the AHWFT was based on an evaluation of secondary research on marketing and management of trails throughout
Australia, and the feasibility of conducting research over a longer period of time (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). A wine route/trail is one of the most established themed routes in tourism studies (Croce & Perri 2010; Hjalager & Richards 2003). Planners have studied the territorial networks of the wine industry as well as studied them as tools of local development (Bruwer 2003; Mason & O’Mahony 2007; Xu et al. 2016). Food and Wine trails are diversified versions of the wine trail and are integral to wine tourism (Hall & Gössling 2016; López-Guzmán et al. 2014; Xu et al. 2016). However, despite the notable growth in the number of gastronomic trails, they are still under-represented in the wine tourism literature (Carmichael & Senese 2012; Hall & Gössling 2016). Australia has been a leader in wine tourism for some decades now (Australia 2018). Its five main wine producing regions, in South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, contribute over $40 billion to the Australian economy (Australia 2018). Using the AHWFT as a case context, this research demonstrates how value emerges as a more-than-human achievement in the themed route context.

1.4 Research Design

This thesis applies an interpretive approach towards understanding value in themed routes using the guiding principles of ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967; Holbrook & O’shaughnessy 1988). The research methods included semi-structured interviews and participant observation as ethnographic tools (Arrould & Wallendorf 1994). The
fieldwork was carried out in three phases. The first phase involved selecting the case context of the AHWFT through an analysis of 15 trails in Australia. The main criteria used for the selection included: firstly, ease of getting information considering the multiplicity of management in trails (Beeton 2006; Hayes & MacLeod 2007); secondly, consistency of the marketing of the theme, which was gauged through presence of marketing collateral; and thirdly, popularity of the trail, which was investigated to ensure usage. All three criteria were researched using secondary data and digital archival research (Fischer & Parmentier 2010).

The second stage involved participant observation including building relationships with stakeholders of the AHWFT to help understand regional marketing/business practices (Fetterman 2009). This stage also helped in gathering local research support with key stakeholders. Outcomes from this stage included identifying seasons, tourist trends, locations for interviews and other data that could help with understanding the practices of travellers in the region.

The third stage involved focused fieldwork, where ethnography was conducted through nine field trips and three reconnaissance trips made over a period of eleven months in 2016. During this time, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 57 tourists and 18 stakeholders in the field. Ethnography also involved collecting artefacts including
documents, marketing collateral, books, souvenirs and photos (Fischer & Parmentier 2010).

1.5 Summary of Contributions

This thesis theoretically contributes to the domains of tourism and marketing as summarised below.

1. This thesis contributes to the study of value in marketing by ontologically theorising ‘value in relation’ (Pratten 2007). Various researchers have called for a relational understanding of value following recent understandings of value in multiple translations and circulations in different consumption contexts (Arsel 2016; Figueiredo & Scaraboto 2016; Scaraboto & Figueiredo 2017). This research answers the call to address relational value by theorizing it as a function of socio-material arrangements, contributing to ontological understandings of value in marketing.

2. Second, this thesis contributes to the theoretical advancement of theming by arguing that value through theming is not only cognitively assessed but also affectively sensed by the consumer. It argues for the role of affect and affordances in constructing the continuity of the theme.

3. This thesis adds to the tourism literature in four ways. First, the thesis explains the creation of the sense of luxury in gastronomic trails. Second, it advances
knowledge on themed route consumption practices. Third, the thesis brings together the social and the material in discourses on value in tourism experiences. Fourth, it highlights the role of affect and feelings in symbolic consumption of tourism.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into six chapters. This first chapter introduces the research by outlining the background of themed routes and explains the research question. This chapter also summarises the methodology and contributions of the research.

Chapter Two presents a literature review on value in marketing, arguing for the need to understand value as a more-than-human achievement. The chapter presents an ontological discussion of value in the marketing context outlining three different conceptualisations of value under different dominant logics or scholarships namely, exchange, use and symbolic value. Considering the socio-material interplay on the themed route, the chapter further highlights different scholarship which presents non-human agency through their role in triggering affect and material involvement. To conclude, the chapter re-conceptualises value from a relational perspective as ‘value in relation’.

Chapter Three proposes a theoretical framework to understand value in the socio-material context of themed routes. The chapter offers social practice theory as a suitable
theoretical foundation for the concept of value in relation. The chapter presents the practice-based value framework and explains the theoretical premises and constructs that are used to help understand value in themed routes.

Chapter Four provides a justification of the methodology and presents the case context of the AHWFT. Specifically, the chapter explains the use of ethnography following the guiding principles of ethnomethodology. This is followed by a justification of the research design and the details of data collection and analysis. The chapter further describes the selected context of the Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail (AHWFT) located in the Hunter Valley, Australia.

Chapter Five presents the findings analysed through the theoretical framework of the research along with the discussion with reference to extant literature. The chapter is divided into three sections following the three different ways value emerges on the route in the four practices of opulence and country, touring and sociality.

Chapter Six concludes the research and outlines the theoretical and managerial contributions of the research. The chapter concludes by highlighting the role of non-human agency in value formation, essentially a summary of the findings. It discusses how understanding value as a more-than-human achievement advances a better understanding of value with reference to post-modern perspectives of marketplaces. The chapter also outlines a two-step managerial intervention strategy. Further, the chapter
articulates in detail the theoretical and managerial contributions of the research and presents implications and directions for future research. The appendices include the marketing collateral and other documentary evidence gathered during the fieldwork, as well as the semi-structured interview guide and ethics approval.

1.7 Summary

This chapter presented the topic of themed routes as a complex and interesting context for study, where the concepts of theming and the role of non-human entities were explained. The background stated that little is known about how value emerges for the travellers who are travelling on the route. The chapter acknowledged themed routes as socio-material marketplaces where value needs to be understood from a more-than-human perspective, which is missing from current conceptualisations of value. The research question was laid out and the strategies employed to answer the research question were discussed. The chapter further described the research design and summarised contributions. The next chapter focuses on the literature review by discussing the ontological orientations of current value conceptualisations. It argues for the need to understand value as a more-than-human achievement.
2  CHAPTER 2 – ONTOLOGY OF VALUE

2.1  Overview

This chapter presents a review of the literature on value to better understand the role of non-human entities in shaping value. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is a broad discussion of the concept of value in philosophy. This section establishes that the notion of value is multiple, and embedded in particular worldviews. In the second section, attention turns to how value is conceived within marketing literature. In marketing, the dominant economic and semiotic notions of value are explored. Assumptions and principles behind different value conceptualisations are outlined along with their shortcomings through three dominant logics i.e. Goods, Service, and Consumer Culture Theory logics. The third section draws attention to the limitations of these dominant value perspectives in the light of calls to understand value in the socio-material marketplace of themed routes which requires engagement with non-human agency.

2.2  Philosophical Origins of Value

This section identifies the philosophy behind value, which informs the conceptualisations of value in the marketing literature. Philosophers agree that value is a complex and contested concept. What is known about value is embedded in multiple
worldviews (Hart 1971). Detailed here are two ontological perspectives or worldviews followed in philosophy, namely, substantialist, and relational perspectives, through which value is explained (Emirbayer 1997).

The substantialist approach to value adopted by early axiologists such as Plato, identify value as an absolute property of an object, which is judged and constructed by humans (Hart 1971). The substantialist perspective characterises value through two principles. First, a substantialist perspective identifies entities as pre-formed, therefore suggesting value to be an established property of objects. As suggested by Plato (Plato 1930), value is understood to be an absolute property of an object as its intrinsic or extrinsic value. Intrinsic value is an individual benefit ‘in itself’, such as health, strength, happiness, knowledge, beauty, power, etc. (Zimmerman 2008). Extrinsic value is attributed to things that are instrumental in achieving these benefits to the individual (Ng & Smith 2015). Thus, value is understood as a ‘real’ property of an object or person, and has an independent status that could be measured or evaluated (Hart 1971).

Second, the substantialist perspective proposes that human (mind) is an actor and thus value is identified only through human cognitive abilities (Emirbayer 1997). Pioneered by Nietzsche (1887), Brentano (1944) and von Ehrenfels (1897), value is recognised to be socially constructed through psychological attributes of the human mind. Value is conceived in terms of the ‘desirable’ quality of objects where ‘desire’ is based on interests
and emotions (von Ehrenfels 1897). In this respect, the ‘valuable’ is contingent upon the human ability to grasp, understand and judge the absolute value of an object.

In addition to the substantialist worldview, value is also interpreted from an anti-substantialist perspective called a relational perspective (Emirbayer 1997). A relational worldview prioritises the relationship between entities, rather than the entities themselves (Benjamin 2015). Conceiving the world as a network of relations, the relational approach suggests that all phenomena are constructed of relations between entities (Gherardi 2016). Relational thinking suggests that socio-material entanglement of relations results in all phenomena, implying that all phenomena are the result of contextually situated relations between humans and non-humans (Latour 2005). Relational thinking underscores that all relations and identities of entities are situated but not static. This suggests that entities can play different roles at the same time in different relational assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari 1988). In providing both humans and non-humans with an equal ontological footing, relational approaches differ from the substantialist approaches, which prioritise humans as actors.

Relational approaches offer an alternative understanding of value. Relational approaches such as the one used by Perry (1926) offer a contextually situated understanding of value, as a relation between ‘an interest’ and ‘an object’. This highlights two things about value. First, existence of value is detached from perception and is embedded in the contextual
relations of the valuable through ‘interest’, which, viewed in relational terms, is conceived through an assemblage of socio-material interactions. In other words, the term ‘value’ is a function of an assemblage of relations in which it is referred (Arsel 2016; Çalışkan & Callon 2009).

Second, relational perspectives point towards more-than-cognitive ways value is felt. Perry (1926) in his book General Theory of Value discusses that the valuer establishes an interest or relation with an object through the ‘motor-affective’ life. Perry’s notion of motor-affective life suggests the role of affective and embodied everyday experiences in construction of feelings and interests. This is a departure from the cognitivist prioritisation in the substantialist conceptualisations of value, therefore suggesting that value may or may not always be cognitively perceived or judged by the valuer (Perry 1926).

Following the different axiological conceptualisations of value posited by the two perspectives, what is known about value is contested. Being a socially constructed absolute property, value is conceived from a substantialist approach as a function of human cognition. Conversely, in a relational approach, value is a function of contextual relations between human and non-human entities, where value perception is not a prerequisite for value formation, suggesting therefore, that value is continuously emergent in socio-material alignments.
2.3 Value in Marketing

Value in marketing is understood through the economic logics of production and consumption viewed from substantialist perspectives, whereby value is the ‘goodness’ attached to objects and perceived through human cognition (Hartmann 2013). In marketing, value is described through three dominant logics, namely, the goods dominant logic (GDL), the services dominant logic (SDL) and the consumer culture theory (CCT) logic. Dominant logic is a term that is used to signify the institutional approach towards value (Skalen & Edvardsson 2015). In addition to GDL and SDL which are logics established in literature, this thesis also outlines CCT logic through readings of consumer research literature on value.

The theoretical framing of value in capitalist relations by the famous nineteenth century sociologist Karl Marx (1867) underpins goods and services dominant logics. Karl Marx critiqued the economic foundations of the capitalist economy during an era of rapid and far-reaching industrialisation where value was described as a ‘benefit’ in ‘exchange’ and ‘use’ of a commodity, described as ‘exchange value’ and ‘use value’, respectively (Marx 1867). The goods dominant logic focuses on Marx’s concept of ‘exchange value’ highlighting value as being embedded in economic transactions. Service dominant logic combines Marx’s conceptualisations of ‘use value’ with theoretical influences from post-structural researchers such as Giddens (1984) and Heidegger (1996) and interprets value as embedded in service processes that include production and consumption. In contrast,
consumer culture theorists (CCT) follow post-modern anthropological researchers such as Baudrillard (1994) and Appadurai (1988) to extend meanings of value beyond the capitalist economic system, and describe value through semiotic associations of practices and objects.

2.4 Goods Dominant Logic – Exchange Value

The goods dominant logic (GDL) defines value following capitalist economy principles (Smith 1904) as underpinned by the Marxian notion of exchange value (Marx 1867). Marx explains exchange value as the exchange equivalent during comparison with a commodity (Marx et al. 1954). The main tenet of GDL is that it assumes value to be created when goods are exchanged. For example, a painting is a piece of paper or canvas with a coloured dot until someone is willing to pay $3 million for it. Therefore, GDL demonstrates an adoption of Marxian principles of value where it is attributed to commodities or goods only in relation to the act of exchange. Following exchange value, value is conceptualised as the ‘worth’ of a ‘valuable’ determined by the ‘valuer’ (Butz Jr & Goodstein 1996; Neap & Celik 1999; Rescher 1969; Smith 1904). While economics scholarship on value is concerned with measuring the worth of a valuable, marketing researchers focus on how value is created for the consumer for the purposes of selling (Beckman 1954; Bolton & Drew 1991; Kotler 1972; Thaler 1985). As the ‘worth’ of a valuable, value can therefore be measured, created, embedded and commodified, as a
property of goods that are exchanged (Beckman 1954; Marshal 1927), which can be extended to services (Grönroos 2000) and experiences (Heinonen et al. 2010; Helkkula et al. 2012). Thus, GDL assumes value to be a property of goods and services, perceived by consumers, and created by the firm without any direct interference by customers (Skalen & Edvardsson 2015).

Following the principles forwarded by Adam Smith (1776) for the capitalist economy, value is realised through utility maximisation. In a capitalist economy where free trade and liberalism are advocated, exchange value becomes relevant by applying the principles of utility maximisation in production as well as consumption. For the producer, value is understood as the marginal benefit to the firm (Miles 1961). This marginal benefit is passed on to the customers by enhancing the products and calling them ‘value added’ (Beckman 1954). The concept of value addition fuels the thinking that value is being embedded in the product during production/marketing by the producer (Butz Jr & Goodstein 1996; Kotler 1972; Miles 1961).
Table 2.1 lists the studies that provide different conceptualisations of value.

Table 2.1 Research Streams of Value in GDL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Studies</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utility Maximisation</strong></td>
<td>Value is in offering best product in the asked price in a competitive environment.</td>
<td>(Miles 1961)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value is the minimum dollars which must be expended in purchasing or manufacturing a product to create the appropriate use and esteem factors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Benefit Vs Cost/Trade Off</strong></td>
<td>Customers want to maximise perceived benefits and minimise sacrifices of money, time and effort</td>
<td>Butz Jr and Goodstein (1996); Doyle (2000); Kotler (2000); Levitt (1980); Lemmink et al. (1998); Woodruff (1997); Zeithaml (1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer Value is the perceived preference or evaluation of products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value is the bundle of benefits customers expect from a given good or service.</td>
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For the consumer, exchange value lies in utility maximisation through trade off. Firm managers believe that the value of their goods can only be determined and perceived by their consumers (Flint et al. 1997; Smith & Colgate 2007; Woodruff 1997). Therefore, firms may study value as perceived by consumers in order to create or add value for the consumers. From a consumer’s perspective, value is understood as a trade off between benefits and cost (Kotler 1972; Levitt 1980; Miles 1961). Consumer perceived value stipulates that consumers evaluate value through a cost-benefit analysis or by employing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Value in services should maximise quality minus the disutility from prices</strong></th>
<th><strong>Value is a proxy for the quality price ratio.</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Desire to obtain the product is equal to cost of the product plus a subjective marginal value which should be equal to the price of the product.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Value of a product depends on the owner’s/ buyer’s desire to obtain or retain a product</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumer Value as a trade-off between time and money spent to quality received.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Value is in perceived quality measurement and assessment of quality (SERVQUAL, etc.), satisfaction, etc.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cronin Jr and Taylor (1992); Mattsson (1992); Zeithaml et al. (1996)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of value generated through different trade-offs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consumer Value is in fulfilment of individual needs and demands</strong></td>
<td><strong>Smith and Colgate (2007)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source of motivation behind a value trade-off.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Type of Consumer value is based on source of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Holbrook (1999); (2005)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a trade-off perspective (Kotler 1972; Zeithaml 1988). Various substantivist studies that measure consumer perceived value suggest a correlation between satisfaction, price trade-off and service quality (Bolton & Drew 1991; Cronin Jr & Taylor 1992; Mattsson 1992; Parasuraman et al. 1988). Additionally, researchers such as Holbrook (1994, 1999; Holbrook & Hirschman 1982) and Holt (1995) pioneered defining typologies of value using the meanings and associations of products and services, suggesting value to include ‘more-than-economic’ trade-offs such as assessments made on functional, symbolic and emotional needs of the consumer (Smith & Colgate 2007). Many researchers incorporated these ‘more-than-utilitarian’ meanings of value to create a typology of consumer perceived value that defined value as functional, emotional, symbolic, social and experiential (Sheth et al. 1991; Smith & Colgate 2007; Zeithaml 1988).

2.4.1 Shortcomings of GDL

When considering the process of value formation on a themed route, the GDL is unable to provide a sufficient explanation. The context of themed routes demonstrates that value can be both lived and imaginary, and is constructed based on previous, current, and imaginary future experiences (Helkkula et al. 2012). Value is known to emerge from the thematic associations that travellers establish with different products/destinations (Mason & O’Mahony 2007; Murray & Graham 1997), which suggests a larger role of consumers in shaping value. GDL, however, does not consider any other ways that value emerges, apart from exchange events.
GDL places value in goods/services/experiences, drawing focus on exchange to derive value (Lusch & Vargo 2006). This positioning of value as being extrinsic to the individual restricts the understanding of value as it holds exchange as a prerequisite for value achievement. Holding exchange as a pre-requisite for value achievement does not acknowledge value that emerges during consumption of goods/services/experiences (Vargo & Lusch 2008a). This also presents a challenge in case of themed routes, because exchange situations are only a part of the themed route journey, with value emerging through different meanings and feelings of movement, imaginaries and immersion (Carden 2006; González et al. 2016; Miles 2016; Murray & Graham 1997; Cutler et al. 2014).

Additionally, by placing value in exchange, the GDL prioritises the role of the capitalist firm by making them responsible for ‘creating’ value, thereby completely devaluing the role of other human or non-human entities in value formation (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Holt 1995). The GD logic assumes value to be created, owned and sold by the firm through the product (Lusch & Vargo 2006) which is perceived by the consumer at the time of exchange (Vargo & Lusch 2008a). Positing value in goods or services clearly demarcates people into producers and consumers, as the producer becomes the value creator, while the consumer is the value arbitrator. This presents a dyadic view of value creation. Overlooked, in this view, is the role of multiple socio-economic actors that facilitate or influence the value creation process (Vargo & Lusch 2008b), including the role of other actors such as supplier networks, family and friends and other social
networks. A dyadic view of value creation is restrictive in understanding value in themed routes due to the involvement of multiple businesses, administrative institutions, marketers, and consumers who come together to construct and consume the themed route (Hardy 2003). Identifying the role of multiple actors in value creation, the service dominant logic (SDL) suggests a focus on socio-economic relational arrangements in value creation as discussed below.

2.5 *Service Dominant Logic - Use Value*

Vargo and Lusch (2008a) describe service dominant logic (SDL) where value is defined through the Marxist and Adam Smith’s ideas of ‘value in use’ (Smith 1776). Marx describes use value as the usefulness of a commodity. Use value discusses the tangible features of a commodity, which satisfy human needs and wants, or serve a purpose (Marx 1867). Therefore, use value is neither ‘in’ the object nor in the ‘perceptions’ of the object, but in the practices in which the object becomes useful. In other words, use value can only be discussed during use of a commodity or during consumption, and does not express social relations of production. However, use value of the commodity forms the basis to assess and establish its exchange value (Marx 2010). According to Marx, exchange value and use value are interdependent and should not be referred to in isolation (Marx 1867). However, following the growth in capitalist economic activities in the industrial era, use value was interpreted as ‘utility’ of a commodity. This growth in capitalist economic
activities decontextualised and disengaged use value from its original conceptualisation, leading to the notion that a commodity has its own essence and can be immediately obtained through exchange, which signified its utility as a part of the exchange value (Ng & Smith 2015). Through SDL, Vargo and Lusch (2008b) aim to recapture the original conceptualisation of use value, but instead of separating exchange and use value, they expand the scope of value to include all stages of production, exchange, usage and disposal, thereby establishing value creation as a process.

While the SDL framework views value relationally, it follows substantialist principles to establish relations. Through the SDL framework, Vargo and Lusch (2017) expand from the transaction to establish value as emergent in socio-cultural relations. In this case, value is not restricted to dyadic exchange, but extends into a network of socio-cultural and economic relations that underpin service processes. This extension of scope helps uncover a larger context, in which value emerges through interactions between multiple humans (Akaka et al. 2014; Vargo & Lusch 2012). Thus, substantialist principles can be witnessed in SDL by virtue of its focus on human relations, where it identifies value as co-created by actors.

Recognising the involvement of multiple humans in value creation, the SDL framework suggests value to be always co-created (Vargo & Lusch 2004). Thus, value is understood as a benefit that emerges during activities linked to production and consumption of
goods and services, co-created by multiple humans and phenomenologically perceived by the beneficiary in interactions (Vargo & Lusch 2017). SDL introduces the terms actors, resources, resource integration, institutional logics and service ecosystem (Vargo et al. 2008), to explain co-creation of value.

Actors are understood as all humans or collectives of humans (individuals or organisations) involved in a service experience, who create value for and with each other, while interacting directly or indirectly (Vargo & Lusch 2011). This categorisation brings into view not only focal actors (the firm and the beneficiary, producer and consumer) but also the contextual actors (Chandler & Vargo 2011) such as social networks or other resource providing actors (cultural groups, media, infrastructure providers).

Resources in SDL are described as any tangible assets such as objects or intangible assets such as skills/knowledge, which are drawn by an actor for support (Flint et al. 2014). Edvardsson et al. (2014) emphasise the dynamic aspects of resources where they become valuable only during an interaction, understood as ‘becoming’ instead of ‘existing’. Hence, resources are defined based on their use in resource integration (activity). Contextual actors such as friends and family can also act as resources when focal actors decide to act upon their advice, knowledge, or even presence (Edvardsson et al. 2011).

Resource Integration is the process of actors using resources in social practices that produce value (Edvardsson et al. 2014). Resource integration practices recognise that
value is produced in activities and interactions in a practice (Akaka et al. 2014; Akaka et al. 2013). It is further stipulated by SDL that resource integration involves the actors’ understandings of the socio-cultural rules or structures that are required for the usage of these resources (Akaka et al. 2014).

Vargo and Lusch (2016) employ the concept of institutional logics to define the implicit socio-cultural structures or ‘rules of the game’ that direct, guide or influence humans in resource integration practices. Institutions can be understood as a set of normative, regulative and cognitive structures (Edvardsson et al. 2014) or the “humanly devised enablers and constraints that shape human interaction” (North 1990). Vargo & Lusch (2012) conceptualise institutional logics as dynamic structuring agents or ‘rules’ that structure and shape value co-creation. Institutional logics, therefore, bind all resource-integrating actors into a self-contained and networked system (Edvardsson et al. 2011). Many researchers propose the instrumental role of institutional logics as binding or structuring agents, aligning actors and resources that create a dynamic ‘service ecosystem’ (Akaka et al. 2013).

Service ecosystem is defined based on the systems theory perspective used in management sciences, where the system is closed, self-sustaining and self-adjusting through internal processes (Parsons 2007). The service ecosystem nomenclature helps in
scoping value co-creation as it identifies actors, resources and institutional arrangements that socially contextualise value co-creation in resource integration practices.

Figure 2.1 Service Dominant Logic Service Ecosystem adapted from Vargo and Lusch (2017)

As compared to GDL, SDL presents a more holistic version of value in three principal ways. First, while GDL presents an exchange-centric view of value, SDL expands the scope of value creation by presenting an interaction centric, processual perspective on value. While GDL situates value in socio-economic relations that define the moment of exchange, SDL expands the context of value to socio-economic relations that are
entangled across the process of exchange, of which the moment of exchange becomes a subset.

SDL expands the context of value creation, which addresses the shortcomings of GDL in exploring value in socio-cultural contexts (Akaka et al. 2014). While GDL suggests value to be a property of goods, SDL acknowledges value to be a part of the socio-cultural practices of human actors. The expansion of the context of value creation by SDL to the service ecosystem suggests inclusion of phenomenological interactions beyond exchange to encompass all human social interactions (Heidegger 1996). SDL discusses value as emergent in interactions with or without the presence of the firm, in the use of a product or service (Vargo & Lusch 2016). This suggests that value also resides in interactions during an individual’s consumption experience with other actors and resources such as the supplier, other customers, friends and family as well as the object itself. Thus, expansion of context to include interactions in everyday life posits that value can emerge from any interaction in the social world (Echeverri & Skålén 2011; Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2018; Reichenberger 2017).

Second, SDL addresses one of the main shortcomings of GDL by identifying consumer agency in value creation. The active role of consumers in creating value has been demonstrated by several consumer studies (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982). Consumers create value through integration of personal and social resources available to them from
their own life worlds or social contexts (Grönroos & Voima 2013), with or without direct interaction with the supplier (Arnould & Price 1993; Carù & Cova 2003; Kozinets et al. 2004; Lego et al. 2002; Warde 2005). By conceptualising value as co-created by multiple human actors, SDL acknowledges consumer agency in value creation.

Third, SDL identifies other human actors such as regulatory bodies and supply chains as being instrumental in value creation (Normann & Ramirez 1993). SDL attributes agency to multiple human actors through its conceptualisation of value co-creation. SDL describes co-creation as the process of integration and exchange of resources among multiple human actors through which value is created (Vargo et al. 2017). This definition suggests that value is always co-created. Understanding value as being co-created opens up discussions of a two-way exchange, thereby attributing agency to all human actors of an ecosystem (Grönroos 2011; Grönroos & Voima 2013). This conceptualisation eliminates any distinction between producers and consumers, acknowledging them as one of the many actors, involved in the value creation process (Sergio et al. 2017). Hence, it acknowledges agency of all human actors without prioritising any one actor. The table below summarises the key differences between GDL and SDL while demonstrating the relational underpinnings of the latter.
2.5.1 Shortcomings of SDL

Following its resource-based conceptualisation which restricts the understanding of the role of non-human actants in value formation, SDL is not able to explain value on themed routes. SDL does not acknowledge the agency of non-human entities in value formation. The role of materials in SDL is limited to how they become ‘resources’ for humans to use (Edvardsson et al. 2014). Non-human actants in SDL have been studied both as a resource as well as a symbol (Akaka et al. 2014; Edvardsson et al. 2014). Edvardsson et al. (2014) suggest that resources retain potential value until they are used in the process of value co-creation in resource integrative practices. Hence, the way an actor uses an object

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goods Dominant Logic</th>
<th>Service Dominant Logic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange Centric</td>
<td>Interaction Centric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer Consumer Dyad</td>
<td>Networks and systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation – Trade-off model</td>
<td>Phenomenology/relational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer perceived value</td>
<td>Value for multiple actors involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarian/economic value</td>
<td>Individualistic/relativistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer Created</td>
<td>Co-created by actors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Goods Dominant Logic Vs Service Dominant Logic
in a practice makes it a resource, by pointing towards its ‘becoming’. Similarly, Akaka et al. (2014) suggest non-human entities as being symbols interpreted by humans, facilitating symbolic value formation through the construction of normative, representative and exchange performances (Akaka et al. 2014; Kjellberg & Helgesson 2006). Both these conceptualisations suggest a one-way interaction between actors and resources, suggesting that materials have no agency in influencing/directing human action but can only do so through application of human agency such as in the case of service-scapes\(^2\). Thus, the usage of the term ‘resource’ to denote people, objects, skills and knowledge, limits the understanding of the agentic role of non-human entities in value formation.

\(^2\) Servicescapes – The marketing literature on ‘servicescapes’ prioritises human cognitive abilities when discussing the role of non-human entities in mediating value. Servicescapes have conventionally been studied as an organisation’s physical environment in terms of interior designs, visual and other sensory cues, and signs that attract consumers. More recent studies on servicescapes extend to identifying landscapes and marketplaces as part of the contemporary service environment (Arnould et al. 1998; Rosenbaum & Massiah 2011). The involvement of non-human entities such as furniture, tapestry and other objects produces associations and imaginaries that mediate value (Salazar & Graburn 2014). Thematic objects such as decorations, architecture, products, and costumes are used to create a setting that has symbolic value for the consumer (Beardsworth & Bryman 1999; Gottdiener 1997; Lukas 2007c). Several consumer studies on themed environments (Borghini et al. 2009; Sherry 1998; Sherry et al. 2001; Thompson & Arsel 2004) describe the involvement of objects and materialities in constructing semiotic associations that mediate exchange or use value. However, in light of emphasis on non-human agency, the concept of non-human entities shaping servicescapes as a ‘resource’ is contested and needs further interrogation, not only from an SDL perspective (Nilsson & Ballantyne 2014) but also from a CCT logic perspective.
Themed routes are collaborative networks or collectives, which suggest value formation as being constructed by multiple social actors. However, the themed route context also comprises of non-human entities that are argued to have agency by post-modern researchers (Law & Mol 1995; Perry 1926). Following this argument, non-human entities such as marketing collateral, landscape and vehicles may be influential in triggering imaginaries or associations, which motivate, entice and move tourists on the route. This suggests the need to investigate the agency of non-human actants in value formation, which is restricted through the resource-based view of value of SDL.

2.6 Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) Logic – Semiotic Value

Moving away from the transactional conceptualisations of value, consumer culture researchers argue for a semiotic understanding of value, from a ‘sign economy’ perspective (Venkatesh 1999; Venkatesh & Peñaloza 2006). The backdrop of semiotic value is Baudrillard’s view of the world as a sign system where the marketplace is constructed during consumption, through the exchange of signs between individuals (Baudrillard & Levin 1981). Semiotic value suggests that both exchange and use values of an object are driven by its semiotic or symbolic involvement in the lives of the consumers (Karababa & Kjeldgaard 2015). Current relational understanding of value is based on its semiotic conceptualisations, which suggest that associated meanings and semiotic associations of objects change during translation (Arsel & Bean 2013), and
circulation (Figueiredo & Scaraboto 2016; Scaraboto & Figueiredo 2017). For example, Arsel (2016) discusses how objects change meaning, and therefore value, in different relational market assemblages. In a similar vein (Figueiredo & Scaraboto 2016) use the concept of ‘trans-valuation’ whereby the value of an activity changes within different physical and digital material arrangements.

Like SDL, the CCT logic also acknowledges the role of non-human entities, in constructing semiotic interpretations. Similar to ‘resources’, CCT studies acknowledge the involvement of non-human entities as ‘symbols’ or sign enforcers, by suggesting objects to be instrumental (Appadurai 1988) through their role in cultural contexts, situations and practices (Fernandez & Beverland 2018), and in determining value (Scaraboto & Figueiredo 2017). Consequently, most CCT research on value, acknowledge the capacity of non-human entities to influence or mediate value through their symbolic affiliations.

2.6.1 Shortcomings of CCT Logic

The semiotic view of value established by CCT research is rather limiting. Non-human entities in CCT logic are understood as resources that influence value through their symbolic associations. Studying value as semiotic, all CCT studies establish the role of material as ‘helpful’ in creating semiotic value, therefore outlining a one-way interaction between humans and non-humans. For instance, Arsel (2016) establishes the materiality
of an online networking site as an infrastructure or a resource in the cosmetic swapping market. Figueiredo and Scaraboto (2016) in their study on geocaching analyse the associated digital and physical objects as influential in perpetuating semiotic value. Such a stance suggests that objects are either passive in nature, invested with meanings given to them by the consumer (Belk & Coon 1993), or are ‘useful’ to people through their involvement as a resource in human practices (Haldrup & Larsen 2006).

Despite it’s acknowledgement, the discourse on non-human agency has not yet been connected to value in CCT research. Several other, non-value-related consumer culture studies, discuss the role of non-human entities as agential in ‘directing’ and ‘changing’ practices through material affordances of non-human entities and affect in marketplaces (Canniford et al. 2017; Epp & Price 2010; Hill 2015; Hoffman & Novak 2018). However, in conceiving value as semiotic, these studies yet again prioritise human cognition, thus diluting the agency of non-human entities and their role in value formation. Additionally, the notion of semiotic value suggests that value is always ‘meaningful’ and humans are rational thinkers who always aim for value in all their actions (Arnould 2013). This is challenging for understanding value for the themed route traveller as considering the role of affect in themes, value may be ‘felt’ and ‘sensed’ in everyday interactions (Ahmed 2013; Newell 2018; Perry 1926). Therefore, CCT research stream’s pursuance of relational ontologies to better understand the role of non-human entities is found to be disconnected from value, following the ‘semiotic’ conceptualisation of value.
2.7 Research Gap

The literature review on SDL and CCT suggests that value formation does not occur in isolated moments of exchange, but through ‘meaningful’ everyday practices that involve social interactions (Arnould 2013; Vargo & Lusch 2017). While GDL establishes value in an object in a dyadic interaction, SDL acknowledges the socio-cultural context in which value is embedded but refrains from acknowledging non-human agency. CCT logic discusses the role of non-human entities through semiotic associations, without acknowledging the agency of non-human entities and the socio-material interplay that can shape value. Although several research streams seek to understand value as a more-than-human achievement, including Perry’s relational conceptualisation of value in philosophy and CCT logic’s acknowledgment of non-human agency, the discussion remains untheorised. This creates a lacuna in understanding the role of socio-material relations that shape value. It is therefore important to re-conceptualise value as a more-than-human achievement, which incorporates ‘felt’, alongside cognitive relations with non-human elements. Considering the non-acknowledgment of the socio-material entanglements, the Figure 2.2 illustrates the research gap in understanding value on themed routes. The gap in understanding value on themed routes is attributed to the absence of acknowledgment of non-human agency, exerted through affect and affordances (highlighted as black boxes), as identified in Chapter 1, and further explored in the next section.
Figure 2.2 Research Gap in understanding Value on Themed Routes
2.8 Value as a More-than-Human Achievement

The themed route marketplace illustrates the importance of thinking about value formation as an ongoing negotiation between human and non-human agency (Pickering 1995). Value formation requires studying not just the role of social actors but also non-human entities for their agency. The term ‘more-than-human’ implies the role of humans and non-human entities in shaping value. A more-than-human conceptualisation of value helps establish value as not socially constructed but situated and relational, thus accounting for the role of non-human entities in shaping value. Following a relational perspective on value, Perry (1926) points towards the role of non-human entities in two ways: firstly, through how material affordances shape practices; and secondly, through their role in triggering affect.

2.8.1 Material Affordances

Non-human entities become active through their involvement in activities through their affordances (Gherardi 2016). CCT researchers have applied relational perspectives to better understand consumption practices, by studying how people engage with things, people, bodies, weather, oceans, and technology (Borgerson 2014; Thomas et al. 2013). Consumer culture researchers have explored the relations with non-human entities through their material affordances which points towards three important insights. First, material affordances have been discussed to be instrumental in directing everyday practices (Canniford & Bajde 2015; Epp et al. 2014; Gruen 2017). Canniford and Shankar
(2013) provide an account of ‘human-surfing’ assemblages, where non-human entities such as technology and weather direct surfing times for seasoned surfers. Gruen (2017) discusses design of the car-sharing service Zipcar as agential in shaping how and when the car will be used.

Second, studies show that the same non-human entity can display different material affordances when placed in different socio-material assemblages (Epp & Price 2010). Epp and Price (2010) discuss the different affordances of a dining table in its different translations over time. Cochoy (2008) describes the different material affordances of the shopping cart constructing calculations about things that can be bought and at the same time, also enabling support for standing, seat for a child and limiting the activities of children while shopping.

Third, researchers have also argued for material affordances to be instrumental in connecting practices. Recently, Hoffman and Novak (2018) discuss the role of the Internet of Things (IoT) or the material affordances of technology in constructing consumer experience by connecting practices. Further, Magaudda (2011) discusses the affordances of vinyl discs and iPods in changing digital music marketplace cultures through continuous changes in interactions, meanings and related interconnected practices. This literature argues for the role of non-human agency in shaping people’s everyday
practices through material affordances, thus highlighting their important role in value formation.

Thus, considering that travelling on the themed route includes interactions with, non-human entities such as cars, roads, vehicle, weather, landscapes and vistas, it is important to study how material affordances orchestrate consumption practices on the themed route.

2.8.2 Non-human Elements as Affective Triggers

Perry (1926) argues that perception or judgment of value is not a prerequisite for value formation. This suggests that value is located not only in cognition but also in routine activities that are ‘sensed’ and ‘felt’ in more-than-cognitive ways. This argument again points towards an important role of non-human entities on the themed route. The agency of non-human entities is realised through affect since materialities are always affective (Anderson & Harrison 2006). Of the several definitions suggested for ‘affect’ in sociology and human geography, this research adopts the Deleuzian understanding of the term (Anderson 2006; Deleuze & Guattari 1988; Massumi 1995) which recognises affect as the flow of intensities through the relations within which entities are entangled resulting in feelings and emotions (Haldrup & Larsen 2006; Sheller 2004; Thrift 2004a).

Affect lies ‘beyond the threshold of awareness, subjective meaning and discourse’ (Gherardi 2017, p. 348348). Literature on affect suggests a conflict between scholars who situate
affect as part of social construction, and those who externalise affect from social construction. While the former discuss affect being circulated between meanings and feelings as people try to make sense of their world through both mind and the senses (Deleuze & Guattari 1988), the latter suggest affect as an external phenomena that occurs before the application of cognition, and is thus, outside the bounds of social control (Hemmings 2005). Following the researchers who acknowledge the interplay between affect and cognition in social construction, affect is discussed as a relation between different entities, which is palpable and felt in symbols (Newell 2018). Many researchers argue that movement of affect amongst entities happens through semiotic processes, which are sensed and felt more-than-cognitively (Anderson & Harrison 2006; Reckwitz 2016). Newell (2018) argues that symbolic associations demonstrate the unconscious percolation of affect into human bodies, something that is reflected in feelings or pre-cognitive actions of the human body. This process, termed ‘semiosis’ by Newell (2018) codes intensities between humans and non-humans into signs and symbolic associations, which are converted into feelings. Feelings are a human bodily response to affect (Molander & Hartmann 2018). Feelings are expressed through visceral shifts in habits and postures that are a pre-cognitive result of affect (Anderson 2006).

Newell (2018) argues for the role of artefacts, materialities and discourses as generators of affect (Reckwitz 2016) or affective symbols. Non-human materialities such as architecture, landscapes, stones, plants, animals create affects that instigate a ‘sense of
place’. For example, Reckwitz (2016) discusses the role of architecture in creating imaginings and interpretations, as well as reflexive pre-cognitive practices through materiality of buildings, lanes and roads, as affect generators or symbols. Newell (2018) discusses discourses, texts, images and language as ‘carrying affect’ when she discusses GIF symbol communication on the smartphone. Recent CCT studies suggest the importance of affect in operationalising non-human agency. Canniford et al. (2017) discuss affects triggered by smells in creating a sense of place. Hill (2015) discusses affective qualities of spaces in influencing bodily experiences of a sporting atmosphere\(^3\) in a stadium. In other words, since affect is always situationally ‘felt’, it highlights the relational composition in which it is triggered, therefore suggesting an agentic role of non-human entities.

Acknowledging affect is important in the case of themed routes, as this literature points towards multiple non-human entities, materialities and marketing communications, carrying and instigating affective semiosis through theming. Thus, addressing symbolic

\[^3\] The meanings of ‘affect’ and ‘atmosphere’ are difficult to differentiate in the geography literature. Geographers describe atmosphere as an affect that envelops spaces and ‘presses upon people from all sides with a certain force’ (Anderson 2009, p. 78). Atmospheres are felt and sensed as affective intensities that pass through bodies. Atmospheres are shared and contagious at the same time (Thrift 2008). These definitions of affect suggest that atmosphere is a spatial derivative of affect. Affect and atmosphere share most characteristics with each other, the difference being that there may be multiple affects constructing an atmosphere. For example, a sporting atmosphere is constructed of several affects that trigger feelings such as anger, disappointment, excitement, etc. However, although many people might feel different affects, the fact that they are in the same space means they share the same sporting atmosphere.
associations as sensed and felt, suggests non-human entities, materialities and discourse
elements to be affective triggers channelling movement of affect.

2.8.3 Value in Relation

The literature on material affordances and affect suggests that value formation for
themed routes needs to be re-thought from a socio-material relational perspective that
incorporates non-human agency alongside human agency. This thesis answers the call to
understand value in the socio-material context of themed routes by employing a ‘value
in relation’ approach, which acknowledges value as situated, relational and a more-than-
human achievement. Through the relational ontological approach, this thesis addresses
the agency of both human and non-human elements in constructing value on the themed
route (Hill et al. 2014). The relational approach makes it possible to investigate the role of
both human and non-human entities in multiple socio-material assemblages. This assists
in understanding value achieved through relations between human and non-human
entities, which direct symbolic consumption of themed routes. In the next chapter, a
theoretical framework is suggested using a strand of social practice theory which
establishes value in the themed route marketplace as a more-than-human achievement.

2.9 Summary

With an entry point of ontology, this chapter offered a literature review to better
understand the concept of value in philosophy and marketing. The review identified
three dominant logics in marketing. It was suggested that although each logic makes an important contribution to understanding value, all the conceptualisations of value are still restrictive in understanding value on themed routes, emergent through a socio-material interplay, which is operationalised through theme and movement. The chapter thus argued for ‘value in relation’ as a more-than-human achievement, incorporating non-human agency through affordances and affect. Borrowing from practice theory, the next chapter presents a theoretical framework to understand the concept of ‘value in relation’.
3 CHAPTER 3–THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Overview

The aim of the chapter is to propose a theoretical framework to understand value in relation by drawing on social practice theory. To answer the research question ‘How does value emerge for the traveller in the socio-material context of themed routes?’ this chapter constructs a practice-based relational value framework, through which value on the themed route can be understood. The proposed framework acknowledges non-human agency through affect and affordances, and helps understand value in socio-material relations by situating them in social practices. This chapter is structured into four main sections. The first section discusses the need for using practice theoretical approaches. The second section provides an overview of different practice-based approaches used in sociology and marketing. The third section discusses the principles underpinning the proposed theoretical framework, and the fourth section offers the practice-based value framework as the proposed theoretical framework for understanding value, by building on strands of the social practice theory.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the literature on value in marketing, through SDL and CCT logic, contextualises the socio-material relations in social practices (Akaka et al. 2014; Arnould 2013). Vargo and Lusch (2017) and Akaka et al. (2014) advise adopting praxeology to understand how value emerges in practices. Similarly, Arnould
(2013) too argues for a value praxeology following that value emerges in social practices. This thesis follows the call to praxeology by CCT and SDL researchers and uses ‘social practice theory’ (Shove et al. 2012) to construct a relational conceptualisation of value in socio-material relations.

3.2 **Why Practice?**

Practice theoretical approaches are a family of sociological approaches that help understand social life (Nicolini 2016). Practices are described as a nexus of ‘doings’ (actions/interactions) and ‘sayings’ (meanings/rules) which form the basic unit of social structures (Schatzki 1996). Practice theoretical approaches posit that practices consist of a set of actions, that connect different practices to form wider complexes and constellations, which in turn form the ‘*basic domain of study in social sciences*’ (Giddens 1984). These wider complexes of practices are understood as social structure, where practices act as the thread that is knitted together (Reckwitz 2002a; Shove et al. 2012; Warde 2005).

There are three reasons why practice theoretical approaches provide a suitable theoretical grounding to understand value in socio-material relations that describe the themed route marketplace. First, practices *situates socio-material relations* (Gherardi 2016). By connecting doings/actions with meanings and understandings, practices help establish relations between entities in a given time and space. By analysing practices, it is easier to draw
conclusions on how value emerges in the socio-material relations arranged through the practice.

Second, practice theoretical approaches recognise the role of affect in enabling the understanding of how value emerges as ‘felt’. Some practice-approaches consider affect to be a guiding phenomenon directing human perceptions as well as doings (Molander & Hartmann 2018; Welch 2017). Thrift (2008) argues for affective interactions being assimilated and reflected upon over time, registered as skills in humans. Reckwitz (2016) discusses the role of affect in structuring action and teleology of a practice. Thus, by recognising affective relations, practice theories enable an understanding of how value emerges as ‘felt’ or ‘sensed’ in symbolic associations that may govern doings and demonstrate acquired understandings on a themed route (Newell 2018).

Third, practice theoretical approaches acknowledge non-human affordances or material agency by recognising humans as part of the socio-material fabric, and not its creator, thus bringing both humans and non-human entities onto the same ontological platform (Shove et al. 2012). Social practice theories assert that non-human entities can equally exert agency through their affordances which can shape an interaction/action. This is important in order to comprehend the role of non-human entities in shaping themed route practices.
3.3 Practice Theoretical Approaches

Practice theoretical approaches commonly referred to as the social practice theory are a broad body of scholarship. There are many different versions, each building on the previous one. In what follows, the argument charts some of the most important contributors and ‘turns’ within the literature. The basic tenet of practices that is common to all approaches is the ‘structure-agency’ recursiveness. The pioneers of practice, Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984) suggest that all human action is shaped by social structures, and recursively shape social structures through their variations over time (Schatzki 1996). Social practice theory has emerged differently following the cultural and material turn in sociology.

The cultural turn views practices as constituting social relations and prioritises human agency (Nash, K 2001), while the material turn emphasises the role of materiality in shaping social relations (Latour 2005; Scott et al. 2014). While the cultural turn followed by Bourdieu and Giddens resulted in humanist versions of the social practice theory, the materialist turn followed by (Shove et al. 2012) resulted in materialist versions of social practice theory.

Humanist practice approaches are borrowed from Bourdieu and Giddens who restricted theorising based on human agency. Earlier work by Schatzki (1996) identifies practice as a doing or an act that is performed resulting from the connection between
‘understandings’, ‘rules’ and ‘teleo-affective structures’. ‘Understandings’ are understood as human skills and subjective considerations of the practice, developed through repetition and routinisation of practice. ‘Rules’ are understood as explicit or normative principles or instructions that guide action, and ‘teleo-affective structures’ (TA Structures) are understood as pre-cognitive and cognitive teleological tasks or actions underpinned by shared meanings, rules and emotions that enable the perpetuation of a practice. Following on from Schatzki’s conceptualisation of practice, Warde (2005) simplified practice into ‘understandings’, ‘procedures’ and ‘engagements’ (Echeverri & Skålén 2011; Schau et al. 2009; Warde 2005). ‘Understandings’, are retained as the skills/know-how or competencies. ‘Procedures’ include the institutionalised norms or ‘rules’ and ‘engagements’ include the doings towards ends and purposes that have an aspirational meaning or teleological structure. Both Warde (2005) and Schatzki (1996) situate practices in the social domain by prioritising human cognition.

Alternatively, later studies by Schatzki (2016) and Shove et al. (2012) present a relationally flat version of practice theory, where non-humans share the same ontological footing as humans. Following the material turn, Shove et al. (2012) describe practice as a doing that results from the intersection of ‘meanings’, ‘competencies’ and ‘materials’. Meanings include norms and rules, and emotional associations that are underpinned by Schatzki (1996)’s definition of TA structures. ‘Competencies’ include understandings and skills of the practice, and ‘materials’ present a category, which include the affordances of non-
human elements through their involvement in the practice. By incorporating materials as a disparate element of practice, Shove et al. (2012) establish non-human agency in practice.

Following the material turn, Shove’s version of social practice theory identifies humans through their affordances by positioning them as carriers of practice (Reckwitz 2002a). Shove et al. (2012) describe competencies as comprising of skills and understandings that are required to carry the practice where understanding is produced through kinaesthetic, tacit and aesthetic sensibilities. These are formed through affective interactions in different practices routinised over time and space. Other practice theorists following the material turn, suggest that human senses ‘store’ gained knowledge of routines, which lead to further refinement of sensibility when in familiar social and material relationships (Schatzki 2012). This understanding of ‘stores’ or ‘carriers’ emphasises the role of humans as vehicles of practices (Reckwitz 2002a). Thus, Shove’s (2012) version of social practice theory points towards a materially driven understanding of sociality.

In the context of themed routes, humans derive value through symbolic association, which is a result of the interplay between feeling and meaning, affect and cognition (Newell 2018). This demonstrates practice as a cultural process achieved through a ‘dance of agency’ between the human and the non-human, which in turn suggests a need to connect the humanist and materialist understandings of practice. This research
conceptualises a version of social practice theory which acknowledges the nexus between the social and the material turns through acknowledgment of both affect and affordances. The upcoming sections outline the premises and elements of the proposed framework.

3.4 Value in Social Practice

Adopting a relational view of value suggests conceiving value in socio-material relations. Social practice theory (Shove et al. 2012) suggests relations to be embedded in practices, which is suitable to understand value in relation. Several SDL and CCT researchers point towards the potential rewards of applying practice theoretical approaches to conceptualise value (Arnould 2013; Arnould 2007; Schau et al. 2009). Indeed, several researchers have established value formation in social practices (Echeverri & Skålén 2011; Hollebeek et al. 2017; Holttinen 2010, 2014; Korkman et al. 2010; Marcos-Cuevas et al. 2016). However, following SDL and CCT conceptualisations of value, these studies suggest practices as being socially constructed (Akaka et al. 2014; Edvardsson et al. 2011), and thus restrict the understanding of value as a more-than-human achievement, by not acknowledging non-human agency.

Drawing upon Schatzki (1996) and Shove et al. (2012), this thesis proposes a practice-based value framework that acknowledges non-human agency illustrated through affordances and affect. This section discusses the three premises on which the proposed practice-based value framework is based.
3.4.1  *Premise 1: Agency as Ability to Change*

To understand non-human agency in practices through affordances and affect, it is important to dig a bit deeper into the meanings of agency. In the field of philosophy, agency is understood as the ‘ability to act’ (Giddens 1984). Both words ‘ability’ and ‘act’ suggest competency and intentionality, making action a human endeavour. Agency can be thought of as equal between humans and non-humans (Malfouris, 2008) from a flat ontological approach. Several post-structuralist philosophers such as Jane Bennett and Bruno Latour argue against this prioritization of competency and intentionality in order to identify non-human agency. Bruno Latour adopts a flat ontological approach (considering both humans and non-human entities as equal) suggesting that, intentionality is mediated in relations and hence both human and non-human entities can have equal agency (Latour 2005). An alternative school of thought presents agency as ‘unequal’ (Fernandez, 2015), or ‘distributed’ (Bennett, 2010) from a not-so-flat ontological approach when incorporating human intentionality. Jane Bennett offers a less-flat-more-vertical ontological approach by accommodating human ‘speciesism’ in intentionality and suggesting the notion of ‘distributed agency’ in relational assemblages (Bennett 2010). Agency being distributed suggests that humans and non-humans interact in their individual capacities to conduct the collaborated action. While both perspectives accommodate non-human agency, they conceptualize human intentionality differently. Latour positions intentionality as a result of human-non-human relations deprioritizing
humans’ ability to think and act. Bennett, on the other hand, upholds human agency alongside non-human agency, whereby humans and non-humans demonstrate their ‘vitalities’ (individual capacities) in the ‘assemblage’ of the phenomenon.

Consumer researchers have recently started thinking about the role of human intentionality in conceptualizing non-human agency following Bruno Latour (Bettany 2014) as well as Jane Bennett (Borgerson 2014, Otnes et. al. 2014). In her paper on agency, Fernandez (2015) follows Jane Bennett in conceptualizing semiotic agency as she upholds human agency (understood as intentionality) by arguing that agency is semantically emergent in socio-material assemblages whereby humans infuse agency into objects through cultural symbols and signs.

Following the practice perspective, the question of intentionality is rendered redundant (Nicolini 2016). As the practice approach conceives of humans as vessels of practices, skills and intentionality of action are both understood as acquired in practice over time. This suggests that humans as a species are not special or different from other non-human entities by virtue of having the ability to act, as both the ‘ability’ and ‘action’ are a processual culmination of different relations in and over time. Thus, this deconstruction of speciesism allows both human and non-human entities to be equally agentic (Malafouris 2008).
Bringing humans and non-humans onto the same ontological footing through the practice approach allows consideration of non-human agency through the affordances of non-human entities. Further, understanding agency through affect requires consideration of affect as a trigger of action or a change. As affect primarily triggers feelings and associations and may not directly translate to action, this thesis conceptualised agency as the ‘ability to change’ (Thrift 2008). Change is understood as a physical/material change or a trigger of feelings or emotions that is ‘felt’ or ‘sensed’ (Thrift 2008). Thrift (2008) describes thinking about ‘ability to change’ to acknowledge non-human agency that is not easily recognised in the on-flow of everyday. For example, the heat produced by the sun resulting in perspiration or a ‘change’ demonstrates the affordances of the body, clothing and the sun. The sun leading to a feeling of warmth (depending on its relational arrangement with winds, clouds) demonstrates the affect of the shared intensities between the body and the sun. Further, a sunny day being symbolically sensed as a good day for outdoors, suggests the combination of affect and previously acquired competencies about outdoors, the sunny day resulting in movement outdoors is a cognitive response or action (Rantala et al. 2011). Thus, recognising affective changes requires unpacking interactions that are physical/felt/sensed. Acknowledging agency as the ability to change, helps in identifying the affect and affordances of non-human entities, which are instrumental in directing value on themed routes.
3.4.2 Premise 2: Exchange and Consumption as Doings

Exchange and consumption are conceptualised as ‘doings’ representing multiple practices (Warde 2014). SDL and GDL both focus on creating value through exchange as a practice in itself. Where GDL restricts value to exchange interactions, SDL presents exchange as a practice along with consumption practices that actors indulge in while using or creating a good, service or experience (Grönroos 2011; Holt 1995). This segregation of exchange and consumption as distinct practices suggests exchange and consumption are central to social life (Vargo & Lusch 2017). This is problematic, as such a conceptualisation does not acknowledge the embeddedness of transaction and consumption as part of other practices (Nicolini 2017). Consumer researchers argue that consumption as well as exchange are ‘doings’, or activities that form part of multiple practices (Halkier et al. 2011; Warde 2005). Warde (2005); (2013, 2016) and Hartmann et al. (2015) conceptualise exchange and consumption as moments of action in everyday practices. Phipps and Ozanne (2017) conceptualise consumption as a part of people’s routines. This is important because setting exchange or consumption as a doing/action of multiple practices helps marketers understand how exchange or consumption features in the everyday life of consumers.

3.4.3 Premise 3: Themed Route Marketplace as Emergent

Marketplaces are conceived as socio-material assemblages that are emergent in practices (Kjellberg & Helgesson 2006). A relational approach argues for the marketplace to emerge
from socio-material relations formed through actions/interactions between humans and non-human entities (Deleuze & Guattari 1979; Latour 2005). Thus, the themed route marketplace is understood as a function of relations between human and non-human entities, which are established during different practices on the route (Bajde 2013; Callon 1984). The connections between entities are established through affects, emotions, meanings and actions (Deleuze & Guattari 1979; Schatzki 2002), which are played out in practice. This relational understanding thus expands the context of themed routes by including multiple related actors and their action networks.

3.5 *Practice-Based Value Framework*

Based on the three premises discussed above, the practice-based value framework is proposed to understand value in relation. The proposed framework describes practices to comprise of three elements: ‘competencies’, ‘actants’ and ‘teleo-affective structures’. Competencies reflect the skill, know-how or practical and general understandings of the practice (Schatzki 2002; Shove et al. 2012). Actants include the human and non-human entities that reflect the agencies that are involved in conducting a practice (Appadurai 2015; Latour 1994). Teleo-affective structures include the associated meanings, feelings, emotions and affects (Schatzki 1996, 2002).

The practice-based value framework proposes that value emerges in socio-material relations that come together in a practice. Value emerges in the process of connection
between the elements of a practice (Korkman et al. 2010; Schatzki 2016; Shove et al. 2012). Figure 3.1 illustrates the proposed practice-based value framework, with the following sections explaining the key elements of the framework.

![Proposed Practice-based Value Framework](image)

**Figure 3.1 Proposed Practice-based Value Framework**

### 3.5.1 Actants

‘Actants’ articulate the agency of human and non-human entities (Latour 1994; Law 2009; van der Duim et al. 2017). The use of the term ‘actants’ is based on an understanding of agency as the ability to change and acknowledges the involvement of both human and non-human entities in practice. The term ‘actants’ also acknowledges humans as
cognitive, affective, as well as material beings, who can impact value through decision-making, sensing and feeling affect, as well as through their bodily affordances. The term ‘actants’ acknowledges the role of non-human elements in generating affect and dictating practices through their affordances. For example, actants in cooking practices would include the cook as well as the ingredients, tools and the stove, all of whom have the ability to bring variations to cooking practices.

3.5.2 Competencies

Competencies reflect how practice is translated by human actants. Competencies broadly include: (i) skills and (ii) understandings. The skills or technical know-how describe bodily requirements to follow the practice by human actants. Skills are derived from Bourdieu’s ‘practical understandings’, which are understood as cognitive and/or pre-cognitive bodily schemes that enable performance of an action (Schatzki 1996).

Understandings of the practice are described as the learnt or cultivated knowledge of the practice. The articulation of understandings in the practice-based value framework follows the perspective offered by Alkemeyer and Buschmann (2016) who argue for consideration of both affective and cognitive aspects of humans in acquiring understandings of the practice. Alkemeyer and Buschmann (2016) posit that social conventions or norms are not only acquired through routinisation of practices (Reckwitz 2002b) but are also cognitively cultivated by humans. Following Alkemeyer and
Buschmann (2016), social structures can transform, transmit, perpetuate and reproduce practices through the application of cognitive learnings. Adopting this conceptualisation of understandings helps in reinstating humans as cognitive, affective and material actants. Building on the cooking example mentioned above, competencies of cooking practices would include skills such as knowing how to operate the stove, an understanding of how ingredients would produce the desirable taste and how the combination of heat, stove, pan and ingredients will result in tasty food.

3.5.3 Teleo-affective Structures

The third element of the practice-based Value Framework is teleo-affective structures (TA). Teleo-affective structures are described as a combination of meanings, and feelings/emotions that guide teleological tasks or doings that structure the practice (Schatzki 1996). The term ‘teleo-affective’ is derived from teleology and affect, where ‘teleo’ acknowledges the purpose-orientation of all action and ‘affective’ recognises the role of shared intensities of interactions that result in emotion and action (Welch 2017). Schatzki (1996) suggests understanding TA structures as the purpose or meanings of action achieved as a result of teleological and affective interactions. These are subsequently institutionalised and normalised with repetition, into a set of meanings and rules that guide performances of a practice when they infiltrate understandings or competencies (Hui et al. 2016). TA structures acknowledge the role of affect as feelings
and emotions that are either directly reflected in activities or are synthesised into meanings and competencies that guide doings/activities of a practice.

While the earlier works of Schatzki studied affect as merged into meanings (Schatzki 1996), some of his later works have articulated affect as an important part of practices, which has been used in this framework (Hui et al. 2016). In the cooking example, teleo-affective structure would include ‘meanings or purposes’ of cooking bringing variations to the practice of cooking, for instance, cooking for the family vs cooking for guests. Hence, it would impact on the resultant tasks/doings, such as using guest china vs homewares or increasing the quantities to include more people. Further, the ‘affects’ of cooking would entail interactions between the cook and non-human actants such as oven, pans, cutlery, smells, sounds and heat that convey feelings such as joy of cooking as a way of relaxing as compared to cooking under the stress of meeting the deadline of the guests’ arrival.

3.6 Summary

Borrowing from social practice theory, this chapter offered a practice-based value framework to conceptualise ‘value in relation’. The proposed framework consists of three elements, these being ‘competencies’, ‘actants’ and ‘teleo-affective structures’. The framework is established on three premises. First, it proposes acknowledging non-human agency by re-conceptualising agency to account for non-human affordances and their role
as affective triggers. Second, the framework acknowledges exchange and consumption to be moments or doings embedded in multiple practices. Third, it conceptualises the themed route marketplace as emergent through socio-material relations expressed in practices. The next chapter describes and justifies the methodology that will be used for the thesis investigation.
4 CHAPTER 4 – METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview

The aim of this chapter is to put forward a methodology that is appropriate to address the research question: ‘How does value emerge for the traveller in the socio-material context of themed routes?’. Following consumer studies that adopt an interpretive research approach, this thesis employed ethnomethodology to help accommodate a sensitivity towards non-human agency. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part provides a justification for the qualitative methods of ethnomethodology. Next, insights are offered on the data collection processes, ethical considerations, sampling and analysis techniques. The second part discusses the empirical case context: Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail (AHWFT), Hunter Valley, New South Wales, Australia.

4.2 Methodological Considerations

Following a relational ontology to study themed routes, results in two challenges when discussing methodology. First, a relational ontological approach does not follow the existing notions of territorialised contexts because it privileges relations (Vannini 2015). Second, in doing so, data collection and analysis procedures are also reconfigured as the focus is on recognising, recording and analysing elements of the proposed value framework. The task of locating agency by analysing non-human competencies and affect
in practices requires using a bottom-up non-representational approach to understand relational networks rather than the top-down representational approaches employed in other social constructivist methodologies (Thrift 2008). Thus, the goal of understanding value as a more-than-human achievement makes it important to utilise a methodology that enables a more-than-representational approach (Hill et al. 2014). Doing so will help construct practices through identification of socio-material interactions.

Identifying a methodological stance that supports the understanding of more-than-human relations suggests moving beyond the epistemological paradigms of positivism as well as humanistic qualitative inquiry (Denzin & Giardina 2016b). Relational inquiry disrupts current epistemological paradigms and allows researchers to adopt a midpoint on the scale of paradigms (Ren 2009) where innovative research designs are achieved through interpretive approaches. This freedom from objectivity and representationalism that foregrounds the relational worldview (Lincoln et al. 2011), allows for a mix and match of research methods, essentially removing them from their paradigmatic limitations (Denzin & Giardina 2016b). Thus, this research subscribes to the interpretive research paradigm to explain ‘value in relation’ in the AHWFT marketplace.

Interpretive research has emerged over the years through acceptance of academic rigor in qualitative research (Goulding 2005; Tracy 2010) demonstrated in most humanist interpretations of consumer studies (Hirschman 1986). The interpretive approach has in
fact also been crucial in hermeneutically assessing B2B networks that have resulted in a resource-based view of value (Gummesson 2003). Interpretive research is conducted by abductively assessing contexts using various qualitative methodologies such as ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology and semiotics (Goulding 1999). This research proposes the use of ethnomethodology to study value formation as practice (Garfinkel 1967).

4.3 **Ethnomethodology: Study of Practices**

This research used ethnography as an ethnomethodology to understand value in social practices in the context of the Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail. Ethnography is understood as a social research method that is utilised to understand how people make sense of everyday life (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983). Ethnographic tools used in this research are artefacts including digital archival research, semi-structured interviews and participant observation (Pink 2015). The details of all the methods are documented in Section 4.7. This section focuses on the guiding principles of ethnomethodology that were used to conduct ethnography which resulted in accounting for the role of more-than-human.

Ethnomethodology is understood as a methodological orientation or toolkit that can be used to analyse a context or phenomenon comprising everyday practices (Garfinkel 1967). It investigates practical social accomplishment by studying everyday practices in
the actions and sense-making of humans (McCabe 2003). It upholds the centrality of social practices by virtue of which the focus is on the construction of situated socio-material relations (Nicolini 2009b). Ethnomethodology departs from other methodological orientations because instead of focusing on overarching social norms or internal motivations, it studies social norms and motivations as constructed in interactions (Denzin & Lincoln 2008). Drawing upon various consumer culture researchers (Dowling et al. 2018; Madsen 2018; Molander & Hartmann 2018; Warde 2016), this thesis used ethnography as an ethnomethodology. The use of ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967) is useful in understanding value in social practices in four ways.

First, ethnomethodology facilitates identifying elements of the proposed practice-based value framework. Ethnomethodology moves away from understanding traditions and cultures, to the actual processes through which meanings are created (Denzin & Giardina 2016b). This process-centric understanding of phenomena helps understand practices and assists with identification of practice elements (Garfinkel 1967).

Second, ethnomethodology helps explore non-human agency through the application of abductive hermeneutic techniques (Denzin & Giardina 2016a; Knorr-Cetina 1981). Exploration of non-human agency requires tracking relations and practices through a non-anthropocentric approach (Ren 2011). A non-anthropocentric approach suggests hermeneutically evaluating the entanglement of relations as a situated process that
decentralises agency (Knappett & Malafouris 2008). This is achieved by adopting an abductive approach in ethnomethodology which allows going and back and forth between theory and fieldwork as sense is made by continuously evaluating findings in the field with related discourses (Mick 1986). Additionally, ethnomethodology suggests the use of interpretive methods that permit the hermeneutic evaluation of processes and thereby facilitating a better understanding of agency in practices (Nicolini 2009b).

Third, the interactionist orientation of ethnomethodology enables a non-representational approach for understanding interactions which helps comprehend affect triggered by non-human entities (Hill et al. 2014). Understanding of affect requires a study of teleology and feelings in interactions, observation of precognition, and recounting of onflow of activities (Thrift 2008). This is facilitated by ethnographic methods of activity narratives using ‘interview to the double’ (Nicolini 2009a) and ‘emplaced participation’ (Pink 2015). The ‘interview to the double’ method proposed by Nicolini (2009a) suggests interviewing participants to recall detail of teleology of activities so that the minute interactions that lead to decisions and steps within the activity can be listed. Emplaced participation uses the researcher’s own multi-sensory emplaced experiences to understand the interactions with non-human elements, thereby assisting in locating affect (Pink 2015).

Fourth, the knowledge produced by using ethnomethodology is always situated and emplaced (Garfinkel 1967). The situatedness of knowledge helps to unpack the ordering
or structure of socio-material entanglements in practices (Schatzki 1996). Ethnomethodology incorporates not only participants’ narratives and practices but also acknowledges the role of the researcher in the field and incorporates narratives of embodied and emplaced participation of the researcher (Denzin & Giardina 2016b). This is helpful as practices “may not need to be collected but may be lived, sensed, and done” (Denzin & Giardina 2016b, p. 1616). Thus, the role of the researcher in an emplaced ethnography is significant in constructing knowledge by performing practices.

Fifth, ethnomethodology makes it possible to explore the relational networks of actants, which means the research scope can be broadened. As no beginning or end can be applied to a relational network (Strathern 1996), and as a network transcends geographies (Latour 2005), empirical studies are grounded by tracing the different elements of practices as established in the proposed framework. The scope of study is thus broadened by using ethnomethodology whereby the fieldwork expands to the ‘ethnographic place’ by studying the Hunter Valley region. Pink (2015) discusses ethnographic places as non-static and geographically undefined places that are constructed by the ethnographer while following the relations and practices that describe an ‘event’ or a phenomenon. Consequently, this suggests the research context of the AHWFT needs to be fluid and not determined through geographic space. Considering that the ‘ethnographic place’ is constructed by acknowledging the fluidity of socio-material interactions,
ethnomethodology helps to trace the socio-material relations that construct geographical understandings of AHWFT.

4.4 Researcher Positionality

One of the drawbacks of ethnomethodology is that it relies on the hermeneutic and abductive capabilities of the researcher (Garfinkel 1967). Practices are not a distinct entity that can be visually observed or researched, but need to be comprehended intuitively, through extended periods of exposure to the context (Nicolini 2009b). This suggests the influential role played by the ethnographer in data collection, recruitment and the interpretation of practices (Baszanger & Dodier 2004; Garfinkel 1967). Considering the involvement of hermeneutic, semiotic-sensitive and performative role of the researcher in an ethnography concerning praxis (Denzin 2017), it is important to acknowledge, accommodate or overcome the impacts of researcher positionality, biases and assumptions in research. (Crossley 2014)

Sociology researchers suggest addressing researcher positionality by aspiring to detach from assumptions and biases through reflexivity, but at the same time accepting and acknowledging their presence to produce enriched accounts (Crossley 2014). Establishing the theoretical framework is one of the first steps in this research that combats some of researcher’s biases. The practice-based value framework provides a theoretical lens through which the research is designed and analysed. This allows other researchers ‘to
see what I see’ and come to similar conclusions which highlights the validity and credibility of the research (Denzin 2017). Additionally, acknowledging researcher’s positionality reflexively facilitates overcoming some of the impacts of the ethnographer’s assumptions, biases, orientations and background that influence the ethnography (Fox & Allan 2014). The paragraphs below discuss the researcher’s positionality, and highlight its impacts on research design.

My own experiences and professional background have been instrumental in the genesis of this research. I am a tourism planner of Indian descent. As a tourism planner, I was involved in planning and designing tourist circuits or themed routes for the Indian government which helped me understand their utility in regional development. However, I questioned the demand for such routes. Through my PhD, I wanted to seek answers not from a regional planning perspective but a consumer’s perspective.

In conducting the research on the route I adopted a reflexive stance following my role of a marketing, tourism and CCT researcher, a new mother and a traveller (Mura 2015). I reflected as a researcher on activities that were new to me (Mura 2015). For instance, I had never travelled on a food and wine themed trail before. Here I adorned the cap of an ‘outsider’ trying to study the practices of wine culture (Berger 2013). This enabled me to evaluate activities that I observed on the route through the theoretical lenses afforded to me through my academic influences of CCT research. I embodied the positionality of a
tourist while travelling on the route and recording my own experiences, which also made me an ‘insider’ (Berger 2013). Further, my role as a mother allowed me access to families and other tourist groups who appreciated the multiple roles I adorned as a female.

While my positionality as a mother, researcher and traveller positively influenced the research, my positionality as an Indian and a female also influenced the research as I encountered issues with access and limitations around selection of participants for the research. My positionality as a female impacted my research parameters as I was constantly reminded of safety in a region where intoxication is a norm (Hamilton & Fielding 2018). Being a female in a relatively male-dominated wine culture restricted my access to certain tourist groups and stopped me from engaging in research activities in the region after dark. Not to forget, my ethnicity as an Indian also made me aware of the cultural biases in regional Australia where I was seen as an outsider (Ortbals & Rincker 2009). My ethnicity also influenced the tourist groups I recruited for the research as I was more drawn towards Asian tourists and also at times not felt particularly welcome by certain other tourist groups. Thus, my positionality as an Indian, female, researcher, traveller and a mother was instrumental in shaping the research design, data collection and analysis (Porter & Schanzel 2018) which is explained in more detail throughout the chapter.
4.5 *Researching Travellers*

During the formulation of the research design for ethnography, four points in the tourism literature helped with understanding and confronting the challenges in researching travellers. First, much trail tourism literature studies travellers as tourists (Leiper 1990; Timothy & Boyd 2014). However, following a relational ontology, this categorisation restricts thinking about the different relational assemblages people become a part of. People travelling on the route took on and performed different identities which suggested their involvement in different practices (Nash, D 2001; Cutler et al. 2014). Thus, this research uses the term ‘travellers’ instead of ‘tourists’ to indicate the people travelling on the route.

Second, conducting ethnography on a trail means interviewing people, in groups or couples. This is because it is common to find travellers doing trails in a group and not alone (Nilsson & Tesfahuney 2016). Interviewing travel parties or groups meant that the interview took the shape of a discussion through which experiences were shared. Travel party members contributed to further detailing their experiences as they reminded each other of how and why they visited places and how they felt. Additionally, it helped recording multiple views as well as shared meanings of the same trip and threw light on the negotiations that were involved in group decision-making. This was important from a practice perspective as negotiations demonstrated what was valued by each member of the travel group and how the trail was appropriated accordingly. Thus, the researcher
made no attempt at segregating interviewees from their group for their interview, but interviewed travel parties.

Third, researching travellers requires flexibility in research design. Much research has explored the importance of flexibility in methods, locations and sampling acknowledging the need to maintain privacy (Guillemin & Gillam 2004) following the personal nature of the trail experience (Caton & Santos 2007; Cutler et al. 2014). Thus, this research incorporated flexibility in the interviewing time and location as well as in methods such as by avoiding filming, or following the travellers during their time on the trail. The interviews were conducted before and after their journey. Recruitment strategies were also based on convenience sampling to incorporate flexibility in research.

Fourth, the living, sensing and feeling the field are important characteristics of tourism ethnographies (Matthews 2012; Wagner & Minca 2016). Thus, through participant observation, the researcher applied her own understandings and reflexivity so that she could feel and sense the trail. Being ‘not so much of a wine’ drinker and having never been on a themed trail experience, the researcher entered the trail context as a novice and recorded her experiences on the trail as a ‘new’ wine drinker. This made it possible to incorporate multiple meanings of the trail through which value emerged.
4.6 *Empirical Data Collection*

Ethnography conducted on the route involved extended, experiential participation by the researcher in what was being studied (Belk 2007). The data collection was carried out in three phases. The first phase involved selection of the themed route. The second phase involved making reconnaissance trips to build relationships of trust with the businesses and organisations about their marketing practices (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Reconnaissance trips also served to identify potential field locations to recruit participants to conduct interviews. The third phase involved conducting fieldwork through semi-structured interviews. Participant observation was carried out in the last two phases. The timeline of the research is shown in the figure below.

![Selection of the Trail vs Reconnaissance vs Fieldwork](image)

**Figure 4.1 Data Collection Phases**
4.6.1 Phase I: Selecting the Case Context

The first phase of research involved selecting the case context, which meant studying multiple themed routes in Australia and then choosing one of them. This involved searching for themed routes in Australia which resulted in the identification of 15 trails. Three selection criteria were identified, of which the first was the ‘local’ scale of the route. The scale of the route was guided by a study on trails by Hayes and Macleod (2008) which categorised trails as simple, standard, and sophisticated. Further research on each of the 15 trails was conducted through secondary research and talking to regional tourism marketing organisations about their use. The discussions revealed complex governance structures and inconsistent communication of the theme following implementation issues in most standard and sophisticated trails. The simple trail is defined as having a small, discrete area of coverage, with limited promotion through brochures/leaflets, governed by local partnerships (Hayes & Macleod 2008). Thus, the scale of the trail was selected as ‘simple’ following the need for easy access to information that could be facilitated by local governing organisations or agencies. This resulted in a shortlist of 5 trails.

The second and third criteria were the presence of marketing collateral and high footfalls, which was applied to the shortlisted trails. It was important to gauge the consistency of the theme throughout the trail by studying trail-specific digital marketing collateral. This was done through digital archival research (Fischer & Parmentier 2010).
research records secondary and primary data including going through archival records such as data sets (tourist records), newspapers, books, magazines and other textual sources available online (Timothy 2012). In the digital environment, these data sources translate into webpages including online brochures, eBooks, corporate annual reports, and websites (Fischer & Parmentier 2010). Fischer and Parmentier (2010) argue that the use of digital archival data helps in theorising and developing concepts as it allows the context to be better understood without venturing physically into it. Hence, digital archival data was used to construct an overall understanding of the different ways trails were promoted. Marketing paraphernalia of each ‘simple’ trail was studied to understand how the themes were promoted.

The criterion of high footfalls was used to select a trail which was popular and in use. However, the number of footfalls on these trails was difficult to find, as they were locally arranged through partnerships (interview with AHA president, 2016). Thus, digital archival research through search engines helped to locate websites, archived forums and threads which demonstrated the use of the trails online through online discourses. Routes were analysed for fleeting interactions by users by looking at their number of Instagram photos, Facebook pages, fan pages, blog searches, Pinterest pages that appeared in the first two Google search pages (Kjeldgaard & Knudsen 2014). Fleeting interactions were studied to understand the usage of the routes through tourist interests, seasons, key locations, and practices. These considerations resulted in selecting the case context of the
Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail (AHWFT). In the later phases, digital archival research was continued to understand the specific context of the AHWFT.

The positionality of the researcher also impacted on the selection of Around Hermitage Wine and Food trail in two ways. First, the researcher’s background and lack of knowledge about themed route marketing influenced the selection of a simple trail. The researcher was made aware of employing themed routes as co-marketing tools only after moving to Australia. This was different from India where themed routes are only being used as regional development tools but not marketed as experiential products. This became a limitation for her as she had never travelled on a marketed themed route. Thus, having no embodied knowledge of a themed route, the researcher selected a ‘simple’ themed route for this exploratory research so as to not be overwhelmed by the complexities of the scale. Additionally, the researcher also travelled on a few themed trails including heritage trails and wine trails prior to beginning the research to acclimatise herself with the experience and understand how a trail is marketed (Belk 2007).

Another way the positionality of the researcher influenced the selection of AHWFT was through her responsibilities as a mother. Proximity to her child was considered an important criterion of selection and it was necessary given that the researcher was still nursing her one year-old daughter and had to accommodate nursing times while doing
the research. This also meant that the researcher always travelled as a family unit (Porter 2018). Travelling as a family unit in fact enhanced interviewing as it made it easier to engage in conversations with other families and couples who were travelling on the route as travellers found it comforting and safe to discuss their experiences (Jennings 2005).

4.6.2  Phase II: Ethnography: Reconnaissance and Relationship Building

This phase involved developing relationships with the stakeholders on the AHWFT. Three reconnaissance trips were conducted between June 2016 and October 2016 during which the researcher met the president and senior personnel of Around Hermitage Association (AHA) and other organisations, building relationships with them and seeking permission to interview and observe the tourists for this study in appropriate places. Another purpose of these visits was to understand and reflect on the seasonality, existing marketing communication language used with travellers, understand travel trends and marketing practices (Matthews 2012). This helped with selection of weekends for conducting fieldwork to conduct interviews with the themed route travellers. The reconnaissance trips were conducted prior to the approval of the ethics application because it helped assess the viability and the challenges that might be involved in conducting research in the region. After seeking the support of AHA, the ethics application was forwarded to the university for ethnographic fieldwork.
4.6.3 Phase III: Ethnography: Fieldwork

Fieldwork in the Hunter Valley region was conducted during nine field trips between October 2016 and March 2017 as the summer season was identified as a high footfall period for the region. These trips included using the methods of participant observation and interviewing travellers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 businesses, 4 marketing organisations and 19 traveller groups that consisted of a total of 57 travellers. This was very helpful for assimilating practices during data analysis. The interviews with the 14 businesses provided details of the meanings associated with the themed route. Separate semi-structured questionnaires were prepared for interviews with the businesses as well as with the travellers (see Appendices). Graphic elicitation through the map, as explained in section 4.7.1, was also used before and during the interviews with the travellers (Bagnoli 2009) as it enabled experience recall. Participant observation was conducted at all times during the research except at night time after the wineries closed at 5 p.m. The researcher simultaneously followed all types of participant observation including informal chats and passive observation to link action to meaning. The next section discusses all the research methods, recruitment and sampling in detail.

4.7 Research Methods, Recruitment and Sampling

The broad ethnographic research methods used for this research were semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Methods used for semi-structured interviews
consisted of incentivising and flexible interviewing, while emplaced participation, informal conversation and passive observation were the specific participant observational methods employed. Ethnography is a method frequently followed in several consumer studies to understand how travellers make sense of their experiences (Arnould & Price 1993; Arnould & Wallendorf 1994) through experiential participation of the researcher. Ethnographic methods allow identifying the practices and processes through which a context is formed or transformed. In this research, ethnography made it possible to understand the practices through which value emerged. Both ethnographic methods semi-structured interviews and participant observation helped the researcher to understand practices through multiple socio-material interactions studied on the route (Garfinkel 1967). All methods, recruitment and data collection techniques are listed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Data Sampling and Recruitment in Ethnography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Recruitment/ Sampling Technique</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>37 Interviews with 19 traveller groups (57 travellers), 14 businesses and 4 marketing organisations, 52 photos and 19 maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentivising</td>
<td>Convenience Sampling</td>
<td>11 incentivised traveller groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Interviewing</td>
<td>Convenience Sampling</td>
<td>14 businesses in offices at scheduled times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 traveller groups recorded on Skype who had done the trail in the past 6 months

4 traveller groups who were not aware of the trail while on it, were recorded.

2 travel groups recruited through personal social networks

Photos/Videos/Maps recorded by the researcher and shared by businesses/travellers resulted in 52 photos including photos put on Instagram by the businesses (with permission to use)

Map elicitation resulted in 19 maps being drawn by the interviewees during interview sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Observation</td>
<td>Over 250 transcribed pages collected over 9 research trips over 6 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emplaced Participation</td>
<td>High footfall days - Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sundays in summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field Journal noted while /after observing - 142 pages including transcribed audio field diary before, after and alongside meeting and interviewing member businesses, organisations and travellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Conversation</td>
<td>Convenience Sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interactions with more than 200 people recorded in field journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Observation</td>
<td>High footfall places - restaurants, wineries, HVVC, viewpoints, signage locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 300 people observed and recorded in field journal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.7.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted on the route with businesses, marketers and travellers. Interviews are typical of ethnographic research and they were designed to
create a good understanding of the meanings and feelings associated with practices (Denzin & Giardina 2016b). Semi-structured interviews with businesses helped obtain knowledge about the general profile of the customers, seasons, marketing and emergence of AHWFT as a context (discussed in section 4.10). This helped to clarify the expectations and understandings of the travellers on the trail. Interviews with marketers helped unpack the politics of geography on the route through which businesses and marketers promoted the trail (Wagner & Minca 2016). This was important as the presence of administrative boundaries and marketing practices of different organisational bodies on the route often conflicted with each other, which in turn affected the promotion of the trail (see section 4.10.5). Interviews with travellers were conducted through the ‘interview by the double’ method. In this way the actions, thoughts and meanings through which travellers derived value through probing each action could be deconstructed. The AHWFT map represented the trail which was used to introduce it to the participants (Moore-Cherry et al. 2014). Interviewing travellers was facilitated by the map which helped them recall and mark the places they went to and helped build the story of their experience (Bagnoli 2009; Pink 2015) (Figure 4.4). The map was a crucial tool for the researcher as it was also used during the analysis stage to deconstruct the behaviour and practices of travellers on the route (Figure 4.3).

The methods used for interviewing travellers included incentivising and flexible interviewing. Although incentivising is debated as a technique for interviewing
(Fetterman 2009), its use was necessitated because of difficulties in finding trail travellers on the route as the selected route had not been well promoted by different stakeholders. During the second phase of the fieldwork, it was found that due to inter-organisational misalignments and lack of collaboration, the AHWFT was not being marketed to the travellers by all collaborating stakeholders. Incentivising travellers helped in getting them to follow the trail/route. Literature argues for problems associated with incentivising which include inauthentic information (Jennings 2005). These problems were dismissed by adopting the ‘interview to the double’ method where the focus was on studying factual interactions in narratives (Nicolini 2009a) and also by observing reflexivity in research (Jennings 2005).

While travellers were given incentives to participate in the research, interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants given the need for flexible interviewing in tourism. These methods were supported by photos/videos shared by the travellers and businesses (with their consent) as well as map elicitation which was done during the interviews. Techniques such as providing opportunities to object, approve or comment on situations as understood by the researcher through common knowledge or previous interviews were used (Snow et al. 1982).

Recruiting the businesses for interviews was facilitated by the Around Hermitage Association (AHA) who identified businesses that would be happy to help. These
businesses ranged from winery owners to restaurant owners and accommodation owners. The researcher began the fieldwork by conducting interviews with the businesses on the AHWFT to understand their customers, business and marketing practices and how the themed route strategy figured in these practices. Interviews were conducted at the offices of the businesses involved. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to 90 minutes. Interviews with four marketing organisations that operated within the valley were conducted through contacts established with the help of AHA. These interviews were held at their offices located in the Hunter Valley region. All businesses and marketing organisations were happy to share photos and videos uploaded on their websites and Instagram accounts for the purposes of the research.

Interviews were conducted with 57 travellers who provided a detailed account of their travel experience as lived by the travellers themselves as well as through narratives of ‘doing’ which helped understand pre-cognitive on-flow interactions (Garfinkel 1967). Using the technique of ‘interview to the double’ while conducting interviews allowed the researcher to map moment by moment activities/interactions that helped construct these meanings. Details of participants and their recruitment are described in Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Travel Party</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Recruitment Method</th>
<th>Type of Traveller</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kayne and Nancy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40 - 60</td>
<td>Incentivising</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>Network Type</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brett and Lisa</td>
<td>25-40</td>
<td>Personal Networks</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Penny and Friends</td>
<td>18 - 25</td>
<td>Incentivising</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ross and Family</td>
<td>25-40</td>
<td>Incentivising</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
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<td>Troy and Lauren</td>
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Addressing the lack of promotion of the trail by most marketing organisations, the researcher had to inform and make people travel on the trail in order to understand their trail experience. Thus, semi-structured interviews were conducted based on convenience sampling by recruiting travellers from trusted professional and social networks (Denzin & Lincoln 2011) and the fact that trail travellers were ‘hard to reach’ (Abrams 2010). As the objective of the study was to understand practices, and not why travellers were not travelling on the trail, convenience sampling was most suitable as this enabled an understanding of practices through participants’ full support (Nicolini 2017). Convenience sampling allowed the researcher to capitalise on her existing trusted networks (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Recruitment strategies involved incentivising travellers to travel on the trail for which adverts for the research were floated within the researcher’s social and professional networks. This included advertising the research on social media, university internal websites and through businesses located on the trail. However, advertising on these platforms did not help secure any participants for the study. Four couples who were friends with the researcher agreed to travel and interview. This resulted in two of the couples being immigrant Indians, and two travel groups from the researcher’s professional networks, who were Australians and New Zealanders, who had travelled on the trail in the past six months. These interviews were conducted online over Skype. Interviewing the travel parties who had previously travelled on the trail was
helpful as it revealed how travellers remembered the trail and what aspects they found valuable enough to recall.

Eleven travel groups were recruited by the researcher by approaching them before they started their trip at the visitor centre or at a restaurant on the trail. These groups were incentivised to travel on the trail following standard research ethics of information and consent (Singer & Ye 2013). This included a selection of six assorted wines from the Hunter Valley region. This hamper was kept with the researcher and given to the participants once the journey was completed. It served as gesture to thank people for interviews considering that they would spend substantial amount of time from their day of leisure, being interviewed. Four other travel-groups, already on the trail but did not know that they were on the trail, were also interviewed. This helped understand the expectations and understandings of what distinguishes a trail and mark key affective triggers and material affordances which may be missed by trail travellers.

A few travellers were also happy to share/email photos from their trips that have been used in this research. Participants were approached and asked to show their photos and videos while interviewing them so as to visually understand their practices and embodied behaviours. The researcher then made notes in her field journal about these photos/videos, etc. Travellers’ photos and videos became a way for them to connect with
their experiences which helped them to recall the moments of decision-making and reasons for travelling to specific places (Rakic & Chambers 2009).

The positionality of the researcher as an Indian immigrant PhD researcher impacted recruitment in three different ways. First, being an Indian, the researcher associated wine with intoxication and something which was not particularly seen in a good light socially. Thus, not being accustomed to the wine culture, the researcher was unable to pick on the nuances of wine and thus how the wineries on the trail differentiated from other wineries in the Hunter valley region. As the role of the researcher was also to inform and promote the trail, this incapability resulted in not being able to entice serious wine connoisseurs.

Second, the embodied identity of the researcher may have deterred some travellers during the first few fieldtrips. Wearing a university ID, casual clothing and lurking at the HVVC observing and gauging who would be interested in an interview, indicated a sense of desperation which might not have been appreciated.

Third, observably, some travelers to the Hunter Valley were Australians in the over 55 age group who did not seem to be interested in engaging with an immigrant Indian woman. This was recorded in a field note by the researcher as below.

‘Why are they not interested in a chat, is it my clothes, am I not fitting in with the atmosphere, or is it the ID around my neck. That couple simply shooed me away as if I was just out of place.’

However, after a few trips, the researcher was able to adjust to the field by wearing expensive-looking clothes, displaying her ID when asked and simply understanding the
upmarket wine culture of the place (Moeran 2009a). This was helpful as the travellers did not perceive any kind of threat or desperation. Further, being of colour was also helpful as some travellers found it interesting to have a chat and also invited the researcher for a drink and were happy to be interviewed. This transformation allowed movement from being an outsider to an insider to the opulent wine culture which benefitted the research (Berger 2013).

4.7.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation was helpful in understanding how travellers performed the practices on the route. Through participant observation it was realised that the actions observed incorporated not one but multiple practices. For example, the wine tasting activity on the route was layered with different meanings and feelings in the way travellers conducted themselves, swirled the glass, took a sip, rotated their tongues, and spit in the spittoon. Each action within the activity symbolised multiple meanings and feelings through which value emerged. Sampling for participant observation was done based on days and places when tourists frequented the trail (Belk 2007). All human actants who could be visually observed by the researcher were observed. As the intention was to identify practices, the researcher did not select any particular type of tourist to observe. Notes were recorded through audio and hard copy field journal which was later transcribed into text. The journal provided a method to record observations and anecdotal data about the embodied themed route practices (Goulding 2005). Participant
observation was performed in several ways including emplaced participation, informal chats and passive observation.

*Emplaced Participation:* The context of AHWFT with its emphasis on sensory experiences of food and wine and perception of space, required the researcher to indulge in emplaced participant observation which emphasised learning through sensory participation (Pink 2015). Pink (2015) describes the occurrence of learning through the researcher’s emplaced experiences through sight, sound, smell, taste, touch as well as bodily movement. By ‘being there’ in the phenomenological sensorial sense, the researcher could understand the flow of everyday practices undertaken by the travellers. Emplaced experiences were recorded on audio on a mobile phone by the researcher.

The researcher’s positionality as a visitor and researcher was recorded through emplaced participation. Through the first few visits to the field, the researcher followed word of mouth, sense of space and names on the map to position herself in the field just like any other visitor. Over the next few visits, the researcher was able to understand and acknowledge different tastes of wine, stories of the terroir by the wineries and how each business distinguished itself in terms of marketing. The researcher recorded her feelings and impressions of each place on the map (Figure 4.2) and on audio which helped understand general associations of the trail. It was found that these associations were
often marked through non-human entities which helped understand their role in practices.
Figure 4.2 Recording Emplaced Understandings of AHWFT
However, emplaced participation made it difficult for the researcher to concentrate on the trail associations of other participants and not prioritise her own impression of the place (Pink 2015). The researcher’s positionality as a traveller visiting with family helped counter this drawback as she constantly asked her husband to describe his own views about a place which made her not adhere to her own perceptions and be more accommodative. Moreover, the positionality of the researcher as a female also impacted emplaced participation as she was not able to record the activities that happened after dark. Acknowledging the researcher’s shifting roles in the research was important as it enabled the researcher to be objective and reflexive at the same time.

Informal Conversation: During fieldwork, the researcher spent hours in various wineries and restaurants in the Hunter Valley chatting with travellers as well as businesses to comprehend their understandings of the route (Belk 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2011). This also included travelling with family or friends and being a traveller interacting with other travellers, initiating conversation with other tourists, participating in activities such as wine tasting, eating at a café, etc. These insights helped understand their impressions of the region and how they viewed the Hunter Valley as a holiday destination.

Though informal conversations form a major part of emplaced ethnography, the ethical implications of such conversations are always in question as these conversations are difficult to articulate before entering the field (Tracy 2010). This drawback was countered
by incorporating informal conversation as a method in the ethics application for the research by establishing it as a qualitative research method.

The positionality of the researcher as a female impacted the access to tourists for informal conversation. As a female, the researcher particularly avoided chatting with ‘stag’ groups following the lack of sense of safety. Thus, groups of men at different café’s were not approached for informal conversation.

*Passive Observation:* Passive observation was conducted by not interfering with the daily rituals of wine tasting performed by travellers and businesses (Hammersley 2016). The researcher also spent time at visitor centre to observe the interactions between the visitor centre and the travellers. Some ‘good spots’ to conduct these observations included restaurants, the visitor centre and a few wineries due to the high number of footfalls and accommodating disposition of the winery owners. The observations were documented in the field journal with entry dates. Passively observing the occurrences of practices also involved photography, whereby the researcher took photographs of interesting sights which provided insights into practices (Pink 2015). It is argued by many researchers that despite the researcher maintaining a passive role in this type of observation, the bodily presence of the researcher does impact the research field (Berger 2013). The researcher was mindful of this drawback of passive observation while conducting research and minimised this drawback by reflexively analysing the practices (Moeran 2009b).
The positionality of the researcher as a female and a mother impacted participant observation as the researcher often travelled with family and restricted passive observation to weekends to avoid considerations of safety and to facilitate child supervision. The researcher’s role as a visitor was also recorded through an audio diary and a field journal. Her experiences corroborated those of other travellers on the trail.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations were reviewed and approved for implementation by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University. Ethical considerations for the research included maintaining privacy and reducing stress to the participant (Guillemin & Gillam 2004). The flexible approach adhered to the holiday mood of travel so as to not cause any psychological or emotional harm or distress to the participants. This approach involved the researcher interviewing participants travelling on the themed route at a location based on the participant’s convenience. Additionally, psychological harm in the form of embarrassment or psychological stress was unlikely to have occurred as the topic under consideration was not of a personal nature and involved willing participants. Participants were assured that the confidentiality of their responses would be honoured by de-identifying respondents in conference presentations, journal articles and the thesis. Distress was avoided by allowing an option to opt out at any stage of the research.
Incentivising as a recruitment strategy was approved by the ethics committee following the requirement of interview time in a leisure setting (Appendices). Incentivising was proposed and approved as a strategy keeping in mind the nature of expected answers and the research context of tourism. It was pointed out that description of embodied and felt experiences takes time as the researcher needs to build trust for the travellers to open up (Jennings 2005). Further, the assumption that travelling on a wine and food trail is a leisurely activity and travellers will have to take some time out from their leisure experiences to devote to the interview, also justified the use of incentivising as a recruitment strategy (Singer & Ye 2013).

4.9 Data Analysis

The interpretation of practices involved an iterative process where practices were interpreted and reinterpreted several times by going back to the literature (Hammersley 2016). The components of the proposed practice-based value framework were used to sieve ethnographic material into practices. The data analysis involved three stages. The first stage involved locating the activities that suggested a practice. The second stage involved finding and highlighting the three components of the framework namely, actants, competencies and TA structures (meanings and feelings) in each activity. The third stage involved abstracting and combining multiple activities that could be seen together as a practice.
4.9.1 Stage 1: Locating Activities

The aim at this stage was to locate activities. Through repeated readings and analysis of the material including the interviews, field notes and secondary research, 65 activities were located on the AHWFT (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983). In true ethnographic style, data analysis started alongside data collection (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994) where activities noted in artefacts, interviews and field notes were all put together. Artefacts such as websites, brochures and magazines helped add new activities to the list that were not directly observed by the researcher during fieldwork such as hot air ballooning and helicopter riding that formed part of practices conducted in the region. Interview transcripts were repeatedly read to code activities through the narratives of doing (Vannini 2015). All activities that marked ‘a change’ (Thrift 2008) including effect and affect were coded. Participant observation notes which included the researcher’s reflective notes served to reveal the interactions between human and non-human actants in activities through observation. Maps were used to mark each manoeuver on the trail through the reading of interview data (Figure 4.3). During the initial stages of coding it seemed that the practices revolved around performances, as that was the basis of coding (Korkman 2006). For example, within a wine tasting experience, activities were studied and separated such as chatting with the winemaker, drinking, swirling the glass, learning about the process, being seated, each denoting a practice.
Figure 4.3 Activity Mapping
4.9.2 Stage 2: Coding Actants, Competencies and Teleo-affective Structures

In this stage actants, competencies and meanings and feelings associated with each of the 65 activities were coded. Having multiple data sources helped with finding missing links of practices such as competencies and actants (Denzin 2017). Words such as going, knowing, liking, thinking, suggesting, talking and helping were also highlighted as they revealed a competency depending on the context of practice. This stage involved coding for elements that help explain why and how the activities were embodied and performed. This made it possible to break down each action for understanding the actants that mediated the activity, the competencies involved and the meanings or TA structures of the practice that are portrayed in that moment. In this way the process of value formation in a particular practice through the coming together of its elements could be understood. Zooming in on each action helped understand the meanings, emotions, actant agency, and competencies that enabled the action. Coding was performed in NVIVO where each doing/action and related TA structures, competencies and actants were coded separately. Learning about the TA structures through coding of meanings, for each activity helped the researcher form connections between activities under shared TA structures which helped with the next stage of abstraction.

4.9.3 Stage 3: Abstraction

Practices were abstracted following value. Following how value was derived in each activity led to understanding how multiple activities were related through actants,
competencies and teleo-affective structures through which value was derived. Value was understood through the process of abduction which included several rounds of observation and checking and matching with the literature to understand why an activity related to a particular practice through which value was derived. Each component of the framework aligned with actions, was put together in different permutations and combinations in several iterations to make sense of value in the originating practice (Nicolini 2017). The 65 activities that were observed and interpreted from the ethnographic material were abstracted to 4 different practices through which travellers derived value. While the first stage involved hermeneutically evaluating elements of each practice to finalise practices, the second and third stages included several hermeneutic cycles of evaluating connections between practices. This led to learning that value emerged in multiple activities which demonstrated the 6 practices.

4.10 Profile of the Case Context: Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail

This section discusses the case context of AHWFT (Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail) which is located in the Hunter Valley, Australia. Australia has been a leader in gastronomic tourism with its five main wine producing regions in South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania with a tourism spend growth in gastronomy worth more than $1 billion ($1.03 billion or 24.6%) in the last three years (winesaustralia.com, 2016). Tourism Australia’s research (2013) conducted across
15 of Australia’s key tourism markets showed that ‘great food, wine, and local cuisine’ is a major factor influencing holiday decision making (at 38%), ranking third, ahead of world class beauty and natural environments (37%).

4.10.1 Hunter Valley and the Theme of Food and Wine

Hunter Valley is a major Australian wine region with a total of 9 billion visitors in 2015 and total expenditure of over $600 million by food and wine tourists (Tourism Research Australia, 2016). The region was one of the first established and vineyards were planted as early as 1813 (Driscoll 1969). The region has become a primary wine region with more than 150 vineyards. Hunter Valley was settled by early pioneers who included convicts and free settlers who have passed down the vineyards and the business through succeeding generations. The region is marketed to international and domestic visitors by the national, regional and local destination management organisations as the ‘oldest’ wine region, generating a sense of history and winemaking as a tradition (visitnsw.com, 2018). Following the increase in wine tourism, several wineries started diversifying their products to include cheeses, chocolates and olives which have now become independent businesses in the region. Several high end expensive fine dining and café style restaurants have also opened shop in the region following the increase in gastronomic tourism (Croce & Perri 2010; Hall & Gössling 2016; Mitchell & van der Linden 2010).
Within this grand and historic narrative, the AHWFT is marketed as a luxurious, boutique trail where wines are expertly handcrafted by new generation winemakers. AHWFT is one of the eleven gastronomic trails that form part of the Hunter Valley region in New South Wales, Australia (Appendices). The figure below displays the map circulated by the Around Hermitage Association (AHA) which represents the AHWFT.
Figure 4.4 Map of the Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail
4.10.2 Human Actants

The human actants considered for this research included all tourism stakeholders that constructed the AHWFT marketplace categorised as travellers, businesses and marketers (Roy et al. 2019). Relational networks of these actants included regulators such as the Singleton and Cessnock councils and social networks, for instance cultural groups, friends and families. It is important to note that all human actants are envisaged as part of the relational networks of AHWFT and are hence not restricted by the geography of the trail.

Travellers are understood as all human actants who visited the ‘Around Hermitage’ region. Businesses identified themselves as being part of the Hunter Valley region called ‘Around Hermitage’ based on the name of the main road which is part of the trail. Businesses on the trail include winemakers and restaurants, intermediaries and associated service providers. The winemakers and restaurants include all business entities in the Around Hermitage region including wineries and restaurants and their supply chain networks and service staff. Intermediaries include businesses that support trail tourism such as tour operators, bus operators, limousine hire, cycle-hire companies, tour guides, horse-riding companies, online travel agents, etc. Associated businesses included hotels, accommodation sites, other related businesses such as antique shops, art galleries and other service providers which work alongside other producers. These
businesses benefit from people travelling on the food and wine trail by providing them with the relevant services.

Marketers include the Around Hermitage Association (AHA). AHA is the local business network that is responsible for socio-political lobbying with other institutions and co-marketing initiatives including the AHWFT. Additionally, other marketing organisations such as the Hunter Valley Visitor Centre (HVVC) and Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association (HVWTA) become important through their interactions with tourists and marketing relationships in the Hunter Valley region. Wine and food being economic drivers of the region, the residents of AHWFT are the country producers and businesses themselves (Interview with HVWTA, 2016).

4.10.3 Non-Human Actants

The AHWFT context includes a multitude of ever changing non-human actants on the themed route. These non-human actants include key elements such as roads, trees, weather, grapes, vineyards, barrels, buildings and objects, for example wines, vehicles, maps, and signage. Some of the non-human entities that were clicked by different travellers are shown in the figure below.
Figure 4.5 Some of the Non-human Entities on AHWFT
Materiality of Space: The space of the AHWFT is defined through the terroir which incorporates meanings of wine country milieu (Crang & Thrift 2000). The terroir includes the physical elements such as the soil, rain, vines, hills and other aspects of the earth which help with wine production (Croce & Perri 2010). Meanwhile the milieu includes stories, people, cultures, and traditions that have formed around the terroir (Boyne et al. 2002; Hall & Gössling 2016). Both exhibit and remind of non-human materialities in the context of the AHWFT. Terroir elements are naturally existing and they include roads, landscapes, slopes and terrains. The milieu elements include cellar doors (small offices where wine is stored and sold, usually have a seating area for wine tastings) architecture, seating arrangements, barrels, equipment, which produce materialities of space interacting with human actants.

Objects: The objects supplied by the AHWFT include the marketing collateral and the signage. The AHWFT is marketed online on the AHA website with a webpage advertising the Food and Wine trail. Further, the AHA has produced a map (Figure 4.4) and a brochure as marketing collateral (Appendices). The brochures concerning the trail and the map were also available at the Hunter Valley Visitor Centre. Other objects or non-human actants include signage of individual businesses and of the trail itself. The Around Hermitage organisation’s logo is marked at the entrance of each of the marketed wineries and other related businesses. Other marketing collateral offered by the HVVC such as the HVWTA magazine and larger Hunter Valley map was also seen being circulated to
tourists in the Hunter Valley region. Other non-human actants on the route included wines, wine glasses, vehicles, clothes, food items and technology.

4.10.4 Emergence of AHWFT

The trail emerged through the partnership and collaboration of local winemakers, accommodation providers and restaurants in the Around Hermitage area of the Hunter Valley (interviews with businesses on AHWFT, 2016). The trail serves two purposes for the local businesses. First, the trail provides a socio-political voice to the regional administrative authorities (Pitt 2017). Following the food and wine economy in the Hunter valley, the region is divided into geographical sub-regions. Each of these regions has formed a collaborative which voices the concerns of local members to the authorities and builds the idea of a community (Demossier 2011). Second, the trail acts as a co-marketing tool for the members of the Around Hermitage Association (Plummer et al. 2005). The Around Hermitage Association was formed with the membership of local businesses in the 1990s with the objective of having a common branding, distinguishing themselves from the other parts of the Hunter Valley (Ferreira & Hunter 2017; Hall & Gössling 2016; Hojman & Hunter-Jones 2012). The emergence of the trail in the region provided a way to attract people to it.
4.10.5 Marketing of AHWFT

The AHA is responsible for marketing the trail while the businesses on the trail support the co-marketing initiative by referring within the trail (interview with AHA president, 2016). However, several businesses on the trail also follow their own marketing strategies and do not necessarily follow these rules of engagement. The trail is marketed through the Around Hermitage website, a dedicated trail map and a brochure which has the map on one side and the details of the businesses on the other (Appendices). The map of the trail describes the way local businesses have aligned themselves based on geography (Timothy & Boyd 2014). The map and brochure is passed on to the traveller by the businesses on the route which is one of the ways travellers come to know about the trail.

The trail is not promoted by other regional tourism organisations such as the HVVC as they do not fall within their administrative boundaries (Cessnock Council). The council boundaries define the mandates of promotion for HVVC which are mediated by the map (interview with HVVC personnel, 2016). This is problematic as the Hunter valley visitor centre forms the first entry point to the valley, following which travellers are directed into the wineries. Till a few years earlier, the HVVC was managed by HVWTA who were happy to market the trail. However, the change in administration has led to problems concerning how the trail is promoted (Prideaux 2002). The only marketing organisation that markets the trail is the Singleton Council Visitor Centre (interview with Singleton Council, 2016).
4.10.6 Traveller Profile of AHWFT

There are no statistics available for the exact number of travellers on the trail (interview with AHA president, 2016). However, the travellers on the Hermitage road, which forms the main artery of the route had recorded more than 8000 cars in March 2016 (data shared by AHA, obtained through the council). As discussed by the businesses, the travellers on the AHWFT include people ranging from having no knowledge of wine to wine enthusiasts. Businesses acknowledged being visited by travellers carrying the ‘James Halliday’ book of top winemakers and coming to singularly taste wine varieties published in the book. However, they admitted that the majority of visitors who visit the cellar doors are ‘day trippers’ or ‘weekenders’ living in accommodation nearby, having a general to no knowledge of wine. The businesses discussed the wedding and concert season to be a high footfall season which starts from October and lasts till March. January was reported to be a slow month due to increase in day temperatures. The winter season is also quite profitable according to the businesses as travellers enjoy the different look of the vines (without leaves) and come to have a romantic country feel (interviews with businesses on AHWFT, 2016).

4.11 Summary

This chapter described and justified the methods and research context. A justification of ethnomethodology to better understand value in social practice was provided as it
pointed towards the importance of techniques that are sensitive to non-human agency in everyday practices that are always emplaced, relational, embodied and affective. The chapter discussed the ethnographic methods of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and digital archival research that were followed for the research highlighting researcher positionality and ethical considerations through different phases of data collection. Stages of analysis were also discussed with regard to how practices were assembled. The chapter also justified and discussed the characteristics of the selected case context of the AHWFT. The next chapter describes the four practices interpreted on the route and discusses the different ways value emerged and was felt by the travellers.
5 CHAPTER 5 – INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Overview

This chapter presents the interpretation of data to answer the research question, how value emerges for the traveller in the socio-material context of themed routes. The analysis of the practices in which value emerges as a more-than-human achievement is arranged into three sections. The first section presents that value emerges as ‘felt’ in the affective atmospheres generated by food and wine in the practices of opulence and the countryside. This section highlights the role of non-human entities as affective triggers in value formation. The second section discusses emergence of value in touring practices. This section points towards the role of non-human entities as active agents of value through their materialities. The third section discusses how value emerges in the feeling of togetherness felt in sociality practices. Togetherness is achieved through both the affective atmosphere and material affordances. Following a relational perspective, the value of a practice is understood to be constantly emerging in relation to actants, teleo-affective structures and competencies. In what follows, traveller/consumer perspective are prioritised over business people or service provides given the project aim.
5.2 *How to Read Practices*

The description of practices follows the format of the proposed theoretical framework whereby actants, teleo-affective structures and competencies of each practice are explained. As practices are not simply observed but need to be interpreted by putting several etic and emic observations together (Schatzki 2016), the discussion of practices in this chapter has followed a similar format. An important characteristic of practices is that the practice theoretical approach identifies competencies and teleo-affective structures as learnt and cognitively processed over time, which suggests going not only to the depths of the ethnographic data but also connecting data points to previous experiences, learnings or socio-material assemblages that were responsible for creating the discourses in the first place (Alkemeyer & Buschmann 2017). Thus, the explanation of practices required going back and forth with collected data and the discourses which have produced these competencies and teleo-affective structures. In a similar vein, articulating the role of actants also required rigorously following their agency through the meanings, feelings (teleo-affective structures), skills and understandings (competencies). As a result, the resultant descriptions include emic verbal reports (to understand the discourses travellers aligned with) and etic observations of the researcher combined with theoretical arguments to support the interpretation of practices.

The writing style is typical of how practices have been discussed in previous literature (Korkman 2006; Schau et. al. 2009; Shove & Pantzar 2005) where the intention has been to
present not individual narratives but convey the attributes of practices that are observed, sensed and interpreted on the themed route. While emic perspectives of the experience by travellers are noted in the quotes derived through interviews, etic and emic perspectives of the researcher are noted in the field notes. Following the researcher’s positionality as a themed route traveller as well as a researcher, her own experiences are also used to decipher and contribute towards the emic understandings of the trail experience.
5.3 SECTION I: FEELING THE THEME OF FOOD AND WINE

The section argues that value emerges through the formation of an affective atmosphere generated by the theme of food and wine, experienced in the practices of opulence and countryside. The section is divided into two parts discussing the practices that sustain the meanings and experiences of opulence and the countryside. Practices of opulence and countryside are studied with reference to the literature applying the theoretical lens of the practice-based value framework. Practices of opulence demonstrated that value emerges as the travellers feel special, exclusive and as part of an upmarket atmosphere. Practices of countryside demonstrated how value emerges in the socio-material arrangements that create a sense of being outdoors. Each practice demonstrated how actants, competencies and teleo-affective structures come together to achieve value through the socio-material arrangements of food and wine. Through a reference to existing literature, the discussion evaluates how emergent value is constantly felt in cognitive and affective symbolic associations of food and wine, demonstrating the agency of non-human entities in value formation.

5.3.1 Practicing Opulence

Value emerged through the affective atmosphere of opulence constructed by the socio-material relations of food and wine. Opulence relates to meanings of power and feelings of being powerful or being dominated through expressions of grandeur and luxury (Atwal & Williams 2009; Jacobsen 2012). In the theming literature, opulence is understood
as one of the themes that is presented in corporatised branded environments (Gottdiener 1997), whereby consumers embody and experience social status and luxury. Following the socio-material arrangements, the teleo-affective structures, competencies and actants of the practice come together, to create an affective atmosphere of opulence, which was felt by the traveller. The interpretation suggests that the travellers were primed for the experience as their competencies demonstrated associations of the theme of food and wine with social status (Veblen 1899), authenticity (Rickly-Boyd 2012) and luxury (Eckhardt et al. 2015). The teleo-affective structures that shaped travellers to embody and conform to opulence include the notions of ‘indulgence’ (Hjalager & Richards 2003), ‘fitting in’ (Jacobsen 2012) and ‘showing off’ (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie 2014). Each of these are listed below in Table 5.1, followed by a detailed interpretation.

Table 5.1 Practice of Opulence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Understandings of social status, authenticity, and luxury</th>
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<td>Skills – driving, reading, dressing, eating</td>
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5.3.1.1 Competencies

Value emerged as travellers associated the theme of food and wine with higher social status, authentic products and winery experiences, and luxury and exclusivity in service.
Literature on gastronomy suggests that both wine and food are associated with luxury and status following historical narratives reproduced in popular media (Bellini & Resnick 2018; Kivela & Crotts 2006; Rokka 2017). Dominant discourse that shapes understanding of luxury and opulence are understood to be integral to differentiating special from everyday practices (Nicolini 2016b). The discourse to convey opulence and luxury on Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail (AHWFT) is reproduced and circulated in the marketing collateral such as the website, magazines and brochures which pitched the Hunter Valley as a luxury destination. Travellers spoke about reading text and images used in marketing blogs, advertisements, photographs and other paraphernalia. Hence, over a period of time travellers built their competencies aligned with luxury and opulence even before visiting Hunter Valley (Nicolini et al. 2016). However, the literature suggests that text, images, and the texture of the paper of the magazine and other marketing collateral, are also affective in nature because they also convey the feeling of luxury to the traveller (Chowdhury et al. 2008; Silkes et al. 2013). Texts, images, and textures all produce affect that transmits intensities as feelings and emotions (Deleuze & Guattari 1988) which together with acquired understandings build bodily, tacit and practical competencies (Nicolini et al. 2016).
When was the last time you stopped to take it all in?
Welcome to the Hunter Valley.

Here’s to the Good Life in Hunter Valley. The Hunter Valley is the ultimate food and wine getaway, an exciting destination where history and experience flow in its vines.

When was the last time... You ordered the dessert?

Explore the delicious delights of the beautiful Hunter Valley, from award-winning wineries and acclaimed restaurants to tasty festivals and fresh local produce.

Figure 5.1 Hunter Valley Visitor Centre Website (accessed in January 2017)
Next time you’re planning a Hunter Valley getaway, why not explore the Around Hermitage region? You’ll find some of the best scenery in the Hunter Valley, award-winning Hunter Valley wineries, restaurants and cafes, and even meet the wine makers at family-owned cellar doors. Relax in luxury Hunter Valley accommodation with rooms to suit all tastes. Browse through galleries and outdoor sculpture exhibitions, or attend one of the fantastic regular events. The Hunter Valley’s ‘Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail’ is where matching food and wine in a relaxed setting is a wonderful experience. With the backdrop of the Brokenback Mountains the Trail boasts some of the best scenery and most awarded boutique wineries and restaurants the Hunter Valley has to offer. (aroundhermitage.com.au, accessed in June 2016)

The figure and text above display the association of opulence with food and wine that was observed in the online website of AHWFT and HVVC. Throughout the website, specific vocabulary conveys and circulates a sense of affluence such as ‘sumptuous’, ‘indulge’, ‘pleasures’, ‘award-winning’, ‘acclaimed’, ‘here’s to the good life’ and ‘high end’. This marketing pitch codes the food and wine themed route as a pursuit of the rich. Further, an authentic experience is produced and circulated using words such as ‘meet the wine-makers’, ‘hand-crafted’, ‘local’, ‘family-owned’ and ‘historic’. Finally, exclusivity to the traveller is reproduced and communicated through terms such as ‘premium’ and ‘only sold at the cellar door’. These heavily coded words and accompanying imageries are designed to stimulate sensations and associations of opulence in the traveller by acting as affective triggers (Morgan & Pritchard 1998; Silkes et al. 2013). Thus, value emerged as travellers felt a sense of opulence associated with the trail even before they travelled on the themed route.

Along the route, value emerged as travellers understood the pursuit of food and wine tourism as an elitist practice. Travellers often journeyed along the route in expensive
vehicles such as limousines and ate at exclusive restaurants and bought expensive wine. Limousine rides and horse carriage rides which cost several hundred dollars, were opted by several traveller groups. Expensive restaurants were important stopping points on the journey as they were understood as an affluent experience (Silkes et al. 2013). For example, Joey and Christina, a married couple in their 50’s, structured their route around their restaurant reservations, “Before starting on the trail, we selected the place where we’re going to eat along the trail”. Amelia and Rick, professionals on a weekend break, also pre-booked the top-rated restaurant on the route as they knew that it was difficult to get reservations, “we booked this restaurant for tonight online. From memory when I was looking at top rated restaurants, I think Muse was number one and these guys were number two or three on the trail”.

An affective atmosphere of opulence is generated as understandings of social status align with the socio-material positioning of eating in expensive restaurants and specific modes of transports along the trail, such as limousines and horse drawn carriages. Thus, the activities of fine dining and limousine driving were understood as important affective experiences on the route through which value emerged following understandings of opulence as higher social status. Literature suggests that consumers derive value by aiming for superiority through conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption (Eckhardt et al. 2015). Eckhardt et al. (2015) define conspicuous consumption as a way to show affluence, while inconspicuous consumption is understood as experiential luxury which
is more subtle, sophisticated and reflects a refined taste (Mora & Livat 2013). Adopting a relational lens, competencies of inconspicuous and conspicuous consumption as opulence are present in travellers which they relate with affective triggers of luxury on the route. Limousines, brands and expensive restaurants became affective triggers of inconspicuous consumption and affected travellers as they inculcated a sense of social status. This is also in line with research on gastronomic tourism which suggests that fine dining and wine tasting experiences are associated with an affective sense of luxury for the traveller (Bellini & Resnick 2018).

In addition, travellers associated authenticity with the AHWFT (Rickly-Boyd 2012). Value emerged as travellers followed their understandings of opulence as authentic in their associations with food and wine products and wineries. Scholars suggest the use of theming as a tool to create the sense of authenticity in any experience (Erb & Ong 2016; Gottdiener 1997). Authenticity is most often understood as being in the eye of the beholder, thus suggesting a sense of moral superiority over others who are unable to understand or ‘see’ it (Zukin 2009). Following a relational perspective suggests that travellers are competent in associating authenticity with opulence. Thus, value emerges as people identify themselves as superior through their interactions (with human and non-human entities), which suggest authenticity.
In the case of the AHWFT, value emerged as competencies of opulence as authentic aligned with the socio-material positioning of local or ‘original’ products which resulted in feelings of opulence (Wang 1999). Affective feeling of opulence was sensed as travellers bought from ‘boutique-y’ wineries. Boutique-y was understood as a small business that specialised in wine manufactured through local terroir ingredients. Travellers such as Danika and Melania were specifically looking for ‘boutique-y’ wineries to ensure their purchases were authentic. “it was really nice to go to Mistletoe for example today and talk to them and know that the wine we are drinking is not just off the shelf and it’s not sold to, you know, it’s not mass produced and they don’t buy the fruit and that it comes from that are”. Melania demonstrates her understanding of authentic as opulent when she contrasts ‘travelling to boutique-y winery’ with ‘buying from the shelf’. The act of not buying mass-produced wine or ‘going to the winery’ communicates a sense of superiority in authenticity. Being able to taste the fruit at its source and buying something ‘that is not sold to everyone’ conveys feelings of being special where interactions with local products creates the sense of opulence.

Moreover, exclusivity is integral to understanding the emergence of value of a food and wine themed route. Value emerged as travellers’ understandings of opulence as exclusivity aligned with the lack of presence of other bodies during wine tasting creating an affective feel of opulence. Being made to feel special through individual attention and storytelling was benchmarked as an opulent experience. Mary travelling with her friends,
who were culinary aficionados, explained how value emerged from the exclusive service in the statements below:

Mary - I think that these little ones can, cause apart from seeing one other couple turning up into Degen, while we were there we were the only people at Misty Glen Wines, we were the only people at Rothvale when we were there, so you got that feeling. We felt unrushed and we felt like they could and they were, they were very talkative about things whereas I think you get to somewhere else, you know, Mistletoe was just starting to get a bit busy.

Emma - It was very intimate and you could just tell that they were super passionate about what they do

Mary and Emma mention the lack of other people/bodies adding to their sense of exclusivity. They also demonstrate how feelings of being unrushed and intimacy were associated with being exclusive and opulent. This correlates with the marketing literature which studies luxury as exclusivity (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie 2014) where consumers are made to feel special and exclusive during experiences.

Integral to understand how value emerged as a feeling of opulence is also the positioning of products which aligned with the competencies of exclusivity. For example, Mary said: “I think that they made the point in saying that they are exclusive that you can’t buy them in restaurants you only get them at the cellar door”. Mary demonstrates her understanding of exclusive as meaning ‘not easily accessible’. Additionally, winemakers created a sense of urgency by promoting wines that were ‘not to be missed out’. Thus, travellers felt the value in socio-material arrangements of products as ‘exclusive’ because it conveyed a sense of opulence.
Value also emerged in and through the affective atmosphere of opulence that was sustained by the skills of reading, dining, driving and dressing. These skills were seen to be standard for most practices on the route, however, practiced differently by being shaped by the understandings and actants of each practice (Nicolini & Monteiro 2017). Several participant observation notes demonstrate how the skills of opulence were acquired tacitly in pre-cognitive movements. For example, skills of driving were shaped by the understandings of opulence as travellers drove luxury cars which required extra attention in parking the vehicle. Skills of dining were shaped by understandings of opulence as travellers followed fine dining rituals of folding napkins, using cutlery and maintaining a straight back (Warde 2016). Skills of dressing too suggested opulence in the way women held their heads high to balance the sunglasses and hats, or walked differently while wearing pointed heels and tight skirts. These points are illustrated from the research diary notes:

‘The women seem haughty as they always have their noses up here, the need to look good suggests they walk funny in those heels…. Lots of Range Rover cars in this parking lot, they are making others wait as they take time to park…. I don’t think I want to have the fine dining experience, I would feel really out of place as I don’t know how to use the cutlery there, plus look at their straight backs, how do they manage this posture all the time. (Excerpts from multiple field notes, December – February 2016)’

The quotation above demonstrates the researcher’s dilemma in following opulence due to the lack of tacit know-how of opulence. Further, entities such as heels, cars and cutlery were agentic in shaping the practical skills of opulence and were thus instrumental in shaping value.
5.3.1.2 Teleo-affective Structures

The teleo-affective structures that guided the practice of opulence included meanings of ‘fitting in’ and ‘showing off’ and feelings of indulgence. Value emerged when travellers felt the sense of luxury and then unconsciously and consciously conformed to it. Eckhardt et al. (2015) discuss how the need to ‘fit into’ the elite social class by the masses has led to an increase in inconspicuous consumption by the elite. In the case of the AHWFT, ‘fitting in’ suggests conforming to the opulent culture or the affective atmosphere felt on the trail. ‘Showing off’ on the other hand is related to how travellers flaunt social status through conspicuous consumption which fuels the affective feel of opulence (Eckhardt et al. 2015; Veblen 1899). Performances such as dressing up demonstrate adherence to opulence. Travellers embodied opulence through dressing up which involved adorning expensive clothing and accessories. Clothes in this case acted as affective symbols which enabled travellers to ‘fit in’. This allowed travellers like Joey and Christina to feel as if they are part of the ‘upmarket’, ‘elegant’ culture which inculcated value. Christina was happy to share her photographs where she is seen adorning an expensive dress and accessories such as sunglasses (see Figure 5.2). The field notes from participant observation also describe people travelling along the route as wearing expensive brands to perform the cultural norms of an opulent lifestyle.

‘Clothes –

- Men are wearing summer clothes, one was wearing a pink t-shirt from Ralph Lauren
- Women wear silky tops with stylish cuts, accessories such as dangling earrings, sunglasses from Prada, Gucci, one woman was carrying a bag from Hermes
- Shoes – sandals and nice looking shoes, even while bicycling they are not wearing sports shoes.
- Men wearing shoes without socks – kinda relaxed look’ (Field notes, 22/11/2016)

Figure 5.2 Embodied opulence

Value emerged as a sense of indulgence was felt as TA structures of ‘fitting in’ and ‘showing off’ aligned with the competencies of opulence. Marketing literature stipulates indulgence as a behaviour which is associated with luxurious hedonic consumption (Wiggin et al. 2018). Referring to the AHWFT, indulgence was sensed as a feeling by travellers as they were influenced by the luxuriousness of the winery setting. The feelings of indulgence were enhanced in the opulent or ‘upmarket’ atmosphere which was sensed through the quality of wine. Joey comprehends social status and an ‘upmarket’
experience through the felt quality of wines (Bellini & Resnick 2018), “Another thing that really attracts us is – it’s an up market, sort of a feeling, compared to a pub this is a more up market, more elite, high quality”. This sensed upmarket experience fuelled the feelings of indulgence for both Joey and Christina as demonstrated in the quote below.

Joey: And we find also that we don’t have any (inaudible) or worries about how much things cost  
Christina: No, we come here we don’t worry about – don’t think about money  
Joey: We come here to indulge ourselves, and if when you’re at home (inaudible), you would say, and you want to go out to a restaurant, you’ll probably think, oh well that’s a bit expensive, and say ooh –  
Joey: If you (inaudible), you don’t have that feeling here, you don’t have that here  
Christina: Yeah, I want a bottle of wine – what? 18 dollars, 25 dollars, 40 dollars – I like it, we get it. Yeah, it is, and that’s sort of the indulgent feeling now when we’re coming here on a holiday, we just –  
Joey: It’s the sort of place you come to, knowing that –  
Christina: That you’re going to spend money  
Christina: And it doesn’t matter

In the quotation above, Joey and Christina talk about how they ‘don’t think about money’ when they feel like indulging. Further, the notion of a holiday intertwines with opulence as people relax and let go of the usual financial parameters of everyday life, when holidaying. Moments of self-indulgence were demonstrated when people bought expensive wines without thinking about money.

5.3.1.3 Actants

The human and non-human actants were instrumental in creating the sense of opulence through their socio-material arrangements. The human actants such as the businesses, marketing organisations such as the Hunter Valley Visitor Centre (HVVC) and other travellers established the sense of opulence through storytelling, referrals, marketing and promotions as well as their presence and absence from different activities such as wine
tasting. For example, the presence of fewer bodies in a wine tasting room suggested exclusive service (Wolf et al. 2016). The non-human actants included food, wine, products for sale, as well as spatial elements which furthered the affective feeling of opulence through their socio-material arrangements.

The non-human actants acted as affective triggers. Interactions with non-human entities create an affect that is spoken of as ‘upmarket’, which is sensed through the collective socio-material positioning of wine brands through their label (Kim & Bonn 2016), branded clothing and limousines and carriage rides. While individually these actants and performances could trigger different symbolisms, put together, along with competencies and TA structures of opulence, they create the upmarket culture or the affective atmosphere of the AHWFT which is sensed by travellers.

The design and material finish of buildings enabled a sense of the business commercialisation, which connected with the understandings of social status and feelings of opulence. In the statement below, Monica, a European backpacker in her early 20s, associates opulence with the commercial attributes of the winery which is sensed by the look and feel of the winery cellar door and having multiple business verticals such as ‘a restaurant next to it’. “We passed some big companies, big buildings, selling wine and restaurant next to it, and we were like oh it’s too posh”. Note how Monica associates ‘posh’ with ‘big’ through the atmosphere created by the buildings. Reckwitz (2016) argues for the affect
triggered by materialities of architecture. This is corroborated by this finding which suggests how affective qualities of the materialities of buildings entwine with meanings and understandings of commercialisation and social status to create value in the feelings of opulence.

Servicescape elements such as lighting, furniture and seating also displayed affective qualities through which value emerged. During the wine tasting experience, the travellers were exposed to the lighting, floors, furniture, seating arrangements and the views of the vines which acted as affective triggers influencing the travellers to buy expensive wines. The winery spaces transmitted a sense of opulence as they offered views of the vineyards, authentic art by local artists, seated/standing areas for tastings, and luxurious furnishings with modern and heritage details. For example, Monica reflected on how her experience of wine tasting was enhanced by the luxurious ‘atmosphere’ at a winery.

Monica - so we like for the wine, we liked it better but for the atmosphere, Keith Tulloch wines and kitchen Cocoa Nib was very nice because you just relax on the couch, you’re outside the balcony and you can taste wine and suited servers just come to you, explain to you.

Monica refers to the material elements including the couch, balcony and service by suited servers that together create a luxurious ambience. This suggests value triggered by the coming together of the affective capacity of the couch, the view from the balcony, being served and the wine itself. The ‘atmosphere’ that is being talked about demonstrates
value being achieved as understandings of exclusivity and social status and TA structures of indulgence connect with the interactions with the couch, views and suited servers to suggest opulence. Similarly, Mary and friends (a group of four middle-aged culinary educationists) discuss how value emerged through interactions with other non-human elements such as large servings, local produce such as cheese, chocolates, information brochures and the glasses acting as affective triggers of ‘generosity’ associated with opulence.

Monique - yeahh they gave us local produce as well
Mary - It was the whole experience wasn’t it? It was an experience rather than just a taste.
Mary - More than happy and very generous too with their tasting serves.
Emma - Yeahhh, quite big servings
Mary - just like the glasses weren’t just uhh you know, a little bit of taste and ohh it’s gone I really need another one just to make sure I like it. Like it was... they were generous with the serves

Marketing collateral such as maps and brochures also acted as affective triggers of opulence. Through the mention of destinations, illustrations of road curvature, icon-based depictions of attractions, classy colours and sleek design, the map affectively expresses the feel of the route and gives a sense of what to expect (Anderson 2006; Bondi 2005; Chowdhury et al. 2008; Rossetto 2012; Welch 2017). For example, opulence was sensed in the uniqueness of wineries in the region which was communicated through the maps and brochures. Several travel groups visited wineries such as Piggs Peake and Wombat Crossing simply because they had interesting names. Many tourists connected with the feel of the name on the map or the ‘intriguing’ feel of the signage. What this
research showed was how the ideas circulated by the map, combined with TA structures and competencies of travellers worked towards feeling opulence.

5.3.2 Practicing Countryside

The feel of being in the countryside is integral to better understand how value emerges in relational arrangements while touring the themed wined route. The literature on theming identifies landscape and countryside as a themed environment (Shaw & Williams 2004). While value in experiencing countryside is well documented in the tourism literature (Barry 2016), a relational perspective enables an understanding of how value is experienced as ‘felt’ (Reckwitz 2016). In the case of the AHWFT, value emerged as the teleo-affective structures or the meanings and feelings of relaxation intertwine with understandings of nature and culture in the affective interactions on the route. This is consistent with the tourism and marketing literature which suggests value in relaxation and therapeutic affects of seemingly natural places that are sensed by being in the countryside (Canniford & Shankar 2013; Olafsdottir 2013). Further, TA structures of the countryside also include the need for escapism from urban life which was observed in the case of the AHWFT (Cova et al. 2018).

Competencies such as understandings of countryside as both a cultural and natural landscape helped decipher the interactions of humans and food and wine. This is consistent with the understandings of the countryside being an amalgam of natural and
cultural ethos (Edensor 2000). Non-human entities such as bodies, bushes, vines, roads, local produce, wine ingredients and even soil and rain became important affective triggers. Travellers interacted with views, wildlife, the terroir, and the wine which aligned with understandings and meanings and feelings of isolation, tranquillity and relaxation to create an affective atmosphere of country. These findings are consistent with the research undertaken by several tourism researchers such as Olafsdottir (2013) and Bærenholdt et al. (2017) who have discussed the materialities of plants and weather in creating an affective space. The table and the sections below tabulate and discuss the components of the practice.

Table 5.2 Practice of Country

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Understandings of isolation, nature and culture, winemaking as a country practice</th>
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<td>Skills – technical know-how of winemaking, listening, reading</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teleo-affective Structures</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Actants</strong></td>
<td>Spatial elements, marketing collateral, vehicle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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5.3.2.1 Competencies

The competencies of countryside practices are constructed by connecting affective interactions with non-human entities the imaginaries created in promotional materials and storytelling by winemakers. Value emerged as competencies of travellers and
winemakers align with the affective interactions on the route. The competencies of the AHWFT as countryside are reinforced through affective interactions with spatial elements such as bushes, number of vehicles and buildings. Interactions with spatial elements through their textures, feel and presence is built over time in multiple practices which eventually become part of cultural capital of a place (Panelli 2009). For example, Rick and Amelia demonstrate their understandings of the countryside through their affective interactions which have been developed over time by making sense of pre-cognitive feelings and actions. They associate the countryside with remoteness and isolation through the bushes and vines, sounds of cars driving around at night, having to go ‘out of the way’, views of the lake, building styles and the distance between the wineries.

"Amelia - I guess we commented on its a lot more bushy like vs some of the other wine regions in the world that is all pretty manufactured and just like rolling hills or like massive estates. Here its sort of a bit more rural with a few vineyards here, when you drive here you have got some bushes, some trees and bit of a bushland and then a vineyard and bushland and vineyard. But it is nicer driving around here ... like fewer cars.

Rick - yeah we probably prefer this area ... we like I guess that are more remote ..... Rick - and out of the way ... yeah so this is nicer than the main that we call the main area, we found

Rick - you have got a lot of space you know its just the house and dont see anything just a view of the lake and its kind of flat with each cabin about 100 meters apart. you are not gonna hear cars driving around at night

Amelia - Yeah ... you dont really get that here (points to Broke Road on map) everything seems to be more compacted, the hotels are all bigger like you might have 50 rooms or something"

In the conversation above, Rick and Amelia compare the trail with the other wine regions and comment on the sense of rural and remote emanating because of the lack of human activity such as cars, people and ‘manufactured rolling hills’. They enjoy and feel relaxed
as they drive ‘out of the way’ through the bushes and feel the expanse of space on the trail. According to Amelia, place plays a big role in creating the feeling of country. Comparing the attributes of hotels and boutique cabins, she discusses how her understanding of country is built on the affect created by places. This is in line with several affectual researchers who discuss places to be affective and how compactly placed items can generate emotions and feelings that are very different from the feelings generated by sparsely placed things (Newell 2018; Robinson 2012). Affectual geographers discuss how places are sensed and performed pre-cognitively in activities such as surfing, climbing, or driving (Thrift 2004a). Many researchers demonstrate how the terrain is manoeuvred based on tactile or bodily understandings that are built over time and cognitively deciphered sometimes after being performed (Kwinter 2002; Thrift 2008).

Knowledge and competencies gained through exposure to marketing and conversations with winemakers built an understanding of winemaking as a countryside practice. In case of the AHWFT, value emerged as travellers encounter marketing collateral which builds their expectations and understandings of country. Gastronomic literature suggests a link between terroir, milieu (common heritage and collective identity) and tourism (Croce & Perri 2010; Hall et al. 2005). Viewing relationally, understandings of countryside are reinforced through understandings of terroir and cultural milieu which are inculcated into travellers in the form of marketing collateral and storytelling. As with understandings of opulence, marketing collateral such as texts and images are affectively
and stimulate feelings and emotions of the countryside even before travellers visit the place (Tolia-Kelly et al. 2016). In the case of the AHWFT, marketing collateral including the website and the magazine produced the imaginaries and associations of country through articulation of terroir (the combination of factors, including soil, climate, and environment, that give a wine its distinctive character) and winemaking as a countryside practice. Promotional campaigns including images and text on websites included words such as ‘handcrafted’, ‘heritage’, ‘latest vintage’, ‘grape varieties’ and ‘locally grown’ which acted as affective triggers of understandings of terroir. The Around Hermitage website talks about the details of activities such as ‘meeting the winemaker’, ‘latest vintage’ that presents their products and services as part of the milieu.
Figure 5.3 Advertisement in Hunter Valley Magazine (August 2016)

Around Hermitage you will find some of the most awarded hand crafted Hunter Valley wines. You’ll enjoy wines that are only available at the cellar door where you will likely meet the owners or winemaker who would love to chat about the latest vintage and their new release wines. Around Hermitage Hunter Valley is synonymous with the grape varieties of Semillon and Shiraz, but you’ll also find varieties not often seen in the Hunter. Come and try some Hunter Valley Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chambourcin, Verdelho and some of the best Riesling in Australia, all locally grown. For something different try some locally made beers, vodkas and gins. (Around Hermitage Website, accessed 28/01/2017)

The above image is from the magazine produced by HVWTA, the regional tourism association that demonstrates the cultural landscape of Hunter Valley through the fully grown vines, lakes, hills and the view of a sunset that instigate references to being in the countryside. Salazar and Graburn (2014) discuss how images are tactile and connected with a sense of touch which tingle sensations. The imaginaries produced then assemble meanings and feelings subconsciously building competencies. Value thus emerged
through these imaginaries which aligned with the sensorial interaction with the marketing collateral.

The understandings of winemaking as a countryside practice were also constructed by the mention of terroir by the businesses through the stories of vintage and winemaking processes. The winemaker’s understandings of winemaking (tools and know-how), and local terroir (vintage characteristics – heat, rains, soil, etc.), helped travellers connect the winemaking to the elements of country. Affect in storytelling has been documented in the literature on communication and media (Papacharissi 2016). Selting (2010) discusses the interactional affect created in conversations. Storytelling not only helped connect understandings of country with the spatial elements but was also used as a marketing strategy by the businesses to engage travellers. Storytellers point towards the cues to recreate the affective stances in the story verbally and visually. In this way, storytellers ‘manage affect’ by manipulating the staging and reconstruction of the story (Günthner 2000). One of the winemakers, Arnold, explains the use of different elements of the winemaking process that helps travellers connect with the place.

Arnold: There’s no better marketing than having someone tell you the story of how the wine is made and pull you a glass of that wine. You can talk about things like, when we use the indigenous yeast and because we’ve grown a yeast culture naturally over ten years. And that yeast starts a wild fermentation in the wine which means talk about the stuff we love- alcohol. Or you tell people about the different forests that the barrels come from. And as long as they can bind to the information and relate it to the place and feel that they own the information, then that empowers them and they feel that we’ve given them something that’s really tangible.
In the example above, Arnold discusses how he recreates the winemaking process by verbally channelising the affect in his story through the mention of ‘yeast’, ‘forests’ and ‘barrels’ which ‘binds’ travellers to the place as it helps them connect and build understandings of winemaking as a country practice. As discussed by Mary’s friend, Monique, several travellers mentioned how they enjoyed the fact that the winemaker was ‘knowledgeable’ and could make you “appreciate the wines more by explaining in 2014 had a really good run and 2016 had a bit of rain, yeah all that history, how the seasons worked”. Selting (2010) also argues that conversational affect is ‘in-situ’ or experienced in relation to the time and place of where the story is being told. This was observed in how travellers connected with the elements they observed during the conversation. Prashant and Ritika suggested how the presence of equipment helped them connect with winemaking as a country practice, “Yeah, they ask us to move in to their chamber so that we can go there have a look and there are like oak barrels where they do the fermentation and all other process”. Alternatively, Mary and Monique talk about how they did not associate with a local winemaker due to lack of connection felt with the affective cues in the storytelling, as they “‘don’t grow their own grapes, yeah that was a little bit of a let down, they get all their grapes in instead of having them on their farm, that’s just sad’”. Thus, presence of countryside elements and affect management by the storyteller were instrumental in shaping value by constructing and also validating the competencies of winemaking as a local practice.
Further, travellers’ individual understandings of what winemaking meant to them also shaped the emergence of value. Borrowing from the work of Goffman (1978), Selting (2010) argues that conversational affect in face-to-face conversations is always a reconstructed affect which is ‘being represented and told by the storyteller to and for the recipient’. This suggests that the involvement of the recipient and the competencies they bring along are instrumental in how the story will be received (Newell 2018). This was pointed out by Arnold when he discussed how he alters his storytelling to accommodate travellers’ interests and competencies. Arnold discusses how most people who are not so competent in wine, relate to personal stories rather than winemaking stories.

Arnold: And you know, tell you, and pour you a glass of wine so this is how this is named after my ten year old son. Tell them the story about my son, because most people who do not know much about wine can link much easier to a story about a child than they can to a story about a vineyard, or a glass of wine. Because, I’ve been a winemaker for twenty years and I fall asleep very quickly when I hear a story about soil you know. You immerse them by giving them information that’s at a level that they understand, you know.

Thus, competencies of winemaking as a countryside practice were constructed through a combination of elements including, tacit know-how or skills of manoeuvring spatial environments, marketing collateral and storytelling. Value emerged as the competencies aligned with the socio-material arrangement of actants on the route.

5.3.2.2 Teleo-affective Structures

Countryside practices demonstrated how value emerged from following the teleo-affective structures of ‘relaxation’ and ‘escapism’ and the feelings of disassociation and
being closer to nature. Value emerged as meanings of relaxation and escapism were connected with the interactions on the route building on the understandings of the countryside. Travellers conducted countryside practices to relax. Relaxation is understood on the trail as ‘not having anything on my mind’ or ‘not being in a hurry’. Most travellers suggested relaxation as a reason for their trip to the Hunter Valley. Ross: “my reasons for coming to hunter valley, probably the majority is just to relax”. Travellers were assisted with this state of mind through their exposure to food, wine and views. Tejas: “you know, have a nice view of some vineyard, eat and just sit back and relax for a bit”. The findings suggested strong linkages between relaxation, views and eating. It was pointed out by most travellers that the views of the vineyard while eating created an affective atmosphere of being in the countryside and closer to nature. Jennifer points towards the affect triggered by the taste of the food intertwining with the views of the vineyard, “we ordered as we intend to do as things were yummy, but it was lovely we just sat there on the veranda and had a lovely lunch where we overlooked the vineyard. It was relaxing”. Value emerged through the relational composition of the veranda, food, and views of the vines which aligned with meanings of relaxation. The veranda in this case allows Jennifer to witness the countryside through which taste is produced, establishing a sense of connection and resulting in feelings of relaxation or not thinking about anything else. This ties in with discourses on relaxation in leisure research (Mannell & Iso-Ahola 1987; Shaw 1985). Indulging in food and wine experiences has been studied as relaxing in the gastronomic
literature (Hjalager 2004; Kivela & Crotts 2006; López-Guzmán et al. 2014). Literature on rural tourism addresses countryside views as rural capital which is tapped by travellers for the purposes of relaxation (Garrod et al. 2006). However, the findings demonstrate the affective connection between eating and countryside views that has not been studied much (Croce & Perri 2010).

Another activity that was acknowledged as or found to be relaxing was driving. Several travellers suggested they enjoyed driving in the countryside as it afforded views understood as scenic and therapeutic. Brett, a transport professional from Sydney travelling with his wife, mentions how he loved driving, “Well I love driving up there. It’s just such a big region to just take any path and cruise along, just relaxing and soothing. And when you’re not in a hurry, take your time looking at the views, it’s relaxed”.

Brett mentions how the expanse of the place, ‘not being in a hurry’ and taking the time to look at views while driving slower made it a relaxing experience. Thus, value emerged as TA structures of relaxation through the temporal experience facilitated by driving slower along countryside roads.

The relational arrangements of life in the countryside are crucial to understand the emergence of value experienced as a disassociation or escape to the countryside. Brett travelling with his wife thought the place had a ‘relaxing vibe’ as it was different from the ‘helter skelter’ of modern life, “well now we’re in the city and stuff like that, escaping that
has you know, the helter skelter of modern life and sort of escaping that for a week or two”. Several travellers enjoyed the sense of the countryside as the antithesis of the urban. For example, Rick and Amelia said “it was good to take a break to get away from people, we don’t like people”. For Rick and Amelia, the countryside is understood as place devoid of people. Several other travellers such as Mary and friends associated escapism with authenticity understood as integral to dwelling in the countryside, “to actually see this is where the wine comes from”. Consumer research literature points towards experiencing authentic, sublime and coping experiences to escape the realities of urban life (Belk & Costa 1998; Canniford & Shankar 2013; Kuo et al. 2016). This finding is in line with previous research as travellers from the city visited the countryside to experience authenticity, sublime nature as well as to cope with modern life.

Value also emerged from escaping and feeling closer to things that they categorised as nature. Nature tied to the ideas of presence of wildlife was associated with the countryside (Bertella 2014). Animals have been studied as important non-human actants in the tourism literature where they are used by tourism providers as attractions (Kontogeorgopoulos 2009). Travellers enjoyed clicking photos of kangaroos that formed part of the country milieu. During their interview, Akshata and Tejas described an incident where they stopped their car in the middle of a rural road as they saw two kangaroos.
Akshata: We saw kangaroos on the road while going to see the sunset. And when we saw them, we kind of stopped just to have a look around. So, most of the kangaroos were looking in my, in our direction. And then we, we decided that uh, Tejas said ‘They’re not doing anything. They’re just standing there and staring at us’. So, it was a feeling of the other way round. It was like they were looking at us rather than we stop to look at them.

Tejas: But it was really good and it was tranquil and peaceful. No one around but kangaroos.

Akshata and Tejas describe how their encounter with the kangaroos made them realise that they were amidst nature. Akshata thinks that the kangaroos are staring at her, suggesting swapping of agency which makes her feel part of nature. Meanwhile Tejas describes value through the feelings of tranquillity which were felt due to the presence of kangaroos. Following the nature-culture blend in the country setting witnessed in the AHWFT (Edensor 2000), several businesses marketed wildlife as a strong link between the countryside as a place for nature, despite various agribusinesses. Figure 5.4 provides example photographs from Instagram posted by businesses to help circulate ideas of ‘winemaking as a countryside practice’ which is frequented by wildlife. While the first photograph shows the lizard as part of the country milieu, the second photograph is a wide angle shot which includes the mountains and clouds as naturalistic elements that intermingle with the countryside settings (vines).
Figure 5.4 Wildlife and Country
5.3.2.3 Actants

Elements of ‘terroir’ were central to how value emerged through affective triggers. Hall et al. (2005) and Croce and Perri (2010) discuss terroir not only as an important determinant of the winemaking process but also as integral to the tourist meanings and experience. However, the understanding of terroir by these scholars as static geographical places is contested through the findings. The findings demonstrate the terroir to be affectively constructed through the relational arrangement of non-human entities which is dynamically shaped through competencies and TA structures. This was evident from traveller’s sensibilities journeying along the trail, which distinguished the countryside through the presence of people, long distances, and changing trees, animals, vineyards and roads. The countryside is constructed as travellers sense affect in their interactions with the views of spatial elements, food, wine, bodies and stories collectively.

The vehicle was another important non-human entity that shaped value in the countryside practices along the trail. Cycles and cars were central to how value emerged through the feel of the countryside. Several travellers drove their cars on the trail to catch views of vineyards, hills and lakes. Further, many people chose cycling as a way to have an experience that made them feel physically closer to the milieu. Penny and friends cycled to specific wineries to catch views, “we just followed the views”. Christina talks about how driving allowed her to appreciate the finer details of the landscape, “I love driving in the country. So we’re driving along Hermitage road and it is the country, it’s gum trees all around,
we saw some kangaroos at some stage, love the country”. Being able to spot gum trees and wildlife connected Christina to the countryside. For Penny and friends travelling on the trail for a long weekend, cycling was a way to experience the countryside. Kevin: “It’s got the ‘see rural Australia’ feel since we were outdoors”; Penny: “my wrists were killing me, but it was worth it”. Penny’s friends also mention cycling as a way to experience ‘rural Australia’ which suggests that cycling, as it enabled a bodily interaction with the terroir or the ‘outdoors’, enabled them to feel the dirt road, the muscle tension felt through the slope, and enjoy the scenery. These findings are consistent with literature on mobilities in geography which argues for the affective qualities of movement where the terrain is felt through bodily interactions and sensations created by the vehicle as an agentic actant (Sheller 2004; Thrift 2004a).

5.3.3 Discussion

Value from the theme of food and wine is sensed in the alignment of socio-material arrangements in the practices of opulence and the countryside. These socio-material arrangements result in an affective atmosphere which conveys opulence and the countryside through bodies, commodities, spaces and conversations through which value emerges. Value emerged as travellers become affected by multiple meanings and feelings of opulence and country which are suffused in the theme of food and wine. This finding corroborates what has been documented in the literature on theming where the theme fosters meanings and connections through symbols and discourses (Lukas 2007b).
Lukas (2007b) discusses that people derive value from making and creating sense of the world around them, and the theme arranges and structures spaces in ways that makes it easier for them to connect with their beliefs, meanings (Erb & Ong 2016) and imagined states (Salazar & Graburn 2014). Following the practice approach, these beliefs and imaginaries are built over time through exposure to cultural practices and discourses which are carried by travellers as competencies with them. The findings demonstrate that value from the theme of food and wine emerges as travellers attach different meanings to food and wine which are processed through their competencies and TA structures.

The literature on theming as yet claims value in symbolic associations as mental processes that associate with non-human elements as symbols (Bryman 1999). However, the findings of the study demonstrate how these meanings and senses of opulence and country are guided by the affect triggered by non-human elements as value is cognitively assessed as well as felt. The findings demonstrate that the socio-material environment is pre-cognitively processed as signals trigger feelings through exposure to the food and wine terroir. These affects are semiotically transmitted through these signs which permeate the thinking of people even before they are able to understand it (Newell 2018). Travellers unconsciously and consciously connected these affective symbols with emotional states, imagined futures and previous experiences. This was evident when travellers were probed to remember why they associated something as rural, country or opulent. For example, this was evident when Rick and Amelia described the route as
rural or non-commercial due to their encounters with the bush, distance, lack of sound of cars, etc. The sense of taste of wine was unstated but prevalent in winery choices of travellers who followed referrals affected by the imaginaries of wine even before they could derive meanings of what the taste of the ‘oak’ or ‘fruity flavours’ or ‘handcrafted’ mean for them. The taste of oak instilled a sense of nature and country while handcrafted instilled a sense of exclusivity through access to local craftsmanship. This demonstrates that value was felt affectively and not just processed mentally.

The finding on affect of the theme corresponds with recent anthropological literature on symbolic affect which brings together social constructivist and materialist discourses in affect theory. Newell (2018, p. 22) defines symbolic associations as ‘affective transmissions or conveyances that allow the recipient to recognize and even reproduce it without necessarily understanding it’. These are qualities that are invoked in human actants through non-human actants acting as affective symbols. Contact with both human and non-human actants in practices triggered symbolic associations that were felt or sensed before they were made sense of, for example, feelings of opulence felt by Monica through the service settings. Thus, symbolic association displayed the value in the interplay between affect and cognition demonstrating non-human agency. Tourism studies (Buda 2015b; Buda et al. 2014) have lately started addressing the role of feelings, emotions and affects, and emphasise the felt aspects of touristic themes. Buda et al. (2014) consider the imagined, material, individual and collective nature of feelings, however,
they are deemed to be socially constructed. What this research throws light on is the affective agency of non-human elements through which the feelings, meanings and understandings are intertwined.
5.4 SECTION II: CONTINUITY AND FLOW IN MOVEMENT

This section discusses the practice of touring where value emerges as travellers sense continuity of the theme in movement. The section discusses how movement positions people in relational assemblages which channels value in ‘flow’. The agency of non-human entities in the practice of touring is highlighted through their material involvement in the practice which creates continuity of the thematic experience. The practice is described through the practice-based value framework proposed in the thesis. Discussion illustrates the resonances, disagreements and additions made to the literature.

5.4.1 Touring Practices

Value emerged in the practice of touring as travellers felt a sense of continuity in their experience. Continuity is understood as a lack of disruption or interruption on the route which is afforded through the seamlessness of the experience. The literature on theming discusses continuity as cohesiveness of the experience (Åstrøm 2018; Lukas 2007b). Though the definition is useful in thematic environments that are spatially bounded and clearly defined, meanings of continuity in the context of the AHWFT are established as ‘seamlessness’ which was achieved in movement. In the case of AHWFT, movement along the route constructed the sense of continuity. Movement is guided by the teleo-affective structures of time management and feelings of familiarity. Travellers selected wineries based on how they could ‘cover more’ through the route they took (Fennell 1996; Mason & O’Mahony 2007). Feelings of familiarity also guided some travellers who were
repeat visitors and impacted routing (Rossetto 2012). Competencies include the understandings of touring as a way to achieve other practices, skills of navigation, map reading and sense of space (Merriman 2013). In addition to the travellers who were the main human actants, the trail map, the vehicle, and the road were important conductors of practice. These findings are consistent with the relational approaches used to study movement in the tourism and mobilities literature (Crang & Thrift 2000; Merriman 2012). Following relational understandings of movement, value in seamlessness or continuity of the experience is achieved when travellers are able to connect multiple practices through movement.

Table 5.3 Practice of Touring

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Understandings of touring</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Skills – navigation, ability to read map, driving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teleo-affective Structures</td>
<td>Meanings of covering more and feelings of familiarity</td>
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<td>Actants</td>
<td>Vehicle, road, map</td>
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5.4.1.1 Competencies

The competencies of the practice involve the understanding of touring, skills of navigation (space, distances and scale) and ability to read the map. Value emerged as competencies intertwined with the socio-material arrangements sensed on the route producing a feeling of continuity. The sense of continuity was felt in touring as it allowed travellers to participate in multiple activities on the route which blended their overall
experience into a seamless experience (Becker et al. 2017). This demonstrates understandings of touring as a means to achieve different practices (Merriman 2012). This was evident in the need for travellers to ‘make the most of their time’ where travelling was understood as something to be minimised. Travellers thus selected wineries based on proximity and ‘geographic convenience’. This understanding of touring is consistent with the human geography literature where movement is a doing through which multiple practices are achieved (Thrift 2008).

Understandings of touring involved being able to route by planning different activities. Travellers spent time choosing where to go and route planning before and while driving. Travellers sensed space and calculated the time involved in different activities which helped them route and plan. Prashant: “I think the map was a good help because it was easy to figure out how far we are from the place and how far the places are from each other so that we don’t have to drive a long way”. The road, direction of travel and the vehicle all became important determinants of which winery to go to and participation in other activities. Penny and friends discussed how the vehicle and location of the hire shop dictated their direction of travel. Penny: “they said if you hire your electric bikes from here, you would sort of do this loop, which we did”.

Competencies also included the skills of navigation which required understandings of space and time. Movement of travellers on the trail demonstrated their understandings
of space and time being constructed through their interactions with materialities of different socio-material actants. While the understandings of space were constructed through the map, understandings of time related to the affordances of the vehicle, other vehicles (traffic), weather and the time required for other activities on the route. The map mediated a sense of space through the alignment of the roads, presenting conglomerations of wineries and identifying the businesses on the route. Ross discusses how the AHWFT map was useful in giving a sense of space, “I think that big map that was provided with larger fonts was more useful. The symbols were quite useful as well to know whether it was a winery opposed to a restaurant or something else”. The map in a way mediated the sense of space in touring practices through its material affordances. The vehicle such as the electric bike in the case of Penny and friends, dictated their understandings of time, suggesting the distance they could travel in a day. This ties in with the human geographer Merriman’s (Merriman 2013) notion of ‘movement-space’ where he argues for a multi-dimensional geography; where space and time are not determinants of movement but are instead felt and sensed in relational assemblages. This finding is also similar to a recent study by Woermann and Rokka (2015) who conclude time to be relational to consumption practices.

5.4.1.2 Teleo-affective Structures

The continuous experience of the theme is equally imperative to how value was achieved through the coming together of competencies of touring and TA structures of ‘covering
more’ and sense of familiarity. Following their competencies of touring and navigation, travellers pursued ‘covering more’ through time management as a goal. The findings suggest value emerging from the routing and planning that was involved to save time and ‘cover more’. Many day-tourists who were observed, visited the valley from nearby cities such as Sydney and Newcastle which were in the radius of about two-three hours driving distance. Further, the wineries closed at 5 pm in the evening. Resultantly, tourists were left with only a limited amount of time in the region which they wanted ‘to make the most of’. Thus, many travellers routed their trip based on their understandings of geographic locations of places that allowed them to save time in travelling. Value emerged as travellers saved time by visiting conglomerations of wineries or destinations that were in close proximity to each other through the affordances of the map. Ross: “What attracted me was how they are all bunched together… some of the other wineries of hunter valley I have had a look at in the south, but it’s too far to drive for so few wineries”. Ross, travelling with his family of seven members, visited a conglomeration of wineries so that he could maximise his time with the family. Thus, his sense of time and space itself was constructed through his understandings of his family needs. Brett and his wife structured their trip based on the trail map and visited one geographical section of the trail each day, “We started down there and then we moved up each day’. This is consistent with research by Merriman (2013), Thrift (2008) and Massey (2005), for whom movement is underpinned not by prehensions of space-time but is relative to other practices and actants.
Travellers also pursued the sense of familiarity or comfort that was triggered by the trail map. In Mary’s case, she mentions ‘spotting’ some familiar names on the map, which provided her a sense of familiarity, “What this map allowed me to do was spot already some places that I hadn’t been to and knowing where we needed to be, I could make it work”. The sense of familiarity or comfort was also enhanced as the trail map brought the selectivity of the trail into focus as discussed by Julia and Julian, who were an over 55 couple from the UK, visiting the Hunter Valley for the first time.

*Julia:* I suppose in some respects, this (AHWFT map), was good. Because with the big book, and the big map, we were going to sit down and look at it, and if we’d find that overwhelming, then we’d have gone back and asked. So in some respects we were glad when you gave us the map because that gave us a bit more of a focus, to be able to cover some vineyards. I mean we didn’t know how many there would be, so I suppose in some respects it’s a little overwhelming.

Julia discusses how the map and the magazine provided by the HVWTA were overwhelming and time-consuming to look at. In contrast the AHWFT trail map gave a better sense of the region by being more focussed and this permitted a sense of space that comforted Julia. In this way Julia could feel relaxed and not forced to negotiate where to go. Literature discusses how the sense of comfort and familiarity, in this case generated by affective triggers such as the map (Rossetto 2012), is crucial to appropriation of experiences and spaces (Madsen 2018). Feelings of comfort and familiarity enable continuity (Hansen & Mossberg 2013) as travellers are able to build trust and remove thought from negotiating movement (MacLeod 2016).
Covering more with the help of the trail as a guide and pursuing the sense of familiarity and comfort resulted in feelings of continuity. Continuity was felt as travellers did ‘not have to think’ by following the map. The tourism literature relates ‘not having to think’ with the discourse on ‘flow’ (Edensor 2010). While Csikszentmihalyi et al. (1988) discuss immersion in an experience through unconscious concentration as attributes of ‘flow’, tourism researchers argue flow to also originate in seamless, continuous experiences where rhythms are established by ‘not having to think’ (Gnoth 2017). The findings suggest that the feelings of ‘flow’ emerged through the affordances of the trail map which further enabled continuity by not having to think. Kayne: “We just went with this map’.

Several travellers reported using the map as the only instrument of navigation. The scale of the map was handy and fit into the hands while driving as discussed by Penny. Monica noted that the legend for the map helped attaining flow by reducing unnecessary manoeuvres.

Penny: We did need a map
Becky: But we didn’t need to have it in front of us and
Penny: Yeah, we just had it folded in the basket, and then when we were coming out here and to the point to turn or not, when we got to the intersection we just slowed down and pulled over and checked the name on the map that it was the name on the road.

Monica: yeah, legend. Yeah it’s perfect because you really know here so here is gonna be just vineyards and that’s what I look for, this is gonna be just vineyards, it’s gonna be restaurants, this is yeah, and I like, I like the legend too…it’s big enough, it’s very clear. I like this map better than the one in the information centre. Was just so easy to follow. We were just going with the flow. It was just easier…

Penny and friends demonstrates how the materiality of the map facilitated comfort and flow during their cycling journey, while Monica discusses how the legend for the map
made it easy to get into the flow. This is similar to how flow is understood in the tourism literature (Duffy et al. 2011; Edensor 2010) understanding flow as a sense of rhythm (Lefebvre 2004).

5.4.1.3 Actants

Value in the sense of continuity was felt as the material affordances and affects of multiple non-human actants aligned competencies and TA structures. Literature suggests that apart from their role in creating affect (Newell 2018) as discussed in the practices of opulence and country, non-human actants also ‘act’ through their material affordances (Epp et al. 2014; Haldrup & Larsen 2006). Value, in the practice of touring, demonstrated agency of the vehicle and the road in movement. Activities such as driving, cycling, horse-riding, and even walking, aligned socio-material relations through their material affordances that enabled function as well as affect. Joey and Christina talk about their vehicle playing an important role in constructing the feelings of freedom through its material affordances, “We just love driving and seeing country views. And we stay as long as we like, that’s the freedom. And if we want to go out and have a photo around here, the car’s in the carpark, oh we’ll stop and have a drink. We’re free, that’s freedom”. Christina discusses the affordance of the car window which provides the opportunity to see vast distances that culminate into a view, as well as the freedom of movement that is afforded by the car. In addition, having the car in the car park also triggered affect as it produced a sense of freedom as it facilitated movement at one’s convenience (Urry 2006).
Material affordances were discussed by several other travellers. Penny and Kevin discussed how the electric bikes helped them cover more distance and directed their trip. Similarly, Kayne discussed the affordances of his motorhome facilitating travelling by acting as a dwelling place, “At least this one I could sleep in and if you’ve had too much to drink, you’ve got a private toilet”. Travellers also discussed how the vehicle facilitated ‘not thinking’ as in the case of the tour bus. Several travellers travelled on the iHop service which was a tour bus connecting limited experiences on the trail. Travellers on the iHop enjoyed ‘not’ having to indulge in routing at all due to their modal choice. Morgan: “I enjoyed the stress removal as somebody else had to do the driving and just being able to sit back and suck in the scenery”. Value emerged through the material affordances of the bus which eliminated thought from routing creating a continuous affective experience. Further, vehicle affordances also related to the ease of carrying wine demonstrating the storage capabilities of the vehicle. The field note below demonstrates the observation made of the car being used for storage.

Discussion at Oakvale - Several cars parked in the wineries I visited seem to have their engine on. I mentioned it to one of the visitors at Oakvale that their engine was on thinking that they might have forgotten to put it off, but they said that was deliberate so that the wine wouldn’t go bad. The service staff at Oakvale remarked that people buy thousands of dollars of worth of wine, look at the weather it’s over a 30 degrees, you don’t want it to affect your wine! – (Field note, 29/10/2016)

The fieldnote demonstrates how the affordances of the car helped battle the heat. The car not only acted as a storage unit, but through its air conditioning also acted as a barrier against heat. Several travellers chose the car not only for the ease of carrying wine but
also as a way to temporarily save wine from the heat (Knappett & Malafouris 2008). This facilitation of practices by material affordances of the vehicle can be explained through the mobilities literature where vehicles are understood as dwelling places, a way to escape, place to dream and also connect with nature (Merriman 2004; Roy & Hannam 2013). What this research demonstrates is how material affordances of vehicles are also important in constructing and maintaining the continuity of the thematic experience.

Further, value emerging from ‘not having to think’ or a sense of continuity or flow was also facilitated by the trail map as a guide. Considering the restricted time available and the vastness of the region, many travellers preferred and were happy to be directed. The HVVC was the first stop for most tourists. Direction was also provided by wineries and other businesses through referrals as well as by the researcher in telling them about the trail. However, the main source of guidance that conveyed the scale of the trail, the space as well as the experience was the trail map. Value emerged through the ‘handyness’ of the map during referencing. Ross: “When I am driving I am sort of constantly seeing the map well, I mean that was helpful”. Monica discusses the achievement of ‘flow’ (“we were just going with the flow”) which is attributed to the availability of information/legend on the map which reduced the need to look at other marketing collateral and diverting attention towards unnecessary ‘finding out’. The legend along with the size of the map (big enough) and clarity eliminated thought and distracting actions creating a sense of flow for Monica and Ross.
Maps in literature have been understood as cartographic tools, symbols of power and co-producers of space (Rossetto 2012). Adding to this discourse, the findings demonstrate the material affordances of the map as well as its role as an affective trigger, which embodied the trail. Barry, Mary’s friend, in the quote below, discusses how the map dictated their winery choices.

*Barry - To an extent the trail actually somewhat dictated cause we drove past a number of them, on the way from Degen, like yes we did bypass some to get to Mistyglen, bypassed more to get to Rothvale, so to an extent that did dictate ...which ones we go to next.*

Barry discusses how they simply followed the map without considering the number of wineries that were not part of the trail. This suggests a sense of flow achieved through the material affordances of the map. Julia and Julian also mentioned how they simply followed the trail map “for the experience, and you know, just accepting things as they came along on the map”. Further, Mary mentions that she did not have a plan when she came to visit the Hunter Valley and was going to ‘wing it’, suggesting that she was not sure what experience she was going to have. However, the trail map directed her group to the trail region which gave her a direction where she was able to spot some familiar wineries which assured her that the trail was not far off from the experience she wanted. Thus, the trail map not only provided her a direction but also helped her feel assured and gave her a sense of security, suggesting the map being an affective trigger. In this way, value emerged as the non-human actants in the practice of touring, aligned and connected.
different practices which helped reduce thinking and negotiating, further streamlining the overall experience.

5.4.2 Discussion

Value emerges through social entanglements of material affordances that were agentic in maintaining the continuity of the thematic experience, allowing the channelling of flow. Positivist approaches towards understanding touring or movement comprehend space and time from a Euclidean or Newtonian perspective, whereby space and time are primordial and travellers calculate time and distance to construct their itinerary (Hwang et al. 2006; Lue et al. 1993). This line of thought is questioned by material and affective geographers (Thrift 2008) who argue for movement to be relational to practices and actants. In the case of the AHWFT, value emerged as the material affordances (Epp et al. 2014; Watson & Shove 2008) and affects triggered by non-human actants in touring practices enabled a seamless connection to develop between opulence, country, sociality (discussed in the next section) and touring. A sense of flow resulting from ‘not having to think’ was subsequently evident. Thus, value from the theme of food and wine emerged through socio-material relations that led to ‘not having to think’ or ‘going with the flow’ pointing towards the seamlessness of the experience (Hoffman & Novak 1996). This can be connected with the capacity of themes to achieve a relaxing effortless non-reflective state of enjoyment or ‘experiential flow’ (Graburn 1983; Lukas 2007c). Edensor (2010)
describes the achievement of flow through the sense of continuity or rhythm (Lefebvre 2004) which facilitates an experiential flow through spaces, architectures and an assemblage of mechanical apparatuses. The characteristic of the theme as being continuous has been discussed in terms of themes creating a narrative which orders and structures experiences (Erb & Ong 2016). This narrative creation or ordering allows continuity of the theme which is followed by the consumer resulting in removal of thought (Lukas 2007a). That said, the literature on theming has not given much attention to how movement contributes to continuity of the theme through material affordances and affects. Movement helps create continuity of the theme by connecting practices and maintaining and reinforcing the theme. The continuity of the theme of food and wine was felt through affordances of the car as people were able to conform to multiple practices by travelling from one winery to another. Travellers achieved a sense of flow as they were able to sense the continuity of the theme through material affordances and affects triggered by the trail map, vehicle and the road.

Theme continuity is important specifically in themed routes as compared to other themed environments. The themed route is a suggestive trail where it is difficult to maintain the continuity of the theme as travellers still undergo a thinking process to select destinations. In such a scenario, the marketing collateral and materials encouraging connections between practices such as the map and the vehicle become crucial elements in reducing decision-making and directing travellers along the trail. This is an important finding of
this research because it defines the role of non-human entities as not only symbols and affective triggers but also continuity creators of the theme through their affordances.
5.5 SECTION III: FOSTERING TOGETHERNESS

This section discusses sociality practices, where value emerges as travellers connect with other human actants. Sociality practices demonstrated that the themed route provides an opportunity for travellers to connect with other travellers, thereby inculcating a sense of togetherness or communitas on the route. Sociality practices demonstrated that value of a themed route is in the collective experience which enables or fosters meanings and feelings of communitas. The section discusses the components of the theoretical framework with reference to the literature.

5.5.1 Practicing Sociality

Practices of sociality are key to better understanding how value emerged as various travellers engage with members of the travel party and other travellers on the route and felt a sense of bonding and communitas. While bonding is understood as a sense of togetherness within the travel party (Durko & Petrick 2013), communitas is understood as a feeling or sense of togetherness achieved in sharing common experiences with other travellers (Turner 2012). The literature on theming demonstrates that theming can inculcate a sense of togetherness as travellers share thematic affect (Lukas 2007a). Value in sensing bonding and communitas is documented in the anthropological and tourism literature which considers travelling or vacationing as a liminal experience which encourages the sense of togetherness (Rihova et al. 2015; Turner 2012). Travelling is understood as a liminal experience as it is understood as transitional moments where
people are brought together and share an experience (Turner 1974). More recently, (Joy et al. 2018) conducted a study on consumer engagement in wine regions in India and South Africa and reported similar findings of travellers experiencing the feeling of togetherness during wine tasting. Travellers engaged with other human and non-human actants which created the sense of *communitas*. The findings on the AHWFT suggest that feelings of social connection were enhanced by travelling on the themed route through material affordances and affect generated by the vehicle (Sheller 2004) and the winery settings. These findings suggest that feelings of togetherness were reproduced as travellers related to each other through doing similar activities on the trail and being part of similar socio-material assemblages. Value emerged on the AHWFT as teleo-affective structures of bonding and holidaying and the feelings or sense of connection are felt in the relational arrangements of people and things. This is consistent with the literature on leisure tourism which suggests that tourism plays an important role in enhancing bonding amongst family members and friends (Lehto et al. 2012). Feelings of connection with other travellers experienced through travel are also corroborated in literature as people share similar interests and backgrounds (Rihova et al. 2015). Competencies of the practice include conversation and engagement skills and understandings of kinship, friendship and sociality. This is consistent with the practice theory perspective of Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1977) and Giddens (Giddens 1984) where cultural understandings are acquired and performed in everyday life through different rituals.
Table 5.4 Practice of Sociality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Understanding of kinship and friendship, understandings of sociality</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills – conversation and engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teleo-affective Structures</strong></td>
<td>Meanings and feelings of bonding and communitas</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Actants</strong></td>
<td>Servicescape elements such as furniture, vehicle</td>
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5.5.1.1 Competencies

Value emerged in the practice as travellers connected with their family and friends following the understandings of kinship and friendship. Following the relational practice-theoretical perspective, the competencies of family are shaped through exposure to multiple practices which enable doing family or friendship (Schatzki 1996). The empirical data demonstrates how travellers understood how doing eating, drinking, talking and travelling together as ‘rites of passage’ or rituals to experience bonding (Wolin & Bennett 1984). Mary and friends pre-booked their lunch to spend time together as a group, as “lunch was the main group activity”. This is consistent with the literature that suggests that shared activities such as eating and drinking are linked to meanings and feelings of togetherness and thus form social competencies (Ravenscroft & van Westering 2001; Warde 2016).

Several travellers associated driving around in a car as another way families could spend time together. Literature suggests cars are dwelling places in motion where social
relations are exercised (Urry 2006). This is consistent with the findings on the route where Ross describes the lived experience of driving as integral to ‘doing family’, “I think when you have 7 people with 2 kids and a dog packed into a small SUV which is designed for long distance travelling we just talk about put on your seat belts, I am thirsty, I am hungry, I need to go to the toilet, Ok there’s a toilet here, ok there isn’t, 5 minutes away”. Ross points out the discussions inside the car which point towards how family was performed during travelling through functional discussions. Doing so demonstrated care and respect for each other (Wolin & Bennett 1984). Further, Pranab, travelling with his family, describes how travelling in the car is associated with family time as that is the time for “talking about family politics, talking about who’s marrying whom, talking about the area as well”. This is consistent with literature on families where discussing family news is one of the ways people practice togetherness (Hilbrecht et al. 2008; Waitt et al. 2016).

Value also emerged in the practice of sociality as travellers connected with other travellers on the route (Rihova et al. 2015). Most travellers discussed how all travellers and winemakers they met on the route seemed very helpful and chatty. Competencies of the practice also included understandings of social behaviour or behavioural conduct in social situations. Pranab discusses how the practice of sociality required understandings of social conduct in liminal experiences where people find each other together in the same circumstances. Pranab mentions how discussing points of
commonality, which in this case was the theme of food and wine enables the feeling of togetherness to emerge.

*Pranab - But there is something to be said about doing this as part of a tour bus as well, with strangers. Because every time we’ve done this with strangers you always make friends. You always talk to people, because you talk where are you from? And a good talker does that as well. Oh, these people are from New Zealand, these people are from Singapore, these people are from Sydney, whatever, and you can all chat and get to know one another and you have that commonality of wine, you’re all in the area, usually as tourists, but it does add to it.*

The literature suggests that travelling or tourism is a liminal experience where everyday social norms are diluted (Law & Urry 2004) and practices of sociality are constantly reworked based on the context in which they are experienced (Turner 1974). In the quotation above, Pranab discussed how doing the same things, being together on the same bus or in the same area and the common social identity of being ‘tourists’ creates a sense of communitas (Turner 2012).

Social skills were important to acknowledge and respect different cultural groups on the route (Ravenscroft & van Westering 2001). Pranab also mentioned the skills of being a ‘good talker’ which is important to achieve value through the feeling of communitas. The skills of sociality were evident as travellers practiced social skills such as waving, chatting and saying ‘hi’ as they connected with other travellers on the trail. For example, Kayne, who travelled the route in his recreational vehicle (RV), registers a sense of communitas with the fellow caravan traveller through his RV and demonstrates competencies of sociality by waving as a way to acknowledge fellow caravan travellers on the route, “oh
yeah, cos anyone with these things, they’re always waving to you”. This is consistent with the literature on communitas which suggests that need for sociality is inherent in people (Turner 2012), and social skills are acquired over time (Giddens 1984). Thus, competencies of the practice of sociality demonstrate how understandings of sociality and family intermingle with the socio-material arrangements to produce value in the practice of sociality.

5.5.1.2 Teleo-affective Structures

The TA structures of community practices include the meanings and feelings of bonding and communitas. Value emerges through the alignment of competencies of family and meanings of bonding in the socio-material arrangements of the practice. Value emerged as travellers performed activities with the purpose to engage with members of their travel party. Travellers followed the meanings of bonding within their travel party where they sought experiences that strengthened their relationships. Activities such as going in search of, and sharing, views and wine tasting were understood as opportunities for reconfiguring the bonds of family and friendship (Wolin & Bennett 1984). Travellers prioritised social agendas. Most activities that they indulged in were scheduled, routed and targeted with the purpose of bonding. Mary: “we dont see each other every weekend or anything so just having that time together and doing something different”. Ross and family took their extended family out on the trip, including two adults, two children, a non-drinking grandmother and a dog, prioritised wineries with ‘a lot of activities’.
Ross - The deal was kids had their time in Hunter Valley Gardens exploring the Alice in Wonderland. yeah so, they have had their part so the afternoon was more for the adults, so they knew that were going to be a bit more bored. Our first stop was Hunter Valley resort which was nice, I mean we mainly stopped there, cause we saw there were a lot of activities and it was nice to be able to scout out what they had for next time as well. Kids liked that too because they had a like a chalk drawing area, they were more accommodating to kids than the other ones.

Ross mentions the main reason for selecting wineries was ‘doing something’ as a family. Ross also mentioned appreciating wineries that had something for children to do, so that they could enjoy the tastings without having to worry about entertaining the children. This finding is consistent with the literature on tourism which suggests family and friends going on vacations enjoy bonding (Durko & Petrick 2013).

Feelings of communitas also guided value in the practice of sociality. Value emerged as travellers interacted with other travellers on the route and felt a sense of camaraderie. Joey and Christina, repeat visitors on the route, discuss the sense of homogeneity that was felt by bumping into people who were doing the same things as them. They suggested food and wine tasting to be some kind of an initiation ritual through which everyone felt the same affective atmosphere of being on a holiday which fuelled the sense of communitas (Turner 1969).

Joey: It’s really like everybody’s on a holiday, everybody’s happy. Here, you just listen, here, everybody’s happy, everybody’s got the same idea, wanting to taste wine.
Christina: Yep, yep. You don’t mind, we might be there right by ourselves and a couple more would come in, and they would say hello, and they go on and, yeah, definitely a hi.
In the quotation above, Christina also mentions the social encounters such as conversations or courtesies that helped them feel part of the same experience (Selting 2010). Travellers also engaged with others through conversations about wine while wine tasting and eating at restaurants. They discussed where all they had been and shared knowledge of wine which resulted in word of mouth. A mother of two children in a café on the route discussed in an informal chat that “you get to know good wineries when you talk to people standing in the queue waiting for your turn”. Thus, wine tasting and eating at restaurants became ritualistic activities where travellers were forced to stand/sit together and perform sociality (Turner 1974).

Further, the alignment of the road forced travelling in only two directions because of which travellers regularly bumped into each other and as they travelled on the route which also led to a feeling of communitas (Tumbat & Belk 2013). Communitas was also experienced by the researcher as she bumped into several tourists at different wineries through the material affordances of the road. This finding is consistent with the literature on communitas which discusses the feeling or sense of togetherness to be affective (Turner 2012; Turner 1969). What this research showcased was how the feelings of camaraderie were facilitated through the agency of non-human actants through shared affects and material affordances in various socio-material arrangements through which value emerged.
5.5.1.3 Actants

The human-non-human actants align with competencies and TA structures in the relational assemblage that help sustain sociality practices and thus emergent value. Actants include other travellers, marketers, businesses as well as servicescape elements such as furniture and the vehicle. The human actants of the practice included travellers within the travel party and other travellers who shaped value in the practice through their bodily presence (Amelia: “we just went where other people went”) and competencies of sociality. The non-human actants included the winery settings and the vehicle which forwarded the sense of togetherness through affect and their material affordances.

Julia: So, there was more opportunity for chatter as we sat at small tables—cause it’s only a small place, isn’t it. So, we were sat round small round tables and whereas the other ones you just wind up along the bar, yeah so there’s less opportunity. And there were three people in Misty Glen when we got in there and they were camping as well, so you know, it’s just really friendly, a nice relaxing, thing to do….

Julia and Julian sense the feeling of communitas as they were sat around round tables, providing them with an opportunity to interact with other tourists. Thus, the material affordances of the furniture in the way it shaped the arrangement of bodies transmitted affect which created a sense of comradeship. This followed the fact that they were all seated for the same thing, i.e. wine tasting. Julia also demonstrates how participation in common activities such as camping became a talking point which helped them establish a sense of togetherness. Literature suggests that participating in shared ritualistic events and activities allows enhances the feeling of togetherness (Turner 2012).
Value also emerged as actants triggered feelings of bonding within the travel party through the material affordances of mode of travel. The mode of travel determined the number of people and the amount of exposure to other people. The field notes reveal the decision of taking the bus by a group of mothers being dependent on the number of people in their travel party. Mothers understand the themed route to break free of their motherly responsibilities for some time and thus comprehend their sense of freedom through the material affordances of the bus.

Observations at the HVVC – A group of 8 ladies are waiting for the iHop bus, they are here for a ‘mom’s day out’, all dressed up and excited to ‘drink and go wild’ as they say. They are taking the bus as that is the only option as they are a large group. looking forward to singing, riding and drinking without having to think. – (Fieldnotes, 03/12/2016)

This field note also demonstrates how ‘not having to drive’ and ‘drinking without thinking’ is facilitated by the material affordances of the bus which enables a sense of freedom or ‘going wild’. Further, the space in the bus allows these mothers to stretch and do shared activities such as dancing and singing which enhance feelings of bonding. Contrarily, Mary and her friends avoided the bus and took the car to have privacy in the group, “I think being in the car it was intimate, it was small so we could just talk about things pretty easily rather than in a bus where you are like have to reach across the arm (enacting) ‘what did you think of that one Emma?!’ and plus we could be ourselves in the car may be in the bus you would have to be a bit more better behaved”. In the case of Mary, her partner and her two
friends, the car allowed them privacy, heightening the sense of intimacy. Mary also mentions ‘having to behave’ in a bus, which suggests a sense of freedom from social obligations afforded by the affective feeling of kinship inside the car. For Penny and friends who chose electric bikes, value emerged from the affordances of the cycle which influenced their interaction within the group as they ‘spread out’ on the road and ‘shouted and yelled’. Penny: “A lot of shouting, person at the back would bell, but if you’re at the front you’d just slow down, and then the people behind would just catch up and then you’d just yell at each other”. Becky: “like, the roads weren’t busy, cycling in a group – You could spread out across the lane”. Further, cycling also helped Penny and her friends connect to other people on the road enhancing a sense of communitas. Adam: “And actually all the drivers, behind us were very considerate”. These findings are consistent with the practice and consumer culture literature which suggests that material affordances are important in shaping practices (Cochoy 2008; Epp & Price 2010; Watson & Shove 2008). The mobilities literature in geography argues for vehicles such as trains and cars to create affect through the way they shape practices following their affordances (Roy & Hannam 2013; Sheller 2004). What the findings suggest are how the material affordances act within the specific socio-material arrangements to produce value through sociality practices.

5.5.2 Discussion

Value emerges as travellers feel and establish a sense of togetherness (felt in interaction with other travellers or bonding felt within the travel party) by travelling on the themed
route. Feeling connected is one of the important ways humans experience the world (Giddens 1984). Following Victor Turner (1969), sharing feelings and competencies in shared liminal settings help travellers bond with each other. The research helped establish the importance of the themed route in achieving this sense of togetherness in three ways. First, the themed route binds people under the same affective atmosphere of food and wine where multiple feelings such as relaxation and indulgence, are shared as a collective. The findings on AHWFT point towards shared feelings of togetherness arising from the collective experience of the thematic atmosphere. This collective sharing of affects produces the sense of communitas or togetherness where people feel they ‘are all doing the same thing’. The geography literature discusses how atmospheres are constructed of multiple affects and feelings that are shared as a collective as people share the same space (Anderson 2009; Hill 2015). The themed route in this case is the arrangement of socio-material relations in which people are bound together, thus, sharing the affective atmosphere produced in these relations.

Second, the material affordances of the servicescape, vehicle, the route and the map physically bring people together again and again as they bump into each other or encounter facing each other in wineries. This reminds travellers that they are part of the same experience. This demonstrates how material affordances of non-human entities play an important role in bringing people together on the themed route, enabling shared affects, leading to feelings of togetherness. Findings on family and friendship being
facilitated through materialities of things are in line with the analyses by Epp and Price (2010); (2015) who illustrate how families are assembled through materialities of a dining table. What this research also points towards is how things create feelings of togetherness outside of the family in liminal experiences.

Third, the AHWFT demonstrated wine tasting and eating at restaurants as initiation or ritualistic events which allow people to bond (Durko & Petrick 2013). Tourism literature suggests activities such as drinking and eating are rituals in which people engage and experience togetherness by letting go of social structures and norms (Arnould & Price 1993; Gibson & Weinberg 1980). Wine tasting allowed travellers to feel a sense of togetherness as they all assumed the identities of ‘tasters‘ and not necessarily ‘buyers’ which enabled them to connect. Thus, following the themed route triggered and facilitated the practice of sociality through agentic alignment of socio-material actants which enabled travellers to connect with each other through the theme.

5.6 Summary

The chapter demonstrated three ways in which value emerges in the socio-material context of the AHWFT. First, section I suggested value is felt and emerges in the alignment of socio-material relations that convey meanings, feelings and understandings of opulence and country through affect triggered by non-human entities. Second, section II suggested value emerging from the experience of continuity of the theme afforded by
non-human entities through their relational arrangements in movement. Third, section III described value emergent in the connection or sense of togetherness triggered and facilitated by travelling on the route facilitated by both affect and affordances of non-human entities. Overall, there are three key takeaways from these findings. First, value is felt alongside being cognitively assessed. Second, value is an ongoing process which is contingent upon particular ways actants, TA structures and competencies align. Third, non-human entities are agentic in value formation owing to their material affordances and capabilities in triggering affect. The next chapter concludes the discussion on value as a more-than-human achievement and provides contributions and directions for future research.
6  CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

6.1  Overview

This chapter concludes the study. The research aimed to understand **how value emerges for the traveller in the socio-material context of themed routes**. Finding no theoretical framework on value to address the non-human agency, the research offered the practice-based value framework to understand value as a more-than-human achievement. The framework thus established was applied to the case context of Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail, located in Australia’s Hunter Valley. The findings highlighted the role of non-human entities through affect and affordances as crucial in upholding, continuing and constructing the theme for the traveller. This concluding chapter thus affirms that value is a more-than-human achievement in the socio-material entanglements of the world and still needs to be understood more exhaustively.

This final chapter is divided into five sections. The first section provides a summary of the key findings. The second section concludes the discussion on value as a more than human achievement. The third and fourth sections describe the theoretical contributions and managerial recommendations. The last section describes the limitations of the research and future research directions.
6.2 Summary of the Findings

Adopting a relational-ontological perspective for this research helped in highlighting the agency of non-human entities, which was a key facilitator in understanding ‘how value emerges for the traveller in the socio-material context of themed routes’. Following the relational ontological perspective on value, the proposed practice-based value framework was integral to understanding non-human agency, through which value was understood as a more-than-human achievement. The proposed framework helped understand value by unpacking each meaning, emotion, and feeling through which value emerges for the themed route travellers. This unpacking was done by applying the concepts of the proposed framework to the research context of the Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail (AHWFT). ‘Teleo-affective structures’ helped in highlighting the role of affect in value formation within the practices of opulence, countryside and sociality. ‘Actants’ highlighted the role of material affordances by emphasizing how non-human entities shaped value such as vehicles in case of touring practices. Through the construct of ‘competencies’, the practice framework also upheld human capabilities through embodied understandings and skills, both of which helped shape value on the route. Thus, the proposed practice-based value framework enabled dissecting value moments into meanings, feelings, understandings and materialities, which helped in decoding non-human agency.
The practice-based value framework was crucial in explaining why the role of non-human entities is significant in channelling value in the context of a themed route. The findings demonstrated three different ways in which value emerges on a themed route through different relational assemblages. All the three ways signified the agency of non-human entities.

6.2.1 Feeling the Theme

Value emerged as ‘sensed’ and ‘felt’ rather than ‘perceived’. Travellers felt the theme as they practiced opulence and country, in which case value emerged as travellers sensed an affective environment constructed through relational arrangements of food and wine. While opulence practices suggested the role of affect in perpetuating the imbibed competencies through exposure and symbolic interactions with food and wine. Country practices demonstrated the role of materialities of non-human entities such as vines, roads and topography in creating or triggering affect. These findings demonstrate both affect and cognition to have a symbiotic relationship in creating symbolic association which argues non-human entities to have affective agency. In the context of this study, non-human entities acted as affective triggers that interacted with understandings, skills and meanings to generate feelings which travellers conformed to or pursued.
6.2.2 Continuity and Flow

Touring practices as interpreted in this research demonstrated value emerging in simply following the route which reduced decision-making and encouraged a sense of flow. Travellers enjoyed the continuous seamless experience that was enhanced through touring. These findings demonstrate the importance of non-human entities in channelling continuity of the theme by creating a sense of flow. These findings suggested that the continuity of the theme is achieved through movement. When interpreted from a post-modern perspective, movement contributes to the continuity of the theme as it connects practices through material affordances of the vehicle and reinforces the theme by facilitating affective encounters with the landscape. Touring practices also demonstrated the role of non-human entities such as the map in achieving flow as it allowed tourists to limit decision-making and ‘go with the flow’. The connection between flow, continuity and movement highlighted in this research has been briefly touched upon in tourism literature and leaves much scope to be further explored. In this research, non-human entities such as the vehicle and the road, forged connections between multiple practices, as material affordances aligned different meanings, doings and feelings together into a continuous affective experience.

6.2.3 Fostering Togetherness

Value emerged as the socio-material arrangements comprising the themed route, enabled a sense of communitas and bonding. Travellers felt a sense of connection with each other
through the sharing of the affective atmosphere as well as ritualistic activities. The findings demonstrate the role of the non-human entities in binding people together under the same affective atmosphere. Further, the findings also suggest the role of non-human entities such as the entities of the servicescape, road and the map allowing people to bump into each other time and again creating a communitas experience. The research also suggested key experiences such as wine-tasting, being ritualistic in nature where non-human entities such as the tasting room, glasses, seating, allowed travellers to renounce individual social identities and nurture a common identity of ‘tasters’. In this case, non-human actants, through their material affordances as well as affective triggers, led to a feeling of cohesion and camaraderie.

Through affect and affordances, therefore, non-human entities in different socio-material relational assemblages demonstrated agency in all the ways value emerged on the route. This is a key conclusion of this research, which establishes value to be a more-than-human achievement.

6.3 Value as a More-than-Human Achievement

Considering value as a more-than-human achievement primarily suggests adopting an alternative view on how value is understood in the extant literature. Following the conceptualisation and re-imagining of marketplaces as being ‘always in process’ and dynamic (Giesler & Fischer 2016), this thesis suggested moving away from exchange or
use-centric understandings of value, and instead understanding value in moments as felt. The literature review elaborated two different value logics dealing with non-human entities, namely, Service Dominant Logic (SDL) and Consumer Culture Theory Logic (CCT). Using a resource-based perspective, SDL relegated non-human entities as resources through which businesses create value for the consumer (Akaka et al. 2014). While on the other hand the CCT logic identified symbolic value to supersede transactional and use value (Karababa & Kjeldgaard 2013). Applying both the SD and CCT logics to the case of theming however, was unable to adequately explain instances where value was shaped through non-human affordances, and the role of affect in generating value as felt. A more-than-human perspective suggests that people and the environment are folded into each other (Hartmann 2013; Panelli 2009). Following the entanglement of the social and the material as discussed in the feminist post-modern sociological perspectives (Deleuze & Guattari 1988; Latour 2005), this thesis connected the different streams of literature arguing for detailed study of these entanglements, with the construct of value. This thesis demonstrated that value is a constant ongoing process which is equally shaped by the involvement of non-human entities. This multi-dimensional understanding of value fits with the relational understandings of the marketplace as envisaged by post-modern CCT researchers (Arsel 2016; Canniford & Bajde 2015).
6.4 Theoretical Contributions

This research presents three theoretical contributions. First, this thesis contributes to a theoretical advancement of understanding value in marketing by answering the call by Arsel (2016) for a relational understanding of value. Second, the thesis contributes towards the theming literature by suggesting the affective nature of themes and pointing to the need for theming to maintain continuity (Whetten 1989). Third, the thesis contributes to the tourism literature by understanding themed routes as tourism experiences where value is felt. These contributions are explained in more detail below.

6.4.1 Value in marketing

Recent services marketing literature on value suggests that value is not only created by firms but is co-created between multiple actors (Vargo & Lusch 2004). Understanding the relationality, translatability and heterogeneity of markets, this interpretation of value is restrictive due to its humanist focus. Although the usage of ‘co’ in co-creation aligns with the relational emergence of value and is understood as an underpinning concept, however, as pointed out by Grönroos (2011), the use of the term ‘creation’ suggests a deliberate, considered and conscious human effort towards generating value. Through the conceptualisation of ‘value in relation’ in this research, it was understood that ‘perception of value’ is not a prerequisite for value formation. In fact, value is also experienced in a subconscious ‘felt’ way in everyday practices. Therefore, when viewed relationally, value is ‘emergent’ in relations and can neither be ‘created’ (Vargo & Lusch
2008b), nor ‘destroyed’ (Camilleri & Neuhofer 2017; Echeverri & Skålén 2011). Thus, this thesis contributes to the understanding of value in marketing by introducing the ontological positioning of ‘value in relation’.

The proposed theoretical framework can be helpfully deployed to study markets as co-constituted socio-material systems instead of simply social systems (Canniford & Bajde 2015; Giesler & Fischer 2016). Marketplaces are increasingly being understood as social processes that evolve through participation of multiple institutional arrangements, collaborations and stakeholders (Humphreys 2010a). Lately, marketplaces are also being recognised as relational contexts that demonstrate socio-material interplay (Fernandez & Figueiredo 2018) between humans and technologies (Hoffman & Novak 2018), or humans and things (Epp & Price 2010; Epp et al. 2014). Considering these re-conceptualisations of the market, value is no longer restricted to the existing realms of exchange, use or symbols, and therefore needs to be understood and rediscovered as a result or by-product of situationally dynamic and processual relations (Arsel 2016). This research presents a framework that helps in understanding the embeddedness of value in such situationally dynamic and processual relations.

The practice-based value framework contributes to the understanding of value in socio-materially dynamic marketplaces, and enables understanding value in moments and as ‘felt’. The proposed framework introduces a new way of imagining value in marketing
which helps the marketer dive into relationships, interactions and human and non-human actants of the emergent marketplace. This reimagined and multi-dimensional understanding of value fits well with the relational understandings of the marketplace that are always in process and dynamic (Giesler & Fischer 2016).

6.4.2 Contribution to Theming

Considering the importance of theming in marketing (Pine & Gilmore 1999), conceptualising value as a more-than-human achievement enables a better understanding of the socio-material interplay through which value emerges. As discussed in Chapter 1, the role of non-human entities in theming is understood to be crucial in creating a theme (Gottdiener 1997). Countering previous conceptualisations of non-human entities as resources in the themed servicescape (Rosenbaum 2005), this thesis articulated value as a more-than-human achievement and thus contributed towards understanding of non-human agency in themed environments through affordances and affect. The practice-based value framework presented in this thesis is helpful in articulating both affect and material affordances. Through the application of the practice-based value framework, this thesis demonstrated that themes are affective. This thesis demonstrated that affect is the driving force behind symbolic constructions through which a theme is experienced. This is an important contribution to the theming literature.
Additionally, the thesis emphasized the role of non-human entities in facilitating a continuous affective experience, in turn, unpacking the construct of continuity in theming. (Åstrøm 2018) identifies ten characteristics of theming: authenticity, chronotype, cohesion, digital technology, immersion, interaction/co-creation, multi-sensory, novelty, relatability and storytelling/narrative. The findings of this research demonstrate the addition of ‘continuity’ of the theme as a significant characteristic.

Continuity is generally understood as the lack of disruption and is distinct from cohesion. Continuity suggests the seamlessness of the thematic experience which helps travellers attain a sense of flow by reducing the need for decision-making.

6.4.3 Contribution to Tourism Literature

This thesis contributes to the tourism literature in four ways. First, it reveals how luxuriousness is associated with food and wine tourism. Establishing this association advances the understanding of gastronomic trails by articulating how they function and what contributes to their performance. The literature on gastronomy suggests that food and wine as products are often related to luxury and opulence through their production and consumption practices (Baer et al. 2018; Maguire 2013; Rokka 2017). However, association of opulence with ‘food and wine tourism’ is not an obvious conclusion (Bellini & Resnick 2018). Bellini and Resnick (2018) argue that opulence in food and wine tourism is related to feeling and sensing luxury as an experience. This thesis explains how
travellers feel and sense luxury in the practices of opulence, as specific socio-material arrangements construct affective atmospheres that enable meaningful experiences.

Second, the thesis advances understandings of the core practices through which value may emerge in a themed route. The literature conceptualises themed routes based on tourism planning objectives which is unable to explain how themed routes are consumed (Antonson & Jacobsen 2014; Hayes & Macleod 2008; Lourens 2007; Marschall 2012; Moulin & Boniface 2001; Prideaux 2002; Ramsey & Everitt 2007; Reis & Jellum 2012; Rogerson 2007). This thesis presents four core practices – opulence, country, touring and sociality – all of which demonstrate the consumption of themed routes. While opulence and country are practices associated with the theme, touring demonstrates the role of movement on the themed route, whereas sociality demonstrates how consumption of themed routes both enables and is guided by doing family, friendship and communitas. This is an important finding as travelling on a food and wine trail is not simply about consuming the theme, but also about being able to relax and ‘let go’, be guided and also feel part of a community. This thesis demonstrated that themed routes facilitate connections between multiple practices, and are consumed as complexes of practices (Schatzki 2011; Shove et al. 2012), rather than a singular ‘practice of travelling on a themed route’.
Third, value as more-than-human achievement informs research on tourist experiences. Value in tourist experiences is largely understood from the theoretical perspectives of value co-creation or service dominant logic (Vargo et al. 2008) whereby tourists co-create value with the producer in an experience (Campos et al. 2018; Prebensen et al. 2013). By arguing for conceptualisation of value as a more-than-human achievement, this research answers the call by tourism geographers to incorporate the ‘material’ along with the ‘social’ in the understandings of value in tourist experiences (Bærenholdt et al. 2017; Haldrup & Larsen 2006).

Fourth, the thesis also contributes to the literature on affect in tourism studies (Buda et al. 2014). This thesis illustrates value as ‘felt’ in the intertwining of affect and cognition, which constructs symbolic association of the socio-material alignments on the themed route. This finding advances the understanding of how feelings and emotions are intertwined with cognitive assessments in touristic consumption (Newell 2018). Considering that people consume destination experiences symbolically (Colton 1987), the role of affect and feelings in symbolic association is crucial to understanding how feelings and affect can shape tourism experiences in different socio-material entanglements (Ahmed 2013; Buda 2015a; Germann Molz 2015).
6.5 Managerial Recommendations

Owing to the applied nature of this thesis, there are several takeaways which can be useful for marketers, businesses and other stakeholders involved with the development and promotion of themed routes. This section discusses the potential applied implications of this thesis in case of themed routes.

This thesis highlights the importance of maintaining the continuity of the theme through affect and material affordances. Addressing the need to maintain continuity, this thesis also identifies the need to have marketing collateral and infrastructure such as informational maps, signage and trail interpretation pods, trail vehicles, etc. These non-human entities play a dual role: first, continuously drawing attention to the positive affects created by the thematic elements such as food, wine and the vehicle; and second, facilitating participation in multiple thematic practices by acting as theme connectors through their material affordances. This thesis established that travellers are directed by non-human entities such as the road and the vehicle, all of which have the potential to lead to negative affects and impacts, if not taken care of (for example dirt roads). This potential for negative affects and impacts highlights the need for critical consideration of non-human entities when planning for themed routes.

Maintaining continuity also involves managing affective interactions on the route, given that travellers arrive with different embodied histories and backgrounds which shape
their aspirations and expectations around the themed route. Managing affective interactions suggests catering to individual competencies by introducing flexibility in service.

Following the findings of the study, a two-point strategy is proposed, to help facilitate consumption of themed routes as experiences. The intent of this section is not to provide any prescriptive guidelines, but rather to suggest specific strategies that can be used to help with the planning, development and marketing of such routes.

First, it would be beneficial for marketers to focus on maintaining the continuity of the theme to ensure the upkeep of the atmosphere of the themed route. Continuity can be improved by introducing activities and non-human entities, such as signage, paraphernalia (e.g. wine passports), and trail interpretation centres. Such non-human entities are likely to contribute towards building associations by providing continuous and repeated exposure to information about the theme. Highlighting the selectivity of the trail, by establishing boundaries, using milestones may assist in enhancing the definition of the trail, and would likely facilitate a more effective method of guidance and navigation for travellers.

Second, it is recommended that marketers use sequencing strategies to reduce the quantum of decision-making for visitors. This thesis argues that materials such as maps, signage, brochures, websites, apps, and special vehicles can reduce decision-making for
the traveller. Many travellers suggested the need for an introductory or initiation activity where they are introduced to the travelling practices of the themed trail, possibly at the visitor information centre. Similar other activities, that allow travellers to distinctly identify the trail as an experience, such as ‘check points’ are therefore critical to ensuring seamless visitor experience, and in turn business success.

Further to marketing implications, this thesis also points towards improvement of the themed route experience for the traveller through more effective management of travellers’ spatial interactions with landscapes, animals, vines and views. Businesses can also apply design thinking by articulating not only customer interactions but also interactions with the non-human elements within the winery servicescape such as architecture, furniture, food, wine, equipment and modes of transport.

6.6 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This thesis provides an ontology, an epistemology, and a methodology to understand relational value or value in relation. However, it is important to note here that it is exploratory in nature. The thesis explores the role of non-human entities in shaping value through affect and affordances. Thus, this thesis only presents a starting point in thinking of value as a more-than-human achievement in different contexts. Therefore, the limitations of the research discussed are potentially also future directions of research.
Adopting a relational perspective to value enables socio-material entanglements to be considered. While this thesis established value in socio-material relations, it is worth noting that socio-material relations are highly dynamic, and change with competencies of the practitioners, the situational composition of teleo-affective structures, and the positioning of actants witnessed in the case of AHWFT (Nicolini 2017). Future research could thus employ multi-sited ethnographies to explore different marketplace contexts so that the interplay of social and material can be investigated more holistically. For instance, future research could explore themed routes that are highly regulated such as tours and other such themed journeys.

As noted in Chapter 4, the promotion of the themed route was found to be restricted and untargeted during fieldwork, which led to very few travellers travelling on the trail. The lack of promotion encountered on AHWFT points towards lack of collaboration which may have hindered value. Thus, future research could look specifically into hindrance of value following problems with stakeholder collaboration.

The practical challenges in following the recruited participants around the trail (so as to not hinder their experience) also limited passive observation (Moeran 2009a). Early stages of research design for this research proposed that the researcher follow the recruited tourists through the course of their trip. However, the strategy was abandoned during fieldwork piloting, as the tourists did not appreciate a stranger’s presence in their leisure
practices (Nash, D 2001). Thus, the researcher was not able to observe the entire journey of the trail travellers. The researcher did, however, encounter some of them while conducting participant observation in varied locations. Future research could explore other ways to overcome such practical field observation challenges, by using different methodological or technological interventions to track travellers via apps, sensors or wearable cameras.

Given that most of the research fieldwork was conducted in the ‘good months’ of Australian spring-summer, the data so collected presents obvious limitations for understanding seasonal practices. In addition, variations in temporal practices were not recorded by the researcher. This limitation points towards potential opportunities for longitudinal studies to capture variability in value that may be triggered by different socio-material relations observed over time.

Moreover, following the research agenda of understanding value for travellers, what this research did not venture into was how value was derived by other actors on the route. Future research could outline value in relation from the perspectives of multiple actors, such as businesses and marketers.

Additionally, this research laid the foundations for further examination of individual non-human elements and their role in creating the theme. Thus, future research could pick up any one non-human entity at a time and closely establish its importance in
facilitating value in themed environments, e.g. map as an affective trigger or affective dimensions of spatial entities.

6.7 Summary of the Research

This research aimed to understand how value emerged for the traveller in the socio-material context of the themed route. The first chapter outlined the need to study the emergence of value on a themed route owing to its popularity as a co-marketing tool, and the potential benefits to the consumer in the form of meaningful experiences. Following the conceptualisation of themed routes as co-constituted socio-material marketplaces, the chapter questioned traditional thinking about the role of non-human entities in the value literature. Following which, the chapter pointed towards the need to understand value as a more-than-human achievement.

Through a literature review, Chapter 2 discussed three different logics through which value is conceptualised in the marketing literature. The review demonstrated that value conceptualisations in the general marketing field do not elaborate on how value is derived from non-human elements. Following the call for attention to agency of non-human entities, Chapter 2 proposed an alternative view arguing for ‘value in relation’ which positioned value as a more-than-human achievement. This was evidenced in the lack of acknowledgment of the anthropological research on affective interactions and consumer culture research on non-human affordances in value conceptualisations.
Through Chapter 3, the epistemological framework to understanding value as a more-than-human achievement was configured. Conceptualising value in the socio-material relations suggested steering away from attitudinal or psychological humanist perspectives, and adopting a theoretical perspective that emphasised non-human agency. Following the tenets of a relational ontological value perspective, the practice approach was identified to be most useful in understanding value as shaped by human and non-human agency, owing to its ability to configure socio-material arrangements. The proposed practice-based value framework has three components namely actants, teleo-affective structures and competencies. Actants highlight non-human agency by incorporating material affordances. Teleo-affective structures (TA) incorporate the role of non-human actants in directing value through their role in triggering affect and feelings/sensations that are more-than-cognitively felt. Competencies demonstrate the understandings and skills of the human actants that are derived over a period of time through exposure to multiple practices. 

Chapter 4 articulated the methodology for the research and also detailed the research context of the AHWFT. The chapter acknowledged the challenges in conducting research on non-human entities and established ethnography as a way to counter those challenges. Chapter 4 also established the importance of researcher positionality in an ethnography, and highlighted the practical and ethical challenges that were faced through this
approach. The chapter also highlighted the data collection methods, stages in conducting research and data analysis techniques to be able to sieve non-human agency in practices.

Chapter 5 discussed the findings of the research and it demonstrated three ways through which value emerges in the case context of the AHWFT. First, it described how value emerges when the theme of food and wine is ‘felt’ and ‘sensed’ by travellers in the practices of opulence and country. Second, the chapter suggested value emergence in following the theme through the practice of touring, which helps construct a continuous seamless thematic experience for the traveller. Third, the chapter highlighted the value inherent in togetherness, realised through the practice of sociality, as the themed route brings people together in ritualistic, shared and liminal experiences. By highlighting the role of non-human agency through affect and affordances, the chapter summarised value to be felt, an ongoing alignment between actants, teleo-affective structures and competencies and thus, a more-than-human achievement.

This chapter articulated the research’s conclusion by arguing for the benefits of understanding value as a more-than-human achievement. The chapter highlighted the contribution of the research to the understanding of value in marketing, theming and tourism. As a managerial contribution, the chapter also presented a two-point strategy to aid themed route planning and marketing. The chapter concluded that the research
presents a starting point to re-think value as a more-than-human achievement which needs to be further explored through future research.

6.8 Reflections on Positionality

My experience of conducting research on the food and wine trail in Australia has made me rethink my positionality not just as an Indian female ‘non-wine drinker’ but also as a tourism researcher and more importantly as a human.

I learnt how my experiences of the trail were similar to other tourists who were new to the region and were trying to learn about the wine culture. I have not been much of a wine drinker and did not understand the associations people have with wine, especially how important it was in the Australian context. Further, due to my conservative upbringing, in my culture, travelling to appreciate alcohol was not considered good or ‘ethical’. I learnt about how the themed route acted as a guide for people like me who were new to the Australian lifestyle, and trying to get initiated into it by understanding the wine culture. My experience on the trail made me reflect on how my lack of knowledge about wine made me shy away from wine connoisseurs until I had gained enough confidence and competencies of wine. Through this research, I became acclimatized with consumer culture around wine and also became a wine collector.

Traveling on the food and wine trail made me think about how we categorize people as ‘us vs them’ through our competencies and understandings that are fuelled and
acknowledged by our material possessions and symbolic associations. My experiences during fieldwork also made me reflect on how intertwined the social and the material is, even in the discourses of ethnicity, where changes in my dressing, tasting and appreciating wine, and display of my possessions (handbag, sunglasses) transcended the differences of ethnicity for fellow food and wine trail consumers and winemakers who were predominantly white Australians.

On the downside, the research also reinforced the realities of conducting research in the field for a female. When I was constantly juggling different priorities with a baby, trying to rethink ways of getting participants by battling issues of safety, I was reminded of being a female in a male-dominated territory.

As a tourism researcher, conducting this research also influenced how I now think about value. Through my professional career, I kept alternating between researching as a marketer and as a tourism planner which had led to very conflicted notions of value in my mind. This research allowed me to explore value in detail. Through my experience in the field, I constantly studied all my interactions and realized how they were mostly influenced and sometimes directed by the non-human. Whether it was the wine glass, or the vines, I scrutinized each interaction for value. My understandings of value changed over time and helped me understand the tourism marketplace to be ‘unfolding’ in the
experience. This breadth of knowledge has enabled me to pursue tourism research from an experiential perspective by conceptualizing relational value in the ‘moment’.

Reflecting on non-human agency also impacted my understandings of space. My educational background in urban planning had equipped me to perceive space geographically. Through my education in town planning, I learnt to follow standards of services that were based on population densities. Through this research, my understandings of space were expanded from being geographic to socially-constructed to relational. This research helped me understand space as constructed through affective material relations.

Through this journey of the doctoral thesis, my positionality as a human now includes consideration of the non-human. My understanding of relations has now expanded to include non-human elements. As a human, I always gave primacy to human endeavour and innovation. This research has made me rethink this primacy and what it means not only for research or marketing, but also for our very existence in this world.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of Support from Around Hermitage Association
Appendix B: Information and Consent Form for the Stakeholders
Appendix C: Interview Guide for Key Stakeholders
Appendix D: Interview Guide for Tourists
Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet for Tourists (Flexible Interviewing)
Appendix F: Participant Consent Form
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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM AROUND HERMITAGE ASSOCIATION

20 September 2016

Ms. Namita Roy
School of Management, Operations and Marketing
Faculty of Business
University of Wollongong
WOLLONGONG NSW 2522

Dear Namita,

RE: Proposed Research Project "Follow the Theme: Tourists' Construction of Themed Route Experiences".

I am writing to express my support, and in my capacity as President, Around Hermitage Association, I hereby confirm my assistance for this research project being conducted on the Hermitage Road area, Hunter Valley, NSW.

As a business group we are committed to promoting our area focusing on joint marketing initiatives and use our collective bargaining power to get preferential advertising rates and editorial in publications. There are about 70 business members including cellar doors, accommodation and restaurants.

The Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail boasts some of the most awarded Hunter Valley wines and no less than six James Halliday 5 star rated wineries. In addition, the Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail has a wide range of dining options from fine dining to relaxed cafe style and a wide range of accommodation options. There are an ever increasing number of other attractions and events occurring along the trail. The construction of the new cycleway on Hermitage Road has commenced which should be a great boost to the Trail.

The proposed research project will assist us in understanding tourist experiences and choices on our main marketed product 'The Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail' and thus maintain our high standard of service and care: now and into the future.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]

V Lashmore-Smith
President Around Hermitage Assoc. Inc.
c/o Misty Glen
293 Deasys Road Pokolbin NSW 2320
APPENDIX B: INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS

Title: Follow the Theme: Tourists’ Construction of Themed Route Experiences

Case Context: Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail

Researchers

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About the Study

This is an invitation to participate in a study conducted by Ms. Namita Roy at the University of Wollongong. The purpose of this research is to investigate, and provide deeper understandings, of how tourists value their journeys on themed routes such as the Around Hermitage Food and Wine Trail.

As a business associated with the Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail, you are a key stakeholder and hence your opinion would be beneficial for this research. We invite you to participate in a semi-structured interview on market trends and tourist behaviour.

Demands on Participants
The researcher will conduct a brief interview with you as per your convenience. The interview duration will be a maximum of 30 minutes. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are NOT, in any way, obligated to do so. Your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. If you agree to participate, your responses will be recorded through audio recording or hand written notes as you choose. You are free to withdraw from the study at any point during the interview and will not be asked for any reasons. To avoid the potential that persons may be subsequently identified, participant names will be replaced with pseudonyms. All the information collected will be kept securely until records are destroyed, 5 years after completion of the research.

Sample questions
The questions will be open-ended and you will be requested to share your opinion to the best of your knowledge. For example,

- How do you market your business to tourists?
- Which is the main season for your business?
- What type of people are your main tourists? Families, couples? Domestic or International? Wine Connoisseurs, novices, or general travellers in the region?

You will not be asked any questions of a legal, political, religious etc. nature. Should you find any question(s) of such nature, you may choose not to answer the question(s).

Risks, Inconveniences and Discomforts
Apart from the investment of your time to participate in the study, there are no other foreseeable risks to you. Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw or amend your participation and data at any time during or after the interview. If you perceive any personal risks from the study and would like to withdraw after the interview, you can directly email the researcher and withdraw your data from the study. Declining to participate in the study will not affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Wollongong. You may also ask to amend their data at any time after or during the research.

Funding and Possible Benefits of the Research
This research is the PhD dissertation project of Ms. Namita Roy, University of Wollongong and hence is not funded by any external organisation. The outcomes of the study will help the researchers in their exploratory study on themed route experiences. This study would contribute to academic scholarship on construction of value and help understand themed route marketing. This will also assist destination management organisations in advancing their marketing strategies towards themed route travellers. Findings of this study may be published as journal publications for the purpose of advancing knowledge.

Ethics Review and Complaints
This study has been reviewed and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) of the University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the University of Wollongong Ethics Officer on 0242 213386 or rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

What do you do next if you’d like to participate?
If you are still happy to participate in the study after reading this Participant Information Sheet, the primary investigator will be in touch with you to coordinate a convenient date and time for the interview.

However, if you would like to withdraw your participation, please do so by informing the primary investigator verbally or through email/phone. Please note that prior to the commencement of the interview you will be presented with a consent form that you will be asked to sign. Please be advised that you may withdraw your participation and data at any time.
Participant Consent

Please read this consent sheet carefully. Your signatures on this consent sheet will be considered as proof of your consent to participate in this study. In case you have any questions please feel free to ask the researcher verbally or through email. In case you do not want to participate in this study, please decline verbally or through email.

I have received and read the information about this project (titled above). I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with participating. Also, I have had an opportunity to speak to interviewers and ask questions regarding the project.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary. I am free to withdraw my participation data from the research at any time. If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Ms. Namita Roy. If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on 0242 213386 or rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

I am verbally indicating my consent to participate in this research, as it has been described to me in the information sheet and in discussion with the interviewer. I understand that the data collected from my participation may be used for journal or conference publications, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

I confirm that my opinions and the information I share can be recorded via Telephone/Skype and personal interview.

I confirm that I give my consent and that I freely and willingly participate in this study.

Name: ___________________ Time/Date: ______________________

Signature: ___________________
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

General Identifiers

1. Name of the Business

2. Type

3. Products sold

Tourists

4. What type of people are your main tourists? Families, couples? Domestic or International? Wine Connoisseurs, novices, or general travellers in the region?

5. How many tourists do you get in a year?

6. What are your peak seasons?


8. Do you get tourists who are following the ‘Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail’? What all activities do they seek? Are you able to provide all the activities? Which of your products relate to the theme of food and wine? And how do tourists use them?

9. Where do your visitors mostly come from and where do they go after / while they are at this place?

10. Do you provide a future direction/ referral to the tourist on the route? If yes how do you decide that? How do you influence the tourists’ decisions?

12. What questions/ comments do the visitors share?
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TOURISTS

This interview guide can be directly used for ‘Flexible interviewing’ approach. In case of ‘single case’ approach, the researcher will modify these questions according to the observations, the activities and manoeuvres of the participants during the trip.

General Identifiers

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Number of people in group and their relationship with each other
5. Number of days on the trail
6. Place of Stay (if applicable)
7. Nationality/ Ethnicity

These questions are aimed at understanding value constructed through travellers’ own resources (possessions, social contexts, past experiences, practices as well as mental and imagined states) as well as value constructed/facilitated by the suppliers.

Q1. Describe your themed route experience?

- Describe your experience on the trail in detail.
- What all activities did you participate in? Can you show on the map where all you went, when, why and how?
- What all did you pack with you especially for this trip? For what use?
- What were your considerations while getting ready to go on the route? How did the theme influence your decision?
Q2. How did you relate to/construct/encounter/navigate the theme?

- How did you construct your journey? What were your considerations?
- How did you decide to bundle certain activities?
- Did the marketing brochure/map/signage on the trail help you? If yes, how? If no, why not?
- Did you follow the trail as marketed on the brochure? How and why did you deviate from it?
- How did you navigate the route? How did you decide where to go next?
- How did the businesses facilitate your experience? Did the businesses direct you to the trail or not (why)?
- How did you experience the theme in the activities? What practices/possessions/social situations/conversations/interactions etc. reminded you of the food and wine theme?

Q3. How did the themed route kindle your imagination?

- How did you learn about the themed route? What attracted you to the route?
- What did you imagine the trail to be? Describe.
- What were your thoughts while on the trail? What elements of the themed route fuelled your imagination?
- What were your expectations from the route? How did it compare to your actual experience?

Q4. How was the themed route a special/different experience?

- Have you travelled on a food and wine route before? What has been your past experience?
- How does it compare to your present experience?
- How is this experience different/similar to any other holidays that you have undertaken?
- How different would your experience be without the theme/the trail?
- How would you have travelled on the route without the marketed theme? Would you seek the same experiences/attractions?
• Did you discover something new on the trail that you would have missed otherwise? If yes, what and how did you chance upon it? Were you seeking a new attraction?

Q5. How did the themed route help in familiarizing you with the region?

• Did you feel safe travelling on the route? Why?
• Did the signage / brochure help you in navigation? How did you navigate the route? Were you able to find the themed attractions easily?
• What made you stay on the route and not digress?

Q6. How was the continuity of the theme maintained in the experience?

• Were you reminded of the theme while travelling? What and how? What were your thoughts and concerns while going from one location to the other? Were you thinking about the theme?
• Did you interact with the winemaker/ café owner/ waiter/sommelier? If yes, what were the discussions around? If no, why not?
• Did you have any discussions with other people travelling on the trail? If yes, what interesting stories did they share? If not, why?
• Did the businesses facilitate/influence your journey on the trail? If yes, how did they encourage you to visit a related experience on the trail? What were your thoughts?

Q7. How did the modal choice influence the fluidity of the themed route?

• How did you travel on the route? Which mode did you chose and why? How did it add to your experience?
• Did you use your own vehicle to travel? Did choosing this particular mode of travel change your experience? If yes, how?
• What if you had chosen a different mode? How would that have affected your experience of the trail?
• How did you pass time while travelling to different activity locations? What all did you do with your vehicle? What discussions did you have? What were your main concerns?

Q8. How did other people on the trail influence your experience?

• Did you decide to take this route as a group, if yes, how? Were you able to manage each other’s expectations/interests? If yes, how? If not, what were the conflicts related to? Did the trail help you in decision-making, if yes, how?
• Did the trail help you meet new people? If yes, how?
• Did you enjoy other people’s company? If yes, how? Did you share notes/ experiences with the same people you met at different locations? If yes, how? Did you feel a sense of community? If yes, how?
• What group activities did you enjoy the most? And why?
• Narrate an experience on the route which you enjoyed as a group.
• Narrate an experience on the route which made you uncomfortable with your present company. An experience which you did not enjoy.

Q9. Did the trail enable you to achieve personal goals? If yes, how?

• Did you want to complete the trail? Why or why not?
• Did you feel compelled to complete the trail? If yes, why? What did you do about it?
• Did the businesses encourage you to complete the trail? If yes, how? Incentives?
• Did you feel obliged to buy any products? If yes, why?
APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR TOURISTS (FLEXIBLE INTERVIEWING)

Title: Follow the Theme: Tourists’ Construction of Themed Route Experiences

Case Context: Around Hermitage Wine and Food Trail

Researchers

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Prof. Gordon Waitt
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Phone: (02) 4221 3684
Email: gwaitt@uow.edu.au

Prof. Ulrike Gretzel
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University of Queensland
Brisbane
Phone: (07) 3346 4412
Email: u.gretzel@business.uq.edu.au

Ms. Namita Roy
PhD Candidate
School of Management, Operations and Marketing, Faculty of Business
University of Wollongong
Phone: (02) 4221-4706
Email: ng381@uowmail.edu.au

About the Study

This is an invitation to participate in a study conducted by Ms. Namita Roy at the University of Wollongong. The purpose of this research is to investigate how tourists value their journeys on themed routes such as the Around Hermitage Food and Wine Trail. The study will use semi-structured flexible interviews to understand experiences of travellers while travelling on the themed route, which will be followed by a post-trip skype/online interview.
Demands on Participants
The interviews are designed to be flexible with the location and time based on your convenience. Should you choose to participate, you will be requested to do all of the following:

- Spend a maximum of 45 minutes with the researcher for the interview.
- Respond to a mandatory follow up post-trip online interview a couple of days after your trip for which you will be contacted via phone/ email (as you choose).
- You may be requested to show / your videos or photos for a better understanding of your trip experience during the face to face interview or/and you may be requested to post your photos/videos on the researcher’s Facebook group in case they are required for presentation.

Your participation is completely on a voluntary basis, and you are NOT, in any way, obligated to do so. Your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. If you agree to participate, your responses will be recorded by either video recording or through handwritten notes as you may choose. To avoid the potential that persons may be subsequently identified, participant names will be replaced with pseudonyms. All information will be kept securely until records are destroyed, 5 years after completion of the research.

Sample questions
The questions will be open-ended and you will be requested to share your opinion. For example,

- How did you experience the theme of food and wine while travelling on the themed route?
- How did you travel on the trail? What all experiences / activities did you undertake and what were your experiences?

You will not be asked any questions of a legal, political, religious etc. nature. Should the participant find any question(s) of such nature, they may choose not to answer the question(s).
**Risks, Inconveniences and Discomforts**
Apart from the investment of your time to participate in the study, there are no other foreseeable risks to you. Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw or amend your participation and data at any time during or after the interview. If you perceive any personal risks from the study and would like to withdraw after the interview, you can directly email the researcher and withdraw your data from the study. Declining to participate in the study will not affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Wollongong. Participants may also ask to amend their data at any time after or during the research.

**Funding and Possible Benefits of the Research**
This research is the PhD dissertation project of Ms. Namita Roy, University of Wollongong and hence is not funded by any external organisation. The outcomes of the study will help the researchers in their exploratory study on themed route experiences. This study would contribute to academic scholarship on construction of value and help understand themed route marketing. This will also assist destination management organisations in advancing their marketing strategies towards themed route travellers. Findings of this study may be published as journal publications for the purpose of advancing knowledge.

**Ethics Review and Complaints**
This study has been reviewed and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) of the University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the University of Wollongong Ethics Officer on 0242 213386 or rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

**What do you do next if you’d like to participate?**
If you are still happy to participate in the study after reading this Participant Information Sheet, the primary investigator will be in touch with you to coordinate a convenient date and time for the interview.
However, if you would like to withdraw your participation, please do so by informing the primary investigator verbally or through email/phone. Please note that prior to the commencement of the interview you will be presented with a consent form that you will be asked to sign. Please be advised that you may withdraw your participation and data at any time.
APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title: Follow the Theme: Tourists’ Construction of Themed Route Experiences

Researcher: Ms. Namita Roy

You will be read this consent form and asked for consent verbally through a YES or NO. Please feel free to ask the researcher to stop in case of withdrawal or in case you have any questions.

I have received and read the information about this project (titled above). I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with participating. Also, I have had an opportunity to speak to interviewers and ask questions regarding the project.

I understand that if I consent to participate in this project I will be followed/observed/interviewed by the researcher during and after the trip. I understand my responses and behaviour will be video recorded.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary. I am free to withdraw my participation data from the research at any time. My withdrawal of consent or data will not affect my treatment or relationship with the researchers or the University of Wollongong. I also understand that this project maintains my privacy and confidentiality, through codification and de-identification of my name, by replacing it with pseudonym.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Ms. Namita Roy. If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on 0242 213386 or rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

I am verbally indicating my consent to participate in this research, as it has been described to me in the information sheet and in discussion with the interviewer. I understand that the data collected from my participation may be used for journal or conference publications, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

I confirm that my opinions and the information I share can be recorded via Telephone/Skype after the trip and through observation and personal interview during the trip.

I confirm that I give my consent and that I freely and willingly participate in this study.

The researcher will record the name, date and time for research purposes.
Name: _________________
Contact Details: Email/ Phone/ Skype

Time/Date: _________________
APPENDIX G: ADVERTISEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT

Are you interested in travelling on a Food and Wine Trail?

This research is looking for tourist groups who are interested in or are planning to travel on the Around Hermitage Food and Wine Trail in the Hunter Valley. The research explores the experiences of tourists travelling on a themed route, in particular the Around Hermitage Food and Wine Trail in the Hunter Valley.

All you have to do is explore the trail and share your experiences with the researcher while you are on the trail. Go on a half/full day trail on the Around Hermitage Food and Wine Trail. The research requires you to be followed by the researcher (in her own vehicle/ walk/ cycle) and get interviewed by her along the journey about your experience on the trail. You will also show the photos/videos of your trip to the researcher while on the trip. You may be invited to share your photos/videos with others participating in the research and the researcher might ask you for permission to use your materials in her publications/presentations, but this will be completely voluntary.

At the end of the trip you will be rewarded with a gift hamper worth $100 of assorted wine!!!

Apart from this, you will be asked for a short follow up interview online over Skype, a few days after your trip, just to touch base on your post-trip experience.

So are you ready to start your food and wine adventure??

For more information

Contact the researcher, Ms. Namita Roy, University of Wollongong on [Redacted] to arrange a small chat about the project and your trip.

For any reason if you do not wish to be a part of the study after consenting to participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time by verbally informing the researcher. Your participation is completely on a voluntary basis, and you are NOT, in any way, obligated to do so. Your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.
APPENDIX H: LETTER OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Namita Roy

From: irma-support@uow.edu.au
Sent: Wednesday, 19 October 2016 11:21 AM
To: venkata@uow.edu.au
Cc: Namita Roy
Subject: HREC Approval of Application 2016/385

Dear Dr Yanamandram,

I am pleased to advise that the application detailed below has been approved.

Ethics Number: 2016/385
Approval Date: 18/10/2016
Expiry Date: 17/10/2017
Project Title: Follow the Theme: Tourists' Construction of a Themed Route Experience
Researchers: Yanamandram Venkata, Roy Namita
Documents Approved: Initial Ethics Application
Response dated 12/10/2016
Participant Consent form for Tourists v2 - 11/10/2016
Participant Information and Consent Sheet for Business v2 - 11/10/2016
Participant Information Sheet for Tourists (flexible) v2 - 11/10/2016
Participant Information Sheet for Tourists (Single Case) v2 - 11/10/2016
Letter of Support from Around Hermitage Association
Interview Guide for Tourists v1
Advertisement for Single Case Study Recruitment v1

The HREC has reviewed the research proposal for compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with this document. Compliance is monitored through progress reports; the HREC may also undertake physical monitoring of research.

Approval is granted for a twelve month period; extension of this approval will be considered on receipt of a progress report prior to the expiry date. Extension of approval requires:

- The submission of an annual progress report and a final report on completion of your project.
- Approval by the HREC of any proposed changes to the protocol or investigators.
- Immediate report of serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants.
- Immediate report of unforeseen events that might affect the continued acceptability of the project.

If you have any queries regarding the HREC review process or your ongoing approval please contact the Ethics Unit on 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,
Associate Professor Melanie Randle,
Chair, UOW & ISLHD Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee

The University of Wollongong and Illawarra and Shoalhaven Local Health District Social Sciences HREC is constituted and functions in accordance with the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.
APPENDIX I: HUNTER VALLEY WINE TOURISM ASSOCIATION BROCHURE
APPENDIX I: HUNTER VALLEY WINE TOURISM ASSOCIATION BROCHURE

Around Hermitage Wine and Food trail in Red

Trails as marketed by HVWTA
# APPENDIX J: AROUND HERMITAGE WINE AND FOOD TRAIL BROCHURE

## ACCOMMODATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beltana Villas</td>
<td>0448 867 114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berenbell Vineyard Retreat</td>
<td>4998 7668</td>
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<tr>
<td>Billabong Moon</td>
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<td>Brocken Ridge Villas</td>
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<td>Broken View Estate</td>
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<td>DenMar Estate</td>
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<td>Duck Hollow</td>
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<td>Eclectic Vineyard Lodge</td>
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<td>Hermitage Hideaway</td>
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<td>Hunter Valley Resort</td>
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<td>North Lodge Cottages</td>
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<td>Olive Grove Cottages</td>
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<td>Peter Drayton Wines Family Retreat</td>
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<td>Silverpoint Accommodation</td>
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<td>Splinters Guest House</td>
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<td>Spotted Gums On Hermitage</td>
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<td>The Grange On Hermitage</td>
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<td>The Olive Retreat @ Belford Green Olives</td>
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<td>Woolshed Hill Estate</td>
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## THINGS TO SEE & DO

- Hunter Distillery
- Hermitage Road Antiques
- Hunter Resort Wine and Cooking School
- Mistletoe - Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden
- Pokolbin Village Pharmacy
- Spa Anise

## WEDDINGS

- Enzo Weddings at Peter Drayton Wines
- Wine Country Weddings

## TOURS

- Eastcoast Xperiences (Segway Tours)
- Group Wine Tours Hunter Valley
- Hunter Private Tours
- Sutton Estate Electric Bike Hire
- Two Fat Blokes Gourmet Tours
- Wine and Grubb Tours

## SELF DRIVE TOURS


## SERVICES

- Wine Country TV

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**WINE AND FOOD TRAIL**

POKOLBIN, HUNTER VALLEY

www.aroundhermitage.com.au
APPENDIX K: HUNTER VALLEY WINE TOURISM ASSOCIATION MAGAZINES